Chronicling Columbia through Digital Archives

Remembering Columbia STS-107

Corrie Marsh, SFA
Columbia Space Shuttle 1981-2003

Named for 1st American vessel to circumnavigate the Earth

27 missions over two decades

February 1, 2003 destruction 16 min before touchdown (breach in TPS on left wing)

More than 25,000 recovery searchers
Jeff Williams, then student in SAF Forestry Research Institute GIS (now GIS Lab director)

All maps and posters were produced and donated by Jeff and dedicated to the 7 lost astronauts

http://history.nasa.gov/columbia
Williams’ Chronicle of Search and Recovery Events

http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/spatialsci/3
Map produced and shown to the international press on Feb 3rd by FRI Director, Dr. Kroll and Nacogdoches County Sheriff Thomas Kerss

First of 1000’s of search and recovery maps produced by the by the FRI GIS Lab for NASA, FBI, NTSB, FEMA and local law enforcement
Jeff determined the local debris field and highest density areas over 14 days. GIS produced locator maps for Nacogdoches and San Augustine Counties.
Space Imaging’s IKONOS satellite image showing debris in forest cover
East Texas Research Center’s Digital Archives

Space Shuttle Columbia Disaster and Recovery

About this collection
On February 1, 2003, the Space Shuttle Columbia disintegrated as it re-entered the Earth's atmosphere. As it traveled across the United States from west to east en route to the John F. Kennedy Space Center in Florida, the shuttle began breaking up due to damage sustained during takeoff. Seven astronauts, including an Air Force colonel, lost their lives on Columbia’s 28th and final mission. Much of the debris landed in East Texas and Louisiana, resulting in a long recovery effort by government officials, military units and volunteers.

Donation of Materials
This collection is the result of many contributors who donated their time and energy into the project. Contributors include those who participated in the oral histories conducted by the East Texas Research Center, the STA Geography and Forestry Departments which created detailed maps of the debris fields, volunteers who photographed the recovery efforts and the school children who through art interpreted the tragedy that landed in their own backyards. Material collected in 2003 by Connie Hodges, Cynthia Keody, Shanna Guillory, and Jerry McShane and 2012 by Jennifer Brandalo.

Project Information
The Shuttle Columbia exhibit was a collaborative project between the East Texas Research Center and the Center for Digital Scholarship. Mark Musquiz created the online exhibit during the Fall 2012 semester.

Exhibit Creator Mark Musquiz, Graduate Student,
Website Designer Dillon Wacherman, Digital Archivist
Editor Linda Reynolds, Director, East Texas Research Center

The Collection
Maps
The items in this collection detail the Columbia tragedy and its impact on the East Texas region. It includes oral histories, written testimonies of witnesses and volunteers, mappings of the debris field, photographs and videos of the recovery efforts.
Browse Maps

Oral Histories
Included in the Columbia are the accounts of persons who were affected by the disaster or who helped in the recovery efforts. Three of these oral histories are presented in the collection.
Browse Oral Histories

Children's Art

Created in 2013 by intern Mark Musquiz
Jeff was one of several people to provide oral histories of their experience.
Local School Children’s Art Depicting Their Understanding of the Tragedy
Debris Density Topographical Mapping
Aluminum tank found 8 years later in 2011 during a drought at Lake Nacogdoches
Space Craft Reconstruction and Accident Investigation

Courtesy Jeff Williams
The Columbia

In an age when space flight has come to seem almost routine, it is easy to overlook the dangers of travel by rocket, and the difficulties of navigating the fierce outer atmosphere of the Earth. These astronauts knew the dangers, and they faced them willingly, knowing they had a high and noble purpose in life.

Because of their courage and daring and idealism, we will miss them all the more.

George W. Bush
February 1, 2003
Thank you!
cmarsh12@gmail.com