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### William Carey center available on Net

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August 16, 2001

Myron Noonkester and Bennie Crockett admit they've always been fascinated by William Carey. Called the father of modern missions, Carey is something of an enigma, according to Noonkester, because information about him is difficult to come by.

However, the two men searched the Internet last July and began acquiring materials related to William Carey. That effort has resulted in the Center for Study of the Life and Work of William Carey, accessible through the Internet.

"When this project was conceived last summer," Noonkester explained, "we had no idea where it would take us."

"A lot of information has not been dealt with effectively," Crockett added. "We want to make it available for anyone interested in studying William Carey. So far, we've made quite a few of the current resources available on the Web site."

Noonkester is professor of history and interim dean of the School of Arts, Humanities and Sciences at William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Miss., and the son of former William Carey College president J. Ralph Noonkester. Crockett is professor of religion and philosophy and vice president of institutional effectiveness and planning.

The Web site was officially announced in March and contains many of the resources obtained for the center. About 60 percent of the material has been acquired through the Internet. Other information has been donated or bought through bookstores.

So far, acquisitions include rare books, maps, articles, portraits and artifacts. "We decided to put what we have up on the Web," Noonkester said. "Most institutions are very proprietary about their holdings. We want to democratize the study of William Carey."

William Carey was a cobbler and a minister in England before going to India as a missionary. He died there in 1834.

"We'll probably never acquire the materials related to Carey's life in England," he continued. "They're very protective about him there. However, we do believe we can put together a fairly large amount of information about Carey's life in India."

Noonkester and Crockett agree that acquiring information has been very time-consuming and demanding, between keeping track of on-line auctions, setting up the Web site and scanning the documents themselves to upload.

"Since we began the project," Crockett admitted, "it's taken on a momentum that surprised both of us."

Internet users from all over the world have logged on to the site since it became available. Recently, the Asian Studies Monitor gave it a 5-Star "Essential" rating, the highest they award. The Web site is located at <http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/index2.html>.

In the future, the center will be housed on the second floor of William Carey College's new learning resources center, where visitors will be able to view items on display. The building currently is in the planning stages of development.

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