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Arkansas Related Civil War Holdings at Public Institutions of Higher Education in the State

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ABSTRACT
An examination of a library collection using an existing comprehensive bibliography on a particular subject allows librarians to make collection development decisions. In this study, the collections of each public university in Arkansas is examined for Civil War related titles, compiled from two historiographical articles which appeared in the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*. The results indicate that collections in the state contain a wide range of items included in the search. The data gathered in this project may help librarians at these institutions and others in the state determine what items need to be added to their respective collections in order to more fully support the curriculum offered.

KEYWORDS
Arkansas, Civil War, Checklist

INTRODUCTION

The development of library collections at academic libraries has focused on supporting the research and teaching needs of individual institutions. Collections must support the coursework offered by the institution. This study uses the checklist method to examine the Civil War related holdings at public universities in Arkansas with particular attention paid to resources related to the conflict in the state. The author seeks to confirm that the institutions studied have robust holdings related to the Civil War in Arkansas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The checklist method is a tried and true tool to evaluate holdings in collections. In the book, *Guide to the Evaluation of Library Collections*, Lockett details the steps in the use of the checklist method with librarians using standard catalogs, specialized lists, and bibliographies, among other resources, to compare the items on the list with works held in the collection. The lists used to compile the titles being checked need to be tailored to the mission of the library. A corresponding high number of listed items held in the collection signified a successful collection development policy (Lockett, 1989).

Porta and Lancaster emphasized that checklist projects need to check a bibliography or other resources against the holdings in a collection. The method is used to identify weaknesses in the collection but, care should be taken when selecting bibliographies and other resources for comparison (Porta & Lancaster, 1988). Lundin (1989) wrote, “Public libraries need to be aware of their readers and to select and evaluate with a balanced view: a delicate balance of community needs and bibliographic control” and the checklist method is an appropriate tool to meet this goal (p. 111).

Tiered lists including seminal works along with recommended titles give librarians an opportunity to check their collection to see if it effectively covers a particular subject or if more attention needs to be given to collection development in that area. Tiered checklists break titles into groups that are deemed to be essential, highly recommended, recommended, or listed, giving evaluators a way to rate the importance of each work to the collection. Seminal works are those that have a great influence in a particular field of study. Dennison (2000) argued that an advantage of checklist studies allows librarians to determine the effectiveness of holdings in a particular area.

Works examining the checklist method when surveying subject specific collections include Coale’s (1965) review of the Latin American Colonial history items held by the Newberry Library. Coale

found the process to be tedious and time consuming, but ultimately worth the effort as it could be performed by a relatively inexperienced staff member under the supervision of a trained librarian. The checklist method can also be used to build a collection, as discussed by Matz (2004) in his work focused on building a graphic novel collection.

More recent scholarship has explored the role of the checklist method in the evaluation of electronic resources. Nisonger (2008) explored the history of the method and examined the holdings to two databases using the citations from two journals. Nisonger found that full-text databases at the time of the examination lacked true comprehensiveness with many still containing large numbers of citations and lacking full-text access to the articles used in his sample.

Civil War literature includes a number of primary sources, edited collections, and secondary sources published well after the conclusion of the conflict. McPherson (2014) argued that the study of the war and the continued publication of new works on the topic were due to several reasons, including the scale of the conflict and the immense human toll suffered by both sides. Ross (2007) examined the number of scholarly works on the war published and reviewed by academic journals in three distinct time periods from the early 1960s to the early 2000s. Ross found that Civil War related materials were more likely to be reviewed in the *Journal of Southern History* rather than the *Journal of American History* but books on the topic still made up a significant portion of the reviews that appeared in both publications.

The Civil War in Arkansas

Located in what became known as the Trans-Mississippi Theater of the war, Arkansas seceded from the Union after the firing on Fort Sumter and after refusing President Lincoln's call for troops to put down the rebellion. Joining the Confederate States of America, the state provided troops for both sides in the conflict. The southern and eastern portions of the state supported secession and the war while opposition to the conflict existed in large numbers in northern Arkansas. Hundreds of military engagements occurred in the state during the conflict with only a few large-scale battles, including Pea Ridge, Prairie Grove, Helena, Little Rock, and Jenkins' Ferry. A Unionist government was installed in the Little Rock in 1864 after the capital fell to Federal forces, leading to two state governments claiming control of Arkansas for the last years of the war (Jenkins, 2019).

METHOD

Institutions in this Study

Included in this study are the ten public institutions of higher education in Arkansas which award an undergraduate degree in history. Community colleges and specialized institutions of higher education are not included. The institutions included are: Arkansas State University (ASU), Arkansas Tech University (ATU), Henderson State University (HSU), Southern Arkansas University (SAU), University of Arkansas, Fayetteville (UA), University of Arkansas at Fort Smith (UAFS), University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR), University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM), University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB), and University of Central Arkansas (UCA).

In addition to the undergraduate degree in history offered at each institution, six of the institutions (ASU, ATU, HSU, UA, UALR, and UCA) all offer graduate coursework in the field. Examinations of the catalogs of each institution reveal that all ten institutions offer specific undergraduate coursework in the Civil War. Three of the institutions (ASU, UA, and UCA) offer specific graduate history coursework in the Civil War. Each institution also offers an undergraduate course in Arkansas history.

Checklist Method

The checklist method is a useful tool in determining the frequency of holdings in specific collections, employed by researchers to determine the quality of the holdings. By using either one or multiple bibliographies on a particular subject, librarians can determine if any seminal works are missing from the collection. The procedure for using the checklist method includes identifying appropriate lists or bibliographies, comparing the lists to holdings, and analyzing the trends that emerge (Wallace and Van

Fleet, 2000).

Checklist for this Evaluation

The checklist in this evaluation was compiled from two articles that appeared in the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* approximately two decades apart. The lists are the most comprehensive studies of literature relating to the Civil War in Arkansas. The *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* is the only peer-reviewed journal that deals exclusively with the history of the entire state and these two articles are the only attempts to create an exhaustive bibliography related to the war that have ever appeared in the publication. The first, written by Anne J. Bailey and Daniel Sutherland and entitled "The History and Historians of Civil War Arkansas" was published in the autumn 1999 edition of the journal. In the article, the authors examine the histography of the subject from the period immediately following the war until the time the article appeared. Included in the article are published resources, including both monographs and articles appearing in peer-reviewed serials. While most of the works included in the article would be considered secondary sources, the authors also included a number of edited diaries and collections of letters. Dissertations related to the war in Arkansas also appear in the article.

The second article on the topic appeared in the summer 2018 edition of the journal. Entitled "Guns, Trumpets, and More: Recent Scholarship on the Civil War in Arkansas," the work was authored by Buck T. Foster and Christopher R. Mortenson. A continuation of the work started by Bailey and Sutherland, Foster and Mortenson examined works published on the Civil War in Arkansas from 2000 to 2018. The article followed the same format as the original, including secondary sources as well as diaries and letter collections.

To create the list used for this article, the author identified 20 monographs from the two articles which specifically explored the Civil War in Arkansas. In addition to these twenty-secondary works, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, a primary source including reports and correspondence during the war and included in Bailey and Sutherland's article, was also included on the list. Only works focused on Arkansas, Arkansans, or soldiers serving in Arkansas were included while wider examinations of the war were avoided for this checklist. Other titles appear in each article, however, those titles do not focus on the state and typically examine Arkansas as part of the wider Trans-Mississippi Theater. The authors of the works include university professors in the state, professional historians, military officers, and dedicated Civil War buffs, among others.

In the checklist method, the compiled list of works is compared to the holdings of institutions. In this project, the titles were searched in each institution's OPAC. Items were first searched by title and then by author if no results were found during the initial query. If the institution held a physical copy of the work in its collection, the work was listed as a "holding" and if the library did not have a copy, it was listed as a "non-holding." Any edition of the work would lead to a recording of "holding" while items held in circulating, non-circulating, or microfilm collections would lead to the same result. Electronic copies were not considered in this study.

RESULTS

The checklist method revealed that all but one institution held more than 50% of the works included on the list. The University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, the only institution in the state offering a doctoral degree in history, was also one of only two institutions to hold more than 95% of the titles. Interestingly, the University of Arkansas at Monticello, the institution with the lowest enrollment, held as many titles as the largest university in the state (see Appendix A). The average percentage of holdings on the checklist across public institutions in the state is 75.72%.

In order to understand why institutions in the state had such a disparate number of items on the checklist, a better understanding of the authors of the works as well as the work of professors at institutions in the state was needed. The author with the most works on the list was Mark Christ, formerly of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program and a staff member of the Central Arkansas Library System. Christ edited the only work that every library held, *Rugged and Sublime: The Civil War in Arkansas*, published in 1994.

Other authors included on the list were previously employed at public institutions of higher education in the state at the time they published titles included in the checklist, including Charles Moneyhon at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and William Shea at the University of Arkansas at Monticello. With active researchers on the faculty of these institutions, it was reasonable to assume that this helped drive the acquisition of at least some of the titles included on the checklist.

Limitations

The catalogs of each institution were checked in the summer of 2021, and it could be noted that additional items may have been added to the collection at a later date. At the time of this study, no other comprehensive examinations of Civil War titles related to Arkansas had been published, leaving the two articles used in this study as the only bibliographies available on this topic.

CONCLUSION

The libraries at public institutions of higher education in Arkansas hold a wide range of works related to the Civil War in the state. This checklist allowed the author to determine which institutions offer library resources to support courses in Civil War and Arkansas history, with the majority of colleges and universities offering items in those subject areas. The data collected may allow librarians at each institution to determine what items should be added to their collection in order to continue to support the coursework offered by their institution.

Future researchers could modify this study for checklist examinations of the holdings of academic libraries in other states. The process could be used for a similar study related to Civil War holdings or any topic where a comprehensive bibliography exists.

While this study and others like it can identify holes in collections, libraries need a robust budget to fill those holes. This specific study could identify an area that needs attention at a particular library but without the appropriate budgetary resources to fill those holes, the work could be for naught.

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Wallace, D. & Van Fleet, C. (2001) *Library evaluation: A casebook and can-do guide*. Libraries Unlimited.

Appendix A
Checklist Title Holdings by Institution

	ASU	ATU	HSU	SAU	UA	UAFS	UALR	UAM	UAPB	UCA
War of the Rebellion	H	N	H	H	H	N	H	H	N	N
Arkansas in War and Reconstruction, 1861-1874	H	N	H	H	H	H	H	H	N	H
Reluctant General: The Life and Times of Albert Pike	H	H	N	N	H	H	N	H	N	H
Arkansas and the Civil War	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	N	H
Confederate Arkansas: The People and Policies	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	N	H
Kirby Smith's Confederacy: The Trans-Mississippi South	N	H	H	H	H	N	N	H	N	H
Pat Cleburne, Confederate General: A Definitive Biography	H	H	H	H	H	N	N	H	N	H
Arkansas Confederates in the Western Theater	H	N	H	H	H	N	H	H	N	H
Steele's Retreat from Camden & The Battle of Jenkins Ferry	H	H	H	H	H	N	H	H	H	H
Rebellion and Realignment: Arkansas's Road to Secession	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	N	H
Pea Ridge: Civil War Campaign in the West	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	N	H
The Impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Arkansas	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	N	H
Rugged and Sublime: The Civil War in Arkansas	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
Fields of Blood: The Prairie Grove Campaign	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	N	H
Civil War Arkansas, 1863: The Battle for a State	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	N	H
The Camden Expedition of 1864	N	N	H	H	H	H	H	H	N	N
Invisible Hero: Patrick R. Cleburne	H	N	N	H	H	N	N	H	N	N
"All Cut to Pieces and Gone to Hell"	H	H	H	H	H	H	N	H	N	H
The Die is Cast: Arkansas Goes to War, 1861	H	N	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
Competing Memories: The Legacy of Arkansas's Civil War	N	H	H	H	H	H	N	H	N	H
Soldiers in the Army of Freedom	N	N	H	N	N	H	N	N	N	N
Percentage of titles held	81%	71.4%	90.5%	90.5%	95.2%	71.4%	66.7%	95.2%	14.3%	81%

Note: Titles are in order by publication date.

H = Holdings, N = No Holdings

Appendix B
Checklist Titles

Bearss, E. (1967). *Steele's retreat from Camden & The battle of Jenkins Ferry*. Arkansas Civil War Centennial Commission and Pioneer Press.

Christ, M. (Ed.). (2003) "*All cut to pieces and gone to hell": The Civil War, race relations, and the battle of Poison Spring*. August House.

Christ, M. (2010) *Civil War Arkansas, 1863: The battle for a state*. University of Oklahoma Press.

Christ, M. (Ed.). (2016). *Competing memories: The legacy of Arkansas's Civil War*. Butler Center Books.

Christ, M. (Ed.). (1994). *Rugged and sublime: The Civil War in Arkansas*. University of Arkansas Press.

Christ, M. (Ed.). (2010). *The die is cast: Arkansas goes to war, 1861*. Butler Center Books.

Dougan, M. (1976). *Confederate Arkansas: The people and policies of a frontier state in wartime*. University of Alabama Press.

Duncan, R. (1961). *Reluctant general: The life and times of Albert Pike*. Dutton.

Ferguson, J. (1965). *Arkansas and the Civil War*. Pioneer Press.

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Shea, W. & Hess, E. (1997). *Pea Ridge: Civil War campaign in the West*. University of North Carolina Press.

Stewart, Jr. B. (2009). *Invisible hero: Patrick R. Cleburne*. Mercer University Press.

Spurgeon, I. (2014). *Soldiers in the army of freedom: The 1st Kansas Colored, the Civil War's first African American combat unit*. University of Oklahoma Press.

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