

The Post-Searchlight

Bainbridge, GA • Georgia's First Inland Port

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BC is first with newspaper's upgrades

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READING NEWSPAPER ARCHIVES, such as this 1903 issue of The Searchlight, is faster and easier on the computer at the Bainbridge College Library. Community patrons can research using BC's new digital image system, the first of its kind in Georgia.

Community patrons researching genealogy or articles and photos of **The Post-Searchlight** and its predecessor papers can now do so by computer at Bainbridge College's library. The new digital image system, the first of its kind in Georgia, replaces the former microfilm readers and printers.

The main campus library's new technology became operational Oct. 25 after the database was installed by Stacy White, BC network administrator.

During the more than four-hour process to load more than 500 gigabytes of information, White was assisted by Tammy Clark, system analyst with the BC Office of Information and Instructional Technology, and by Bill Kimbel of Tallahassee, Fla., representative of Office Systems Consultants.

Kimbel trained library staff members Chandra Anderson-Casteel and Michelle Barsom on the use of the new system. They will train the rest of the library staff and assist library patrons using it.

The product, called Digital Reel, was produced by BMI Imaging in California, a leader in secure document and film management solutions for more than 50 years, Kimbel said, noting he has worked with BC Library Director Susan Ralph since February to find a suitable solution after the college's microfilm reader/printers quit working.

"When that happened, the library elected not to purchase a new machine for the antiquated format," Ralph said, noting that meant there was no way to view past **Post-Searchlight** articles.

She added that BC President Dr. Tom Wilkerson was instrumental in assisting the library with the funding to send the microfilm to California to be digitized.

"It is a new process that Office Systems Consultants of Tallahassee presented to us, and was much less expensive than other digitization projects we checked into," Ralph said. "I am so excited that the digital **Post-Searchlight** is available for our patrons," she enthusiastically said.

She and Kimbel worked with Dr. Toby Graham of the Digital Library of Georgia, which is at the University of Georgia. Graham was able to secure better film images for the project than the scratched microfilm BC had been using.

Kimbel noted that Graham is working with the Georgia Newspaper Project to evaluate this system for archives of more than 290 Georgia newspapers, a project Kimbel said would be "unmatched in the U.S."

The BC project covers archived papers from 1869 and involved converting more than 111 rolls of microfilm into the digital format.

The new resource reduces search time by quickly getting to the desired image. It provides options to convert the files into images, to make copies on a printer and to export into a pdf format.

The BC Library's new electronic archives involve point-and-click operations with the computer cursor at the work station that houses the files. A researcher may choose to see an image by selecting the name of the publication, for example **The Post-Searchlight** or the **Southern Georgian**, and view a particular issue by year and month and see individual images of pages.

In addition to simpler operations and easier viewing, the digital system provides the advantages of reduced annual repair, maintenance and replacement costs, and reduced staff time that was required to work with the old technology.