PRODUCTION NOTE

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library
Special Collections in the Twenty-first Century

Barbara M. Jones

Issue Editor
Library Trends, a quarterly thematic journal, focuses on current trends in all areas of library practice. Each issue addresses a single theme in depth, exploring topics of interest primarily to practicing librarians and information scientists and secondarily to educators and students.

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We encourage our readers to submit ideas for future Library Trends themes; issue topics are developed through recommendations from members of the Publications Committee and from reader suggestions. We also encourage readers to volunteer to be issue editors or to suggest others who may be willing to be issue editors.

The style and tone of the journal is formal rather than journalistic or popular. Library Trends reviews the literature, summarizes current practice and thinking, and evaluates new directions in library practice. Papers must represent original work. Extensive updates of previously published papers are acceptable, but revisions or adaptations of published work are not sought. Although Library Trends is not formally peer-reviewed, guest editors invite articles for submission which are then critically reviewed by both the guest editor and journal editor. Unsolicited articles are not accepted.

An issue editor proposes the theme and scope of a new issue, draws up a list of prospective authors and article topics, and provides short annotations of each article's scope or else gives a statement of philosophy guiding the issue's development. Please send your ideas, inquiries, or prospectus to F. W. Lancaster, Editor, GSLIS Publications Office, 501 E. Daniel Street, Champaign, IL 61820-6211.
Special Collections in the Twenty-first Century

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University of Illinois
Graduate School of
Library and Information Science
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Introduction

BARBARA M. JONES

I was pleased to accept F. W. Lancaster's invitation to add to the legacy of Michele Cloonan's 1987 Library Trends issue, "Recent Trends in Rare Book Librarianship," with a 2003 version, "Special Collections in the Twenty-First Century." Professor Cloonan and Dr. Sidney Berger graciously agreed to write a reflective, transitional piece for this issue. I will be happy to do the honors for my successor.

Professor Lancaster was apparently intrigued by my August 2000 American Libraries article, coauthored with Paul Saenger, about the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC)/Newberry Library joint acquisitions program for medieval manuscripts. I remember how pleased I was at the time to enter into such an agreement. It felt innovative but sensible, and included much of what I find "new" about the special collections field at the beginning of the twenty-first century. We managed to craft this agreement—between a private independent research library and a huge, bureaucratic public university—and agree on a means to transport the fully insured manuscripts back and forth securely. These three shared manuscripts benefit the book history programs at the Newberry and the medieval studies program at UIUC. Students have already embarked on detailed studies of these manuscripts. An April 2000 joint reception at the Newberry Library to celebrate this collaboration was attended by Chicago-area UIUC alumni. Dr. Saenger, the architect of this innovative program, has brought the manuscripts to campus on two occasions, to make them available for an international medieval studies conference and to lecture on early Biblical manuscripts and concordances. Happily, Dr. Saenger agreed to describe the Newberry program more fully for this issue. Aside from the fact that these manuscripts are obviously a rich addition to our collection, they
are being used—for traditional scholarship, for exhibits, and for public programs to inspire our alumni to support our library’s mission.

The philosophy of resource-sharing inherent in such agreements has the potential to build bridges and influence the perceptions of library colleagues in other research library units. Special collections, too, can control acquisitions costs by implementing our own version of interlibrary loan. While I believe that special collections need to remain “special,” twenty-first-century fiscal and political realities mandate that they be integral to the larger institution. After all, many special collections materials don’t start out as “rare,” but as part of the general collections. One envisions a continuum of books, steadily moving from the central stacks to special collections as they deteriorate physically, become scarce, or are subject to theft or vandalism. More than ever, we are part of the whole.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AS AN INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Special collections libraries in many institutions still need to justify their existence to administrators, legislators, and donors, not to mention other library colleagues. We can no longer assume—if we ever could—that every research library can afford the stewardship and time-intensive labor required by special collections. Acquiring the rare book, manuscript, or archival collection is only the first step; following is storage, conservation, security monitoring, and processing. That is why the Association of Research Libraries’ statement, “Research Libraries and the Commitment to Special Collections,” endorsed by the ARL Board of Directors in 2003, is so important; it underscores the tremendous institutional responsibility related to such collections. The catalysts for renewed focus on special collections have been the “Building on Strength: Developing an ARL Agenda for Special Collections” conference at Brown University on 27–29 June 2001 and the energetic Task Force on Special Collections. Joe Hewitt and Judith Panitch’s article on the ARL project describes our ongoing efforts and the optimism that we will be able to realize significant changes.

INFORMATION AS CULTURAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ARTIFACT

One of the most intellectually exciting trends is the current revival of interest in the history of the book. This field, of course, is far from new; but it has been embraced by critical theorists and social historians in such a way that the traditional descriptive bibliographical analysis can be embedded in historical and cultural context. On my campus, the revived interest in book history has led to a multidisciplinary faculty and graduate student reading group: “The Book as Artifact in the Twenty-First Century,” funded by the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities. Similarly, SHARP (The Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing) pre-
sents cutting-edge and wide-ranging research at extremely popular interna-
tional conferences. Faculty, librarians, and students can deepen their
knowledge of book history at summer programs at the American Antiquar-
ian Society, Rare Book School at the University of Virginia, the new pro-
gram at UIUC, and many others. As Joanne D. Chaison’s article demon-
strates, “‘Everything Old is New Again’” as scholars mine old research
collections and discover new synergies for emerging academic fields.

Underlying the history of the book is the concept of “information as
artifact,” which has made us reflect on the relative importance and nature
of the “real thing.” Abby Smith’s intelligent and provocative article, “Au-
thenticity and Affect: When is a Watch not a Watch?” is a must-read.

UIUC’s 10 millionth volume celebration will take place in Fall 2004.
Each millionth milestone has been marked by the donation of a rare book
by a Library Friend. This year will be no different, but the library is creat-
ing the “10,000,001 Book,” designed by Jennifer E. Hain and authored by
campus library-lovers who want to contribute. It will be a true reflection of
the early twenty-first-century representation of “information as artifact,”
because it will include a CD!

THE DIVERSE COMMUNITY OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS LIBRARIES

Susan M. Allen’s “Special Collections Outside the Ivory Tower” high-
lights the extraordinary riches housed in independent research libraries.
The past twenty years has brought increased collaboration among differ-
ent types of libraries on acquisitions, digital projects, exhibitions, and pres-
ervation initiatives. While Dr. Allen is correct in her assessment of indepen-
dent research libraries being particularly vulnerable to financial exigencies,
the “up” side is that these libraries can be very organizationally agile and
creative and can get things accomplished quickly. This is clear from Paul
Saenger’s organization of the Newberry Library’s medieval manuscripts
project and from Joanne D. Chaison’s description of the American Anti-
quarian Society as a “research spa.”

TECHNOLOGY

The Berger-Cloonan article demonstrates that special collections are,
arguably, the most technology-intensive areas of libraries. Abby Smith’s
article explores the philosophical impact of digital projects. John F. Dean’s
article provides much-needed guidance on standards for digital imaging,
so that these records can be shared and reflect the contributing institu-
tion’s dedication to quality control of reproductions. He also clarifies the
much-debated issue of whether digital imaging can be construed as “con-
servation” of the original artifact. The next issue of Library Trends on this
topic should include examples of how digital projects have stood the test
of time. By then, there should also be (we hope!) clarification on the com-
plex intellectual property issues associated with digital imaging, the Web, and the Internet.

SINGING FOR OUR SUPPER

The first article I invited was Lisa Browar’s and Samuel A. Streit’s article on fund-raising. Nobody told us in library school in 1977 (and I went to a good one!) that we would be spending so much of our time on fund-raising and donor and public relations. Special collections libraries are increasingly expected to depend on endowed funds for acquisitions and staffing, and this takes time. And this time commitment will only increase, as donors envision special collections libraries as a worthy recipient of their generosity and deeds of gift are monitored and redrafted carefully in an increasingly litigious society. Librarians entering the special collections field in the twenty-first century must understand that their job will require lots of “people skills.” I will never forget supervising the movers hauling away dozens of boxes from the garage of a donor, who watched and commented, “I feel as if my guts are being torn out.” At the same time, of course, one meets some of the most interesting people in the world. I am still searching for a way to publish the wonderful stories shared among special collections librarians about fund-raising and donor adventures and misadventures. It would be a “best-seller,” at least among librarians. The stumbling block is the confidentiality and sensitivity surrounding all our negotiations and relationships.

Special collections librarians must also be prepared to negotiate with development officers who are understandably eager to bring in gifts in order to cultivate alumni and other potential big donors, even if these gifts do not fit institutional collecting parameters. There are a lot of PowerPoint presentations to local service clubs and interviews with the press. All this, of course, can yield some unexpectedly wonderful financial support.

THE TEACHING MISSION OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS LIBRARIES

I hope that the next Library Trends issue on special collections will include an article on teaching with primary resources. Based on the presentations at the 2002 Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) preconference in Atlanta, more and more of us are collaborating with teaching faculty to incorporate rare books, manuscripts, and archives into student research and coursework. The president of the University of Illinois Foundation stopped in the other day and saw a class interacting with rare treasures in the history of architecture. This lively class will be included in the video presentation for donors during Foundation Weekend. In another instance, we team-taught with a history professor a seminar on the Spanish Civil War. The students spent the last part of the semester in the library using Abraham Lincoln Brigade manuscript correspondence for their research
papers. And, most special collections libraries now include K–12 and Elder-hostel participants in their teaching and public service mission. This will only increase as we continue to build digital collections. As one RBMS/Atlanta audience member remarked to a presenter of a high-school teaching project: “It is so wonderful to see this happening in our field. Twenty years ago you would have been laughed out of the room.” It is crucial that we teach new generations the concept of stewardship of cultural resources. Special collections librarians should also participate in their library’s information literacy program and become more aware of teaching methodology and ways to measure effectiveness and learning outcomes.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICE

An essential accompaniment to special collections teaching is the reference and public service mission. Daniel Traister’s “Public Services and Outreach in Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Libraries” is a comprehensive survey of the wide range of activities in a twenty-first-century special collections library. It is refreshingly candid and based on many years of professional experience.

Dr. Traister reminds us that many potential patrons are intimidated by special collections libraries. Despite the fact that the UIUC Rare Book and Special Collections Library has always been open to the public, alumni from twenty or so years ago report that they always assumed they were prohibited from using the collections. We need to attract a new generation of scholars to our collections. Our colleagues in the performing arts call this “audience development,” as they try to build a new audience for classical music and symphony orchestras.

GLOBAL REACH

The recent news of the destruction of Iraq’s National Museum and the National Library of Iraq in the aftermath of the war is but one instance of how special collections around the world are increasingly a concern for all special collections professionals. This issue contains two papers from librarians with considerable experience in the international arena. Alice Prochaska, the chair of the IFLA Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, provides here an invaluable background on recent trends in international special collections librarianship. And Ekaterina Genieva, director general of the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature, has contributed an important assessment of the often painful and controversial issue of book collections that have been displaced during times of war and used as “war booty” and of the emotional issues surrounding “repatriation” of materials. The United States press has covered the repatriation problems in the art world, but in fact the same legal issues arise in libraries as well. This problem begs for more attention and scholarly research, and I hope that Dr. Genieva’s article will inspire some of you to pursue it.
Hidden Collections: Unprocessed Backlogs in Our Nation’s Special Collections Libraries

The Brown conference participants’ consensus was that uncataloged backlogs are the most urgent special collections problem. The backlogs will be thus addressed in a 2002–03 white paper, “Hidden Collections, Scholarly Barriers,” available on the ARL Web site, and they were the subject of a conference at the Library of Congress (LC) in September 2003. Uncataloged backlogs are a security threat and a barrier to comprehensive coverage of a scholarly topic. The LC conference planners expect an action plan to emerge, involving reallocation of institutional resources, creativity and flexibility in applying cataloging rules, and external funding.

The year 2003 brought another key event in the special collections world: The Yale Conference to Revise the Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (DCRM). In March, Yale University and the Beinecke Library hosted an invitational twenty-five-person conference to update the DCRB (Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Books) rules, and to enhance the guidelines for “collection-level records” as a strategy for attacking backlogs more efficiently. Included in this issue is conference organizer Deborah J. Leslie’s report of this historic meeting.

Conservation and Preservation

Jennifer E. Hain has provided a concise, general overview of twenty-first-century trends in conservation and preservation. Then Paula De Stefano’s article targets one of the most challenging formats for the twenty-first century: film. I think that a great deal of energy and resources will need to be focused on what one of my colleagues calls the “funny formats”—including tape and film—that are often set aside and forgotten in the backlog of materials we don’t have the time, money, or expertise to preserve. John F. Dean offers a helpful background on the complex environment of digital preservation.

Space

There is never enough of it, and it now needs to be reconfigured not only to hold more books but also to house a variety of activities: group study, exhibitions, lectures, receptions, digital project preparation, processing, and conservation. Donald G. Kelsey’s welcome article tells the story of the University of Minnesota’s much-touted storage facility that also created a distinguished special collections space, the Elmer L. Andersen Library. Kelsey is much too modest about this important project. The strategy of tying special collections to storage, and getting the Minnesota legislature to pay for it, was brilliant and a great gift to the people of Minnesota, despite some environmental and political problems.
FOR THE NEXT ISSUE—SOON, I HOPE

Not everything is covered in this issue of *Library Trends*. I am particularly sorry there isn't an article on the development of educational opportunities for special collections librarianship. I taped Terry Belanger one afternoon last summer at Rare Book School, intending to transcribe his remarks about his role in developing education for rare books and special collections librarians over the past thirty years. I realized I was not up to the task at this point. We will need to wait for Professor Belanger's own account. In the meantime, I am delighted that he agreed to write the afterword to this issue.

We need an article on exhibits, as they are an increasingly important part of public relations. I think that good design principles are crucial, and many of us need guidance on how to attain or hire this expertise.

As mentioned earlier, we need an article on teaching using rare books and primary resources.

We need an article on security. Miles Harvey's book *The Island of Lost Maps*, makes us all painfully aware of how easy it is for thieves to decimate library collections.

We need an update from ARL's Task Force on Special Collections—especially to see if their "Hidden Collections" initiatives will make a dent in research library cataloging backlogs.

As mentioned previously, legal and intellectual property issues, including ethics and intellectual freedom, will be a major complexity for the special collections profession.

Many special collections libraries have close relations to museums, art galleries, and performing arts centers. The next issue should highlight collaborations with other cultural institutions to create joint programming.

As the Berger-Cloonan article points out, researchers today are probably using more manuscript and archival materials than rare books. And, catalogers looking for solutions to backlogs are turning to archival principles for handling printed materials. The next issue should include more about archives as an integral part of the special collections endeavor.

Thank you, authors and contributors. I want to say I asked some of the best and the brightest, who are also the busiest, and yet they said "yes." I am so gratified. I also remember fondly a "power" lunch at Berkeley's RBMS preconference with Dan Traister, Sam Streit, and Lisa Browar to help shape and plan this issue. Thanks, too, to Marlo Welshons on the *Library Trends* staff, for all her encouragement, patience, and cheerful assistance.

As we face a decade of increasing fiscal and professional challenge, let's try to cherish the rewards and fun times of being a special collections librarian. Remember the awestruck sixth-grader looking at a medieval manuscript in an exhibit case and whispering, "Is that real gold on those pages?" The freshman running out of the classroom for a Kleenex because viewing
Shakespeare’s First Folio “has changed my life.” The seasoned scholar jumping up and down in the reading room because he has just found a manuscript fragment matching one in a Viennese library. A television crew taking over the library for several days to film “The Song and the Slogan,” a documentary about Carl Sandburg (even if we did trip over cords). And please collect these stories for me, because one of these days I would like to include them in an unabashedly optimistic book about being a special collections librarian.
The Continuing Development of Special Collections Librarianship

MICHÈLE V. CLOONAN AND SIDNEY E. BERGER

ABSTRACT

This essay introduces the overall subject of the present issue of Library Trends and puts into a contemporary and historical context all the pieces which follow. The authors look at the current world of special collections, showing how it has evolved and how, in many ways, issues of the past are still with us. Libraries change, in all of their capacities and departments. Special collections and archives have always presented specific challenges to those in charge of them. Those concerns have changed in many ways, but they have not disappeared. And new challenges and initiatives, new technologies, and new ways of configuring the infrastructure of the institutions which house the collections bring special collections librarians and archivists the need to stay current with the world of information management.

In 1957 Library Trends devoted an issue to Rare Book Librarianship. Thirty years later Michèle Cloonan edited another issue on the same broad topic. Sidney Berger’s opening essay gave an overview of the field (Berger, 1987). This was followed by a section on “Advances in Scientific Investigation and Automation,” presenting six pieces on the impact of science on books and manuscripts, scientific equipment, the proton milliprobe and its use in analyzing early printed books, paper analysis, and the need for standards in the burgeoning (though pre-Internet) electronic environment. That environment truly did burgeon, as we shall mention later. The third section of the 1987 issue focused on practices in rare book librarianship, followed by two sections on funding and preservation, respectively.

While most of the issues raised in that volume are still current, the grow-
ing complexity of the world—and of course the world of libraries and archives—has made it desirable to revisit the whole issue of Rare Book Librarianship with an eye to developments in the profession since that 1987 Library Trends issue. Indeed, today we tend to think more broadly of special collections since archival materials are now sometimes even more frequently consulted than their “book brethren.” And, there seems to be an increasing interest in primary materials by a wider audience than the rare book world. It is probably no exaggeration to say that the profession has changed more in the last sixteen years than it did between the 1957 publication and the 1987 one.

One of the areas of recent change in the profession has to do with the clientele who use our collections. With ever-tightening budgets and the constant suspicion of many who do not understand the role of rare books and special collections in libraries, we must “justify our existence” by proving that the collections are being used for scholarly and other purposes. By “other” we mean that collections have often been used for impressing donors and garnering publicity. Witness the many articles we continue to see in the popular press and in our own scholarly publications about the acquisition of or discoveries in our important collections. But increasingly, we are seeing a wider audience for our activities. K–12 teachers, for instance, are bringing their students to our departments and exhibits. New databases and finding aids mounted on the Internet are making our collections “universally accessible,” and are thus bringing increased research inquiries from a worldwide audience. And the nature of our manuscript holdings makes them ideal testing grounds for new applications. The EAD/California Digital Library¹ and similar projects at Cornell² and MIT³ are cases in point. Scholars running those projects are testing the limits of current digital technology, and in so doing are making a vast amount of information—even digitized versions of unique primary materials—available. There are many technological advances that we must know about. Even if we cannot control or manipulate these advancements ourselves, we must know what they are capable of doing and how to direct computer and other information specialists to make them useful to us.

Special collections have thus seen a change in the way money for our field is being allocated. There seems to be a smaller percentage of it for buying books and manuscripts and other media and more for electronic materials. Such a shift has made us try to use our resources with greater care and circumspection. Of course, it has also increased the amount of materials we now have at our disposal (the new digital stuff), increased the use of the collections (as we indicated), and thus required us to seek further education to enable us to handle these new technologies.

The new technologies, further, have demanded that institutions rethink their hierarchies and personnel structures. Systems departments and digital specialists are now more prominent in our institutions, requiring realign-
ments in human resources and reallocations of funds. These changes will affect us physically and even psychologically as we must adapt to new kinds of colleagues and new configurations of our space. All this must be accomplished while trying to carry out “business as usual”: the normal tasks and responsibilities that have been our way of operating for decades.

Inevitably, as our libraries use up their space, several issues have arisen (or reemerged). The first is the old one of finding new space. We must continue to weed collections, but now with a new public awareness that has been engendered by some prominent cases in which libraries have been accused of doing so with careless abandon. We must continue to “fight” for space in libraries and archives that need primarily to serve students and faculty at the general-collection level.

Second, with the construction of new buildings, we must be involved in the architectural planning, with a fresh understanding of the new kinds of space (amount and configurations) that we will need because of the new technologies we are incorporating into our operations. And when off-site storage facilities are constructed, we must continue to fight for secure, environmentally sound spaces.

Third, there is the major issue of rights management for intellectual property, particularly complex with materials that are digitized or born digital and then made available over the Web.

Fourth, institutions are looking seriously to—and adopting—a team-operation style. How the teams are configured, who is on each team, who manages the teams (from within and from above), and whether this conversion will prove to be better than the older configuration are at issue. Related to this, with some library reconfigurations, is the development of information commons in which special collections departments enhance the commons. The concept behind the commons is to provide “a seamless continuum of patron service from planning and research through presentation into final product” (Bailey & Tierney, 2002, p. 284).

Fifth, there is an emerging world of experiential, dynamic, and interactive records that will soon be under the aegis of our libraries and archives. The key issue here is preservation: Is it preservable? Who will be responsible for data storage? data structure? information integrity? object integrity? Who will pay for its preservation? We have yet to adopt reliable strategies for preserving and maintaining any digital materials.

Sixth, and clearly related to the preservation issue, is the area of funding. Our libraries and archives, with their blend of the old and the new, are costing more and more to run. Creating, handling, and preserving electronic materials alone can be tremendously expensive, and this is only one new area of concern. Where will the money come from to allow us to continue to collect and provide access to our collections?

Seventh, as Victoria Steele at UCLA notes, with the new technologies that allow us to scan images and get them out onto the Web, there is an
increasing opportunity to raise funds for our departments. But we have seen donors of visual materials (especially photographs) expect us to digitize their collections' images and collect royalties for them. Our special collections want to receive important donations, but they do not want to become businesses for the benefit of our donors.

Though not a central concern, there is also the new awareness of terrorism in the world, and we must therefore have a heightened sense for the security of our collections. Most of us have been particularly concerned about security in general, but for many this has become an even keener concern. There is not only the ongoing threat of theft and mutilation, which have been part of keepers' concerns for centuries. New technologies have engendered a new race of thieves and mutilators, able to pierce our firewalls, steal our images, and deface our electronic databases.

Additionally, there have been advances in preservation theories and conservation materials and techniques, along with the complex issue of preservation of digital materials, which are becoming an increasing part of our holdings. One of our key responsibilities—related to our primary directive of making our materials accessible—is to know as much as we can about the latest developments in conservation and preservation for a very broad range of holdings. Continuing education and attendance at conferences and symposia about digital preservation cost money and take time—neither of which we have in abundance. (We recall getting our first computers at work and being told that they would save us time and make us more efficient. What we were not told was that they would increase administrators' expectations of what we must accomplish, and they would certainly increase our workload.)

As the articles in this volume attest, old issues are joined by new areas of concern: fund-raising; moving image preservation; “displaced book collections”; the Association of Research Libraries’ continuing efforts to identify key special collections issues, which include “global resources,” “archiving of electronic resources, defining special collections and their functions, particularly with respect to the missions of their host institutions, costs of serials, “accountability and performance measures in many universities,” and “competing priorities in the digital environment”; new library construction in tight financial times; special collections from an international perspective; collection development; authenticity and the idiosyncratic interpretation of items in a special collections library; and public service and outreach. Most of these are just new twists on old themes. The emphasis for us is that even though the world of special collections has evolved remarkably in this electronic age, the essays selected for this issue of Library Trends emphasize the fact that much has stayed the same. We must continue to grapple with problems we have seen for over a century.

However, as we have suggested, there is a new spotlight on special collections created by the Internet, which has brought us new users. The chal-
The challenge is to marshal this recent attention into new resources and to anticipate the next stage of our development as a field.

We face increased responsibilities, burgeoning clientele and holdings, and new technologies to master, while acquiring no new permanent funding or staffs. There are increasing needs to raise funds or to seek donations of collections; to protect our holdings; and to come to grips with massive configurational changes in our intellectual and physical environments.

In 1987 Cloonan described the changes from 1957 as a tsunami. The present wave—the coming of the electronic age—is still upon us and shows no sign of receding. The aftershock waves bring in new technological advancements that librarians and archivists must embrace. The world of special collections continues to change rapidly. In it there is no “Same ol’, same ol’” or “Business as usual.” The only constant in the field is change, and that’s why we love it so much.

NOTES
1. See http://www.cdlib.org/.
2. See http://cornell.nsdl.org/.
4. The article by Ekaterina Genieva talks about “cultural valuables displaced as a result of wars.”
5. See the essay by Joe A. Hewitt and Judith M. Panitch, who go on to cover a wide range of issues.
6. The article by Donald G. Kelsey discusses the planning, funding, engineering, designing, and construction of a new library at the University of Minnesota.

REFERENCES
"Everything Old Is New Again": Research Collections at the American Antiquarian Society

JOANNE D. CHAISON

ABSTRACT

The American Antiquarian Society (AAS), founded in 1812, is the nation's oldest historical organization. Its library of books, serials, manuscripts, and graphic arts extends from the colonial period through the late nineteenth century. Generations of scholars, graduate students, bibliographers, and independent researchers have studied at the library, "under its generous dome." This article explores elements of the institution's history, the evolution of its collections, and the relationship between its staff and readers that make it a leading humanities research center. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the collections, carefully and aggressively acquired for two centuries, are extraordinarily supportive for new trends in research. Comments offered by several recent scholars working in a variety of fresh historical, literary, and interdisciplinary projects illustrate how the depth and breadth of AAS collections proved indispensible for their research. Sometimes referred to as "the stuff of everyday life," AAS resources not only support new trends in research, but the expansive range of primary documents has enabled the institution to foster a new area of study—the history of the book. An overview of its Program in the History of the Book in American Culture provides examples of the AAS leadership role in this academic discipline.

The American Antiquarian Society (AAS), the oldest national historical organization in the United States, has a research library containing the most accessible collection of materials printed from the colonial period through the Civil War and Reconstruction. An international community of researchers uses these resources for their literary, historical, cultural, ge-
nealogical, bibliographical, and artistic projects. In their work, they have explored and expanded the frontiers of scholarship by probing the well-known and unexpected wealth of sources within the Society’s collections. Some have affectionately described their experiences in such glowing terms as “research brigadoon” and “research spa.” This article will discuss what makes AAS a premier research center for the humanities and how its collections and programs support new trends in scholarship.

The Evolution of the Institution and Collections

The history of AAS begins with one person—Isaiah Thomas (1749–1831). As a young boy, Thomas was apprenticed to Boston printer Zechariah Fowle (1724–1776), with whom he labored from 1755 to 1765. It was in Fowle’s print shop that Thomas set his first type from a copy of a broadside ballad, *The Lawyer’s Pedigree*. Inspired in the ways of printing from an early age, Thomas established the most influential printing and publishing business in the country following the American Revolution. His businesses in the young nation included newspapers, a paper mill, a bindery, and bookstores, making him the leading printer, publisher, and bookseller of his generation (Whitehill, 1962).

Thomas left his legacy in 1812 when he founded the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts. Filled with the patriotic spirit of the newly independent country, he sought to collect and preserve “every variety of book, pamphlet and manuscript that might be valuable in illustrating any and all parts of American history” (Whitehill, 1962, pp. 71–72). He devoted his life to collecting, scholarship, and philanthropy. Thomas gave generous gifts to the Society, including his private collection of 8,000 books that he had personally cataloged on 217 manuscript pages, and more than $20,000 for its first library building. He was relentless in his drive to acquire materials. Although he loved finely bound books, he was just as comfortable printing or acquiring inexpensive items, “the stuff of everyday life”—newspapers, children’s books, travel literature, almanacs, broadsides, political tracts, sermons, primers, etiquette manuals, and government documents, to name but a few. Among the volumes he gave to the Society are such rarities as the first book printed in British North America, commonly known as the *Bay Psalm Book* (1640); John Eliot’s *Indian Bible* (1663), translated into the Algonquian language; and the first American edition of *Mother Goose’s Melody* (1786). Of special significance for the early American book trades, he deposited his private and business correspondence, diaries, and legal documents, even his apprenticeship indenture to Zechariah Fowle.

Thomas also gave the Society a collection of hastily printed broadside ballads that he purchased in bulk from a Boston printer in 1813, making him the first broadside ballad collector in the United States. These rare sheets span the period from the Revolutionary era through the early part
of the War of 1812. In presenting this collection to the Society, Thomas’s
inscription speaks volumes about his interest in print in every form: “Songs,
Ballads, &c. In Three Volumes. Purchased from a Ballad Printer and Sell-
er in Boston, 1813. Bound up for Preservation, to shew what articles of this
kind are in vogue with the Vulgar at this time, 1814. N.B. Songs and com-
mon Ballads are not so well printed at this time as they [were] 70 years ago,
in Boston. Presented to the Society by Isaiah Thomas. August, 1814.”

By the time of Thomas’s death in 1831, the Society had been infused
with his spirit to acquire, preserve, and make accessible the printed record
of the United States. Under the stewardship of subsequent librarians, the
collections expanded in every conceivable direction. Christopher Colum-
bus Baldwin (1800–1835) added substantially to the collections during his
tenure as the third librarian from 1827 to 1835. An energetic bibliophile,
Baldwin enthusiastically recorded his acquisition conquests throughout his
diary. Perhaps the most fascinating entries deal with the private library of
Thomas Wallcut (1758–1840) of Boston. In the morning of 2 August
1834, Baldwin arrived in Boston and went to the garret on India Street
where Wallcut’s collection was stored. He spent five days in a space of op-
pressive heat but filled with countless books and pamphlets. He wrote of
the treasures that surrounded him in that fourth-floor oil store:

They were in trunks, bureaus, and chests, baskets, tea chests and old
drawers, and presented a very odd appearance. . . . Mr. Wallcut told me
that I might take all the pamphlets and newspapers I could find and
all the books that treated of American history. . . . Everything was cov-
ered with venerable dust, and as I was under a slated roof and the ther-
mometer at ninety-three, I had a plenty hot time of it. . . . The value of
the rarities I found there, however, soon made me forget the heat, and
I have never seen such happy moments. . . . Great numbers of the pro-
ductions of our early authors were turned up at every turn . . . . (Bald-
win, 1901, pp. 317–321)

On the fifth day of Baldwin’s stunning acquisition, he filled a wagon with
nearly 4,500 pounds of books, pamphlets, and newspapers and returned to
Worcester. Today, the Wallcut imprints are one of the most important col-
lections of Americana acquired by the Society in the nineteenth century.

Successors of Thomas and Baldwin continued the drive to acquire
materials. They also made significant contributions to scholarship, emulat-
ing Thomas’s History of Printing in America, a seminal reference work for the
eyearly history of printing and typography (Thomas, 1810). For example,
Clarence Brigham, a far-sighted leader from 1908 to 1959, expanded the
collections of the Society dramatically. In a single year, he obtained more
than 7,000 imprints issued before 1821. His ability to deepen areas of the
collection was legendary. When such mundane material as city directories,
nineteenth-century novels, almanacs, or local histories became available,
he would buy the largest collection on the market, usually at a time when
interest in that field was low. Clifford Shipton, a consummate scholar-librarian at AAS for twenty years, said that Brigham’s “genius in selecting fields which were to become popular for collectors was amazing. . . . He recognized fields of potential source material before most of the professionals and was the first to collect them.” (Shipton, 1963, pp. 330, 336). Newspapers were among Brigham’s great interests, and he collected them “with a vengeance.” In 1947, after thirty-four years of research, his monumental bibliography, *The History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690–1820*, was published, and remains an indispensable resource, among his many other significant publications (Brigham, 1947).

Marcus A. McCorison, referred to as the “Grand Acquisitor” by the staff and book collectors alike, retired in 1992 after thirty-two years of distinguished leadership as AAS librarian, director, and president. During his tenure, he acquired over 150,000 items, ranging from a single broadside or letter to a run of hundreds of issues of a single newspaper. His legacy lies in the great quantities of materials he acquired from the nineteenth century, effectively balancing the holdings of the colonial and Revolutionary era with significant additions to the antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction eras. Moreover, he greatly improved access to AAS holdings through the creation of a machine-readable cataloging system. One of his most decisive and enduring achievements was the establishment of a fellowship program in 1972, which effectively placed AAS in national ranking for humanities scholarship (Hench, 1992).

Currently, Nancy H. Burkett holds the endowed position of the Marcus A. McCorison Librarian. While her scholarly interests lie in the areas of African American studies and women’s history, she strives to acquire an exemplar of everything printed through 1876 for the institution. Her collection development statement for 2002 echoes the mission pronounced by Isaiah Thomas 190 years earlier:

> The mission of the Society—to build a premier research library and to make collections available to those who seek to learn about and to interpret the past—has remained constant throughout our history. Isaiah Thomas set us on a course from which we have not deviated: to focus on the history of print culture in North America. We collect imprints not only because they are carriers of ideas, but also because they are cultural artifacts. We are convinced that the development of printing throughout North America is one of the principal agents through which American culture developed. (Burkett, 2002).

At the start of the twenty-first century, the AAS library held approximately 700,000 printed volumes, including two-thirds of all imprints issued before 1821; 15,000 titles of American and Canadian newspapers; and 1,400 manuscript collections ranging from family papers, letters, and diaries, to the records, ledgers, and account books of early American printing and publishing houses. The Society’s outstanding collection of graphic arts mate-
rial includes broadsides, lithographs, engravings, sheet music, maps, and scores of ephemera (e.g., trade cards, bill heads, binders’ tickets, bookplates, colonial currency, and stereographs). The collections offer unparalleled opportunities to study American culture and society from the earliest period of settlement through the nineteenth century.

**Institutional Culture**

The AAS staff are widely recognized as strong supporters of historical researchers of all kinds—whether they are members of the academic community, undergraduate students enrolled in their annual American Studies Seminar, K–12 educators, genealogists, creative artists, or independent researchers. Through their everyday activities, the staff become the allies of researchers using the collections. And the staff themselves have made important contributions of their own by compiling important bibliographies, writing significant monographs and journal articles, and frequently presenting papers at scholarly conferences (Hench, 1997). Although the staff work individually within departments, they share a common goal to acquire and provide access to collections. Acquisitions and curatorial staff, for example, strengthen collections by searching dealer and auction catalogs and soliciting gifts, donors, and endowments. Even eBay, the online auction service, is an occasional source for materials.

The AAS cataloging department exemplifies the way that access is provided to an institution’s collections. For more than thirty years, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has generously supported AAS cataloging programs, most importantly its North American Imprints Program (NAIP), whose objective is to create highly detailed computerized records of holdings through 1876. These records are unmatched in their level of detail. In addition to providing extensive subject analysis and assigning prescribed rare book genre headings, provenance tracings for former owners and donors, and physical characteristics of the artifact, catalogers have developed a broad range of local subject and genre terms for even richer access to imprints and manuscripts. This internal thesaurus includes dozens of unique headings such as “Blacks as authors,” “Women in the book trades,” “Juvenile novels,” “Sermons to temperance societies,” “Addresses to lyceums,” and “Autobiographical fiction.” Even deeper access to holdings was achieved in the summer of 2002 when Endeavor’s Voyager Web-based catalog replaced the earlier online system, which had been available on the Internet since 1992.

Helen Horowitz of Smith College captured the ethos of AAS in the acknowledgment of her recent book, *Rereading Sex: Battles Over Sexual Knowledge and Suppression in Nineteenth-Century America*, when she wrote:

> For all who enter its reading room, the American Antiquarian Society is a special place. . . . Its extraordinary resources, built over its long life,
are a historian's dream. In addition, the educational program makes it possible both for many to research there and for fellows and staff to learn from one another. It is a model of what thoughtful care, applied for many decades, can do to build a collection and make it accessible. Its mission is furthered by a staff who remember that research is fun. Everyone, from custodian to president, is interested in history and the process of research. (Horowitz, 2002, p. 493)

**Working at the "Research Spa"**

When readers work at AAS, it soon becomes obvious that there is a great deal of communication among the staff and between staff and researchers. This is especially evident at the traditional "staff talk" when fellows present an introductory overview of their projects, followed by comments from staff at all levels and departments who suggest research strategies and sources. They might mention a newspaper just acquired, a book just cataloged, a lithograph just purchased, a collection of family papers being inventoried, an underutilized but relevant subject bibliography, or a handwritten checklist for an uncataloged collection.

After their stay at AAS concludes, fellows submit a written report of their impressions and experiences. In his 1990 report, Scott Casper, then a doctoral candidate in American studies at Yale University, referred to AAS as a "research spa—an intellectually rigorous but relaxing and nurturing environment that enables the scholar to accomplish enormous amounts of research and to rekindle enthusiasm" (Casper, 1990). Seven years later, as a member of the history department at the University of Nevada, Reno, he returned to AAS and further reflected upon his research experiences at a symposium marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of visiting fellowships. Professor Casper highlighted the benefits of staff recommendations to use uncataloged or underutilized collections and suggested that such conversations often help scholars redefine or transform their projects. When he began his fellowship, he said that he

wanted to explore the cultural work of nineteenth-century American biography, the stories that biographies told and the cultural purposes they sought to achieve. As I concluded my [staff talk] the head of readers' services asked whether I knew about the Society's collection of library catalogues: printed catalogues of nineteenth-century libraries all over the United States, ranging from ladies' lending libraries to prison libraries. Of course, my answer was no—but not for long. Within a week [she and her staff] were bringing me stacks of uncatalogued library catalogues... I was hooked and my dissertation was transformed. (Casper, 1997, p. 272)

Often a fellow's initial "want list" of materials expands after conversations with the knowledgeable staff and curators. For example, Barbara Hochman, professor of foreign literatures and linguistics at Ben Gurion University in Israel, recently arrived at AAS to work on her study of the
publication history and popular response to Harriet Beecher Stowe’s bestselling novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Initially, she focused on reading the abolitionist newspaper, *The National Era* (Washington, D.C.), where the novel first appeared in serialized form on 5 June 1851. But, after following through on recommendations she received from the staff, her project took on greater depth to reflect the phenomenal popularity of this novel. Professor Hochman had access to numerous editions of the novel—in fancy and cheap bindings, hard and soft copy, and foreign language imprints. She could access children’s editions of the book, Topsy and Eva paper dolls, Uncle Tom songsters, pictorial scenes from the novel represented on lithographed sheet music covers, book reviews in nineteenth-century periodicals, broadside advertisements for the stage adaptation, and a wealth of “anti-Tom” novels that sprang from Stowe’s work. One of the best suggestions Hochman received came from the curator of manuscripts who provided her with references to the novel in readers’ letters and diaries. Her study took on far deeper dimensions than she originally envisioned (Hochman, personal communication, April 12, 2002).

The breadth and depth of AAS collections provide ample research opportunities for scholars of microhistory and borderland studies, race and ethnicity in America, gender role and identification, historical memory, art history, Atlantic world studies, and cross-fertilized fields such as American studies. In addition to awarding academic fellowships for more than thirty years, AAS has been offering fellowships for creative and performing artists and writers since 1995. Academics now work alongside novelists, playwrights, poets, painters, and filmmakers. Artist fellows have, for example, researched African Americans in the West for a music/dance performance piece; studied the Salem Witch Trials of 1692 for a book of poetry that reimagines the experiences of those involved; explored the history and legacy of the slave trade in New England for a television documentary; and read newspapers for a one-woman play about the nineteenth-century columnist Fanny Fern (Sara Willis Parton). The broadening of AAS constituencies has energized the collegial life of the entire institution and greatly enhanced the interpretation of historical materials; but the major users of collections remain the scholarly community, and they consistently make new and imaginative connections in literary, historical, and interdisciplinary topics. A few profiles illustrate the current directions of work, and some surprises, at the “research spa.”

Karin Wulf of American University is working on an expansive project on the cultures and politics of family in early America. She explores lineage practices through the phenomenon of genealogy, which she broadly defines as the literary, performative, and material representation of extended kinship in eighteenth-century America. Her pathbreaking study is closely related to the creation of historical memory and the role of lineage as a source of political, social, and cultural authority. In her fellowship report, she wrote
that "what I had not counted on was finding so many new sources and new ideas for sources." Besides the Society's superb collection of early published family histories, she found extensive family records in Bibles and manuscript collections, listings of family pew rentals in local histories, dozens of bookplates with heraldic devices, and visual and material culture sources—all great resources for her emerging study (Wulf, 2000).

Until recently, one of the most underutilized collections at AAS was the Mather Family Library—more than 1,500 printed books that once belonged to Richard, Increase, Cotton, and Samuel Mather and their families and colleagues. This is the largest extant portion of colonial New England's most important library. Isaiah Thomas purchased the bulk of the collection from Hannah Mather Crocker in 1814 and now—nearly two centuries later—a new generation of scholars interested in transatlantic studies recognizes the vast potential of this important historical artifact. Mark Peterson of the University of Iowa knew about the Mather Family Library before he arrived at AAS and later wrote that he "had no idea how rich it would be, how well it would suit my interests, and how it would shape the direction of my research and writing." He examined hundreds of volumes for his current book project about Boston's involvement in the cultural, intellectual, and social history of the early modern Atlantic world. Professor Peterson found a wealth of evidence of the influence of books in shaping the intellectual lives of the Mathers by examining the books they read—the marginalia in the volumes, the subject matter, the places where the books were published, and how the books could be seen as part of the Mather family's involvement in an international Protestant culture (Peterson, 1999).

Elisa Tamarkin from the University of California at Irvine studies American Anglophilia from a unique perspective—as a post-Revolutionary fixation which found its way into the character of American high culture and intellectualism, as well as the practices of colleges and the academy and the pretensions of American taste. She asks, for example, why were there, in the American academy, flagrantly cultivated British accents? She explores the ways that Anglophilia affects the experiences of being American and of American assimilation. At AAS, she uncovered the shapes of pretentiousness through recognizably British forms of conduct and manner at universities. Before arriving she had examined elements of Anglophilia in the works of major literary figures, but she still needed evidence of the English character in American academic circles. Professor Tamarkin writes:

What I found at AAS—wonderfully, fortuitously—in addition to "official" college materials, printed editions of public lectures, college rosters, etc. (which I knew I would find) is a surprising treasury of college student publications from 1810–1870. Volume upon volume of student humor, cartoons, fashion, miscellany, of reflections of what it meant to be a student, or to look like a student, of mock-manuals on edict and behavior for underclassmen and upperclassmen (lest they be con-
fused). What was equally rewarding was being able to compare the social life at New England colleges to that of colleges in other regions. By the end of my stay so many facets of antebellum academic life had taken focus: I had familiarized myself with student slang, with habits of dress and behavior, with club and fraternity life, with tales of college romance and courtship, with what it means to be a college "swell" and, more importantly, with the regional and institutional subtleties of such student conduct across U.S. campuses. And why hadn't I found these materials before? Because AAS has such a unique—perhaps the most unique and comprehensive—collection of such materials. (Tamarkin, personal communication, September 24, 26, 2002)

Historical and literary scholars are exploring new ways of studying sexuality in antebellum America by analyzing a unique collection of ephemeral publications at AAS referred to as racy or flash newspapers. These newspapers of urban life were published in New York, Boston, Baltimore, Cincinnati, and Richmond, among other cities, during the 1830s-1850s. Young editors targeted a readership of unmarried male youth—clerks and apprentices, fops and dandies, loafers and low-wage workers—by providing humorous stories, jokes, and gossip. Their "sex and the city" articles dealt with the world of parties and balls, of brothels and parlor houses, of theaters and saloons. The subject of prostitution, men and girls on the town, and sporting events convey a real sense of the celebration of a leisure culture of pleasure, a defiance of standard middle-class values. With titles like Budget of Blunders, Viper's Sting, Polyanthos, the Rake, the Whip, the Flash, the True Flash, this collection of flash papers has recently become a vital source for scholars who are researching the underground geography of urban sexuality (Cohen, personal communications, September 9, 10; October 8, 2002).

Several scholars who have read the flash newspapers of the 1830s-1850s have found them invaluable for exposing the subterranean worlds of urban America. A leading expert, Patricia Cline Cohen of the University of California at Santa Barbara, read the flash papers exhaustively for her book on the sensational murder of Helen Jewett, a New York City prostitute (Cohen, 1998), and for her current project on Mary Gove Nichols and Thomas Low Nichols, two health and marriage reformers of the 1840s and 1850s who became nationally known leaders of a sex reform movement in which they advocated for "free love," generating tremendous press both favorable and condemnatory. Professor Cohen describes the AAS's holdings of flash newspapers as an "unparalleled collection" (Cohen, personal communications, September 9, 10; October 8, 2002). The Society recently acquired several new titles and issues of the flash papers, making it the largest repository of source material for scholars working on the frontier of this new area of antebellum urban studies.

In another area of research, scholars of Native American history are seeking to reclaim the active voices of Indians in the communities in which they lived and survived. Unlike earlier historical works that dealt with the
decline of native communities upon European contact, a new generation of historians is focusing on native culture and intra-Indian topics, including gender, family, class, communities, and regional interactions with one another. For instance, David Silverman of Wayne State University, a recent AAS Mellon Post-Dissertation Fellow, is revising a manuscript in which he places the Indians themselves at the center of their history.

At AAS, Professor Silverman found manuscripts and newspapers to be among the richest sources for answering questions about how the Wampanoag Indians of Martha's Vineyard and whites lived alongside one another in peace throughout the colonial period and beyond, and how native communities on the island survived as distinct cultural and geographical entities to the present day. The manuscript collections that he read include the John Milton Earle Papers with capsule histories, genealogies, and censuses of Vineyard communities, as well as the rare voices of Indian religious figures found in letters to Earle during his tenure as commissioner to the Indians of Massachusetts. As he sifted through colonial newspapers, Silverman was able to locate the presence of the Native American, a crucial source for his study, in these daily or weekly papers. He commented that “only in the newspapers among the advertisements for runaway servants can we learn the details of native workaday dress, of the extent to which Indian bonds people were sold away from their locales, and of their fluency in the English language. . . . Only in the newspapers can one trace the 1763 yellow fever and smallpox epidemics that ran riot throughout the Wampanoag villages of Cape Cod and the islands.” As scholars unearth the histories of Indians living among colonists, not west of them, newspapers are a crucial primary source. As Silverman notes, “no other institution has as rich and complete a collection of early American newspapers than those found at the American Antiquarian Society” (Silverman, personal communication, September 9, 2002).

Documents of a distinct nature were essential for another scholar of Native American Studies whose work takes a completely different track from Silverman’s. Catherine Corman of Harvard University is completing a groundbreaking study of Native American literacies during the Removal Era of the 1820s and 1830s and the ways that natives were affected by the revolution in print that was occurring during this period. At AAS, she examined original documents from a new and revealing perspective—by analyzing the printed document as an artifact and giving meaning to the document itself as opposed to the “text.” With an interest in both semiotics and print culture, she wanted most to explore a single genre, the treaty, which was a formal, written diplomatic convention that Europeans and Euro-Americans had used from as early as the sixteenth century to obtain Native American land cessions. During her fellowship, Professor Corman examined more than 150 printed treaties, dating between the 1620s and the 1860s, looking for changes in material and format. She wondered, for example, what
happened when Indians were forced to negotiate with Americans who were immersed in a new culture of print and mass circulation. Would printing alter conventions of treaty-making? Would the treaties themselves look different with the advent of organized government printing? What role would print play in changing power relations between the United States and Indian nations as wars and white settlement devastated Native communities (Corman, 2001)?

What printers did to change the treaty format revealed important clues about Native and U.S. national appreciations of each other. Corman states that

what mattered to me was how a set form accommodated changing needs and relationships. The words were less important, in some ways, than the fonts, bindings, papers, inks, and formats. Because AAS allowed me to get close to original printed Documents . . . it gave me a chance to think about the ways that ephemera are essential . . . I believe historians have to go back to the Documents [and] I think it's important to have the room and space to ask the Documents a universe of questions. . . . Only the originals—the gems in the holdings of the AAS—would help me find the answers to the questions I wanted to ask. (Corman, personal communication, August 1, 2002)

"AN AMERICAN BOOK CENTER"

For nearly two hundred years, Isaiah Thomas and his successors assembled a vast archive of original artifacts that has provided generations of scholars with opportunities for innovative research. The Society's expansive collection of books, pamphlets, newspapers, periodicals, visual materials, ephemera, and manuscripts also lays the foundation for a new field of scholarship—the history of the book. These collections are the starting point for studying print culture from its earliest beginnings in North America through the nineteenth century (Gross, 1993).


A number of equally impressive monographs were recently completed by a new group of scholars, also benefiting from the AAS fellowship

Moreover, the AAS staff have introduced scholars from numerous fields to the methodology of the history of the book. Many never thought this new field of study would have a dramatic impact on their projects before they arrived at AAS. One scholar remarked that the history of the book is “in the air” at the Society. Another, studying the eighteenth-century Jamaican diarist Thomas Thistlewood, wrote that he “had not anticipated that my work . . . would focus quite so heavily on his reading practices. But the more I researched, and the more exposed I became to History of the Book approaches, which are such a vital issue at the American Antiquarian Society, so I increasingly saw the value and necessity of exploring Thistlewood’s reading habits in great detail” (Morgan, 1997).

The Society is deeply committed to fostering broad interest in book history and print culture. The Program in the History of the Book in American Culture (PHBAC), formally established in 1983, sponsors an annual lecture series in book history and publishes important bibliographical and monographic literature in the field through the Society’s journal, the Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society. A major undertaking of PHBAC is the five-volume series entitled A History of the Book in America. The first volume in this series, The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World, edited by Hugh Amory and David D. Hall (2000), proved to be a major contribution for the transatlantic study of reading, printing, publishing, and book trade practices through the eighteenth century.3

The combination of bibliographical and original sources has made the Society “an American book center,” and an ideal setting for a second major PHBAC activity, the annual history of the book summer seminar (Basbanes, 1997). Since 1985, these seminars have brought together an interdisciplinary group of historians, literary scholars, librarians, archivists, bibliographers, and graduate students. Seminar offerings, led by authorities in the field, have ranged from “Critical Methods in Bibliography,” “The Business of Publishing: Reading Financial Records as a Source for the History of the Book,” “The Politics of Reading, Writing, and Publishing in Nineteenth-Century America,” to “Reading Culture, Reading Books,” “Getting Into Print,” “Books in American Lives, 1830–1890,” and “Teaching the History of the Book.”
The Society’s staff work closely with seminar leaders in shaping and designing workshops. Although topics and source materials vary from year to year, for the past twelve years an annual staple has been the workshop on bibliographical sources for book history research. In this session, the research librarian introduces dozens of reference sources and comments on their usefulness and intrinsic value. Workshops are tailored to the specific focus of each seminar with opportunities for the hands-on study of materials from a variety of collections, such as the financial and accounting records of printers, publishers, and booksellers; popular literary journals with book reviews and advertisements; editions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels with marginalia and scribblings; etiquette books advising men, women, and children what to read; ethnic and immigrant newspapers from a selected city for a range of years; almanacs from several cities for a selected year; book trade papers and broadside advertisements for trade sales; prospectuses; and subscription books, engravings, and lithographs of images of people reading, to name but a few.

As an exercise at one recent workshop, participants read diaries for evidence of “reader response.” Robert Gross has written about the use of diaries to provide a wider view of the constraints and choices in the social system of print (Gross, 1993). Among the many diaries held by AAS is the journal of Edward Jenner Carpenter, a young apprentice cabinet-maker in western Massachusetts whose daily writings span the period between March 1844 and June 1845. Throughout his journal, Carpenter comments upon all of the books, newspapers, and magazines that he read. The AAS holds copies of each of the items he mentions in his diary, thus providing an interior view of a young man’s reading world of popular novels, sensational literature, biographies, histories, and local newspapers (Clark, 1988). The extensive collection of print and manuscript sources offers vast opportunities for seminar matriculants to explore print culture themes and to appreciate the role that print has played in our society.

The AAS is not only a center for studying print culture; it is also a catalyst for advancing interdisciplinary scholarship in productive ways, often stemming from relationships that were formed during the summer seminar program. Reading Books: Essays on the Material Text and Literature in America, edited by Michele Moylan and Lane Stiles, is a collection of essays, most of which were written by members of the 1992 AAS summer seminar (Moylan & Stiles, 1996). More recently, Scott E. Casper, Joanne D. Chaison, and Jeffrey D. Groves coedited Perspectives on American Book History: Artifacts and Commentary (Casper, Chaison, & Groves, 2002). Without the resources of the American Antiquarian Society, the editors and contributors would not have been able to produce this innovative textbook of primary documents and original essays, with its accompanying CD-ROM of captioned images of print culture. Nearly all of the contributors to Perspectives on American Book
History were drawn from the Society’s various book history seminars or from its fellowship program.

In 1997, Philip Gura, professor of American literature and culture at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, spoke eloquently of the scholarship that AAS has fostered through its fellowship program. His comments apply equally well for all who enter the library to use its collections in new and exciting ways. He remarked that

such an appreciation of the potential magic inherent in all aspects of the historical record to evoke another age is yet another sentiment that unites those of us who have worked in these August halls . . . a government document, a bookseller’s catalogue, the Mather Family library, a sheet of lithographed sheet music, a first edition of Cooper’s work, an almanac, an emigrant’s guide, a history of the Sandwich Islands, a railroad map, the Cambridge Platform: here they are all equal, waiting for a fellow who will burn whatever fragment she chooses until it catches the light thus so, brightly illuminating another corner of our past, and kindling the flame of her scholarship. (Gura, 1997, p. 298)

Professor Gura’s impressions of the wealth of AAS resources—materials that reflect “the stuff of everyday life”—are shared by the other scholars whose work has been described in this paper. The research collections have also made the Society a preeminent center for advancing scholarship in a new discipline—the history of the book. This article has provided a brief overview of the history and culture of the Society, the collaboration between staff and scholars in the research process, and the magnitude and importance of its collections. What were once undiscovered, overlooked, or underutilized resources are now what researchers consider essential for their projects, whether these sources be heraldic devices on bookplates, marginalia in imprints owned and read by the Mathers, antebellum college student publications, Indian treaties, colonial newspapers, manuscript records, flash papers, or an archive full of invaluable artifacts that enables one to study the history of print culture in North America.

In 2012, the American Antiquarian Society will celebrate its 200th birthday. One can feel confident that the institution’s incomparable collections, acquired since 1812, will continue to support new trends in scholarship. The Society will remain a “research spa,” where cutting-edge research means that “everything old is new again.” This was so evident in 1992 when President Emeritus Marcus A. McCorison said “if we can get the books into the place, the scholarship will take care of itself” (McCorison, 1992, p. 345).

Acknowledgments
I am especially grateful to Scott Casper, Gary Chaison, Jeffrey Groves, and Thomas Knoles for reading and commenting upon earlier versions of this paper.
NOTES
1. For information about this and other aspects of the Isaiah Thomas ballad collection, see Schrader (1988).
2. Recent staff publications produced by the Society include Barnhill (1991); Knoles (1999); Knole and Knolcs (1999); and Wasowicz (1996).
3. For an overview of the History of the Book Program, see Hench (1994); for collected essays published by the Society on the emerging field of book history, see, for example, Joyce et al. (1983); Hall and Hench (1987); and Hall (1989).

REFERENCES


In the Age of the Web: Strategies for Building a Collection of Primary Sources for European History from the Middle Ages to the Eighteenth Century

PAUL SAENGER

ABSTRACT

Changes in technology and evolving trends in contemporary scholarship are enhancing the role of the research library as the principal custodian of the written and printed artifacts that serve as primary sources for studying the literature and history of western Europe from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century. In order to respond to an increasing desire of scholars to examine original source materials in their original state, the Newberry Library has pursued new avenues of interinstitutional cooperation in collection development. These new approaches include: 1. A unique program of joint acquisitions with five midwestern institutions of higher education, 2. The en bloc acquisition of rare book collections from religious colleges and seminaries, and 3. The acquisition of selected books, appropriately deemed out of scope, from museums and historical sites open to the general public. Proceeding in this manner, the Newberry Library has since 1991 added eighteen medieval manuscripts and several thousand rare printed volumes, dating from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, significantly augmenting the preexisting strengths of its holdings.

I.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, two trends in the world of research libraries seem clear, one ominous, one hopeful. The ominous trend is that the research library is increasingly becoming one of a series of redundant points of electronic access to the Internet rather than a unique repository of physical artifacts and their apposite reference tools. In a future world without books as tangible documents of the age, researchers shall likely lack the equivalent of the incunables and first editions that today serve to inspire scholars to appreciate the chronological development of European culture...
of previous centuries. An equivalent of the kinds of close documentation of
authorship, publication, and reading which is so precious for appreciating
the historic texture of European civilization from the Middle Ages to the
French Revolution may not exist for future periods and, if digitization sup-
plants conservation, much of the record of nineteenth- and twentieth-cen-
tury erudition may well be decimated, or at least severely truncated.

In contrast, the hopeful trend is that at the very moment when the
publication and preservation of bound monographs and serials that gave
birth to modern scientific historical research are in maximum peril, human-
istic scholarship has increasingly returned to the artifact book and journal
as sources for cultural and literary history. The history of the book, which
in the mid-twentieth century was a rather minor and dull subdivision of
all historical enquiries, has evolved in the hands of leading historians such
as Henri-Jean Martin, Roger Chartier, Robert Darnton, and Richard Rouse
into the history of books and reading, one of the most vibrant areas of con-
temporary historical research. Among scholars of literature, the transfor-
mation has been even more remarkable. A generation ago, both philoso-
phers of literature, like Jacques Derrida, and literary theorists of
reader-response criticism, like Hans Robert Jauss, Wolfgang Iser, and Stan-
ley Fish, viewed tangible old books as objects of scant import. Their focus
was on the abstract "text." In theory, the school of reader-response criticism
aspired to recapture the perceptions of literary works in the minds of read-
ers of previous centuries, but in fact, especially for the Middle Ages and
Renaissance, they did so solely on the basis of texts as presented in mod-
ern editions. The distortion inherent in preparing any critical edition did
not concern them. In material terms, they were thus implicitly guilty of the
very historical anachronisms they deplored when they criticized the then
current approach of university professors of modern languages who stud-
ied the evolution of genres on the basis of an arbitrarily defined corpus of
canonical authors. In contrast, many of today's leading literary scholars,
from Malcolm Parkes to William Paden, Lina Bolzoni, Brian Richardson,
Mary Carruthers, and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, are intimately engaged in the
study of the book as artifact. By virtue of their intense interest in physical
books, even scholars trained as historians, like Armando Petrucci, Brian
Stock, and Roger Chartier, can today comfortably dwell in departments of
either romance languages or comparative literature.

This transformation of scholarship has validated the role of libraries that
collect rare books and, in fact, has reinvigorated the collecting impulses of
institutions like the Newberry Library, whose primary function for over a
century has been the collecting of original source materials in their origi-
nal state or in historically significant subsequent emanations prior to our own
day. Partly in reaction to the new electronic technologies, in the last two
decades the Newberry has pursued the goal of artifact collection with increas-
ing determination, not only as an individual institution, relying on its own
all too limited resources generated from donor restricted endowment, but in active collaboration with other educational and cultural institutions through a variety of programs that include joint acquisitions with Midwestern universities and, via either negotiated purchase or donation, the acquisition en bloc of rare book collections from religious colleges and seminars, for whom an evolving paradigm of educational function has rendered such books largely superfluous. Also, the Newberry Library, with the support of a devoted circle of private donors, has purchased rare books individually and in groups from museums who have through various circumstances come into possession of volumes essentially unrelated to their scope and function.

II.

The most innovative of our strategies for bringing new rare materials into a repository where they will be freely available to a broad spectrum of scholarly readers has been our joint acquisition program. In it the Newberry shares acquisition funds with five Midwestern institutions of higher education to build a core collection, which to date is composed primarily of fifteen hitherto unstudied medieval manuscripts. In general the Newberry pays two-thirds of the purchase price, and the collaborating institution one-third. The program began in 1995 when Professor Kent Emery of the University of Notre Dame (a world-renowned specialist in the Carthusian order) brought to the library's attention a precious Carthusian manuscript in the catalogue of a German antiquarian bookdealer. The Newberry challenged Professor Emery to help with the financial burden. Ultimately the Medieval Institute of Notre Dame, guided by its then director John Van Engen, in a splendid commitment of resource-sharing, contributed funds to the purchase of a codex from a North American dealer similar to the one that had initially caught Professor Emery's eye. Under four successive Institute directors, the Newberry-Notre Dame collaboration has flourished. In 1997 Professor Van Engen, himself an expert in the late medieval religious literature of the Low Countries, vetted a copy of Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen's De reformatione virium animae that had been underdescribed in a London auction catalogue. Armed with his expertise, and a Notre Dame guarantee of financial support, the Newberry made a successful bid. In Van Engen's hands, this volume has since proved to be important for ongoing research on the Devotio Moderna, a lay Catholic religious movement, long seen as a precursor of the Reformation. A canon law text, the Liber sextus decretalium, representing a genre of university book of which examples are rarely available for sale, was subsequently acquired with Notre Dame in 2000. By early 2003, with Professor Thomas F. X. Noble as director of the Medieval Institute, a seventh and an eighth manuscript were being purchased—two volumes of thirteenth-century sermon collections both copied in Paris, with one containing hitherto unpublished texts of the twelfth-century university professor and later bishop of Paris, Maurice de Sully. In each instance
Notre Dame contributed not only financial wherewithal, a necessity for all successful collecting, but also intellectual expertise, an essential but intangible prerequisite to all wise bibliographic expenditures.

In 1995, after the initial joint acquisition with Notre Dame, Theodore Karp, a distinguished Midwestern musicologist at an institution not yet a Newberry partner, brought to the Newberry’s attention a liturgical codex copied in about 1300 that contained a rare example of Aquitanian neumatic notation, a form of musical notation that antedated the square notation customarily found in late medieval manuscripts and early printed tomes. Full funding being available neither at the Newberry nor from Notre Dame, the library approached Western Michigan University. Dr. Lance Query, historian and then director of the university library, taking heart from Notre Dame’s example, joined in the acquisition of the codex. This manuscript, along with a Processionale from Saint-Denis of Reims, subsequently acquired with Notre Dame, was “resurrected” to join the living by a concert performance held at the Newberry in spring 2002. To date Dr. Query and subsequently his learned colleague, Western Michigan’s able director of special collections, Dr. Thomas Amos, have collaborated with the Newberry in acquiring three additional codices. The first, acquired in 1996, was a mid-fifteenth-century manual for nuns, written in Nuremberg with texts in Latin accompanied by German vernacular rubrics; (Illustration 1) the second, acquired in 1998, was an Antiphonary in a portable format suitable for individual use during performance. The latter was bound in a fragment of a thirteenth-century liturgical codex containing examples of Catalonian neumatic notation (closely related to the Aquitanian variety present in the first Western Michigan joint acquisition). In 1997, De Paul University in Chicago, led by then librarian Doris Brown, joined this burgeoning consortium of the willing and purchased in collaboration with the Newberry a fifteenth-century Italian copy of the Regula monachorum attributed to Jerome, which in actuality is a text formed in the Middle Ages from extracts of Jerome’s genuine writings that were circulated as a work from his pen. This purchase complemented the Newberry’s outstanding collection of genuine and spurious Jerome texts, both in manuscript and early printed editions.

Also in 1997, the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, with the support of special collections director and historian Dr. Barbara M. Jones, made its first of a series of important purchases with the Newberry: a fifteenth-century Burgundian genealogical roll of the Kings of England and France. This unusual artifact of Burgundian ducal propaganda subsequently became a central document in a master’s thesis written in the department of art history at Urbana. The same Illinois-trained scholar, Charlotte Bauer Smith, has since written an article on this roll forthcoming in a volume of internationally collected essays. In 2001, the University of Illinois again joined with the Newberry in acquiring a second manuscript, this time a codex: the fifteenth-century German Carthusian Heinrich Reicher’s auto-
graph of his *Tractatus divinae sapienciae*, a work of which no other manuscript copy is known to survive and of which only a fragmentary portion has been printed (Illustration 2). This manuscript, clearly important for its text, also contains folkloric illuminations that are very different from those usually found in late medieval university manuscripts, but curiously similar to eighteenth-century Pennsylvania Dutch frakturs. In a mark of true interinstitutional sharing, the “consortium’s” resident Carthusian specialist, Professor Emery of Notre Dame, provided crucial expertise in the decision-making process that led to the purchase. In 2001–02 the University of Illinois and Notre Dame’s efforts again complemented each other. First, the University of Illinois joined the Newberry in purchasing as its third joint acquisition: the first North American copy of the verbal concordance to the Latin Bible, which was prepared by Dominican friars in Paris in the mid-thirteenth century (Illustration 3). This concordance to the Vulgate provided alphabetical access to all the substantive words of Scripture in the context of the phrases in which they occurred. As an index to the Bible, this concordance remained a standard reference tool well into the age of print. A year later the University of Notre Dame joined the Newberry in acquiring a Book of Hours (the rare Use of Thérouanne in northeast France) of which the thirteenth-century flyleaf came from an early copy of the preliminary version of the same Biblical concordance (Illustration 4). These tomes, like all the books bought jointly, live in the Newberry and may be borrowed by the co-owners for prolonged periods of study either by faculty (like Professor Van Engen) or students (like Charlotte Bauer Smith) for research or for exhibition. We hope eventually that any one of the participating institutions will be able to borrow any of the jointly owned books in like manner.

III.

In the nineteenth century, small religious colleges and seminaries assembled important collections of manuscripts and especially early modern printed books chiefly for pedagogical purposes. As interest in psychology and the social sciences has replaced the study of Greek and Latin patristics in these institutions, the Newberry has found significant opportunities to purchase, and more frequently to receive as donations, entire rare book collections en bloc. These institutional collections, containing prime original source material for early modern European intellectual history and the history of the printed book, also reflect the denominational character and the ethnicity of the Chicago-area institutions that assembled them. In 1991 Newberry trustee Sister Ann Ida Gannon, B.V.M., working with the Library, arranged to purchase (at a price established by an independent appraiser) the rare book library of Chicago’s Mundelein College of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (an order founded in nineteenth-century Germany), shortly before that institution ceased to exist as an independent entity. The collection reflected the tastes of the order’s nineteenth-
2. Newberry/University of Illinois MS 2 (MS 175), the autograph codex of Heinrich Reicher's *Tractatus divinae sapientiae* (Würzburg, 1450), folio 1 recto.
3. Newberry/University of Illinois MS 3 (MS 179), *Dominican Concordance to the Latin Vulgate* (ca. 1300), folio 145 recto.
4. Newberry/University of Notre Dame MS 6 (MS 185), *Book of Hours, Use of Thérouanne* (France, ca. 1450), folio 7 recto.
and twentieth-century immigrant Irish and German members and its secular patrons. Over one-half of the titles added to the Newberry had been collected and donated to Mundelein by a German-American priest, Father John E. Rothensteiner of St. Louis. The entire collection is now traceable as a virtual entity within the Newberry’s online catalogue, and the books given by Father Rothensteiner can be retrieved in like manner.

Highlights of the Mundelein collection include eight incunables, among which are a two-volume German vernacular Bible with hand-colored woodcuts, published by Anton Koberger in Nuremberg in 1483, and a copy of Saint Sidonius Apollinaris’ *Epistolae et carmina* (Milan, 1498) that formerly belonged to the noted seventeenth-century Dutch Protestant scholar Isaac Vossius and possibly bears his annotations. In addition, the Mundelein purchase included nine volumes dated prior to 1521. Among the latter were Jean Petit’s 1505 edition of the *Sermones* of Saint Ephraem and the unique and exceedingly rare first edition of Claude de Seyssel’s *Tractatus de triplici statu viatoribus* (Turin, 1518), an unstudied work by sixteenth-century France’s most distinguished translator of classical texts and a political theorist of note. Another nine titles dated from prior to 1551 included two scarce editions of Erasmus, and twenty-three works dated from the second half of the sixteenth century. These sixteenth-century editions included a 1562 German vernacular Livy with remarkable illustrations printed in Strasbourg (Illustration 5) and an example of the extremely rare unexpurgated first state of Holinshed’s *Chronicles of England* (London, 1587). In addition, 109 volumes dated from the seventeenth century; 173 volumes dated from the eighteenth century. The last group included numerous British printings of the Latin classics, seven of which were published in Glasgow by the Foulis Press.

In 1993 the Library was contacted by Father Sebastian MacDonald of the Passionist Monastery of the North Side of Chicago (an order of early eighteenth-century Italian origin), who was seeking a new home for his rare book collection, some 270 titles (ca. 435 volumes). In 1994, the Passionists gave the entire collection (which in fact had been consolidated from a number of other Passionist monasteries in the Midwest and adjacent southern states). On the evening of 30 November 1994, His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Bernardin participated in the joyful celebration of the transfer from the monastery located near O’Hare Airport, where the volumes had been stored stacked in cartons, to the Newberry, where they are now fully cataloged and traceable as a bibliographic unit and stored in an environment ideal for conservation.

The Passionist gift included two Strasbourg incunables, four sixteenth-century books, thirty seventeenth-century imprints, and seventy-eight eighteenth-century titles. The collection was particularly rich in tracts and theological works pertaining to the Catholic Counter-Reformation flowing from the Council of Trent (1545–63) as well as the Latin and Greek patristics
Livy, *The History of Rome* in German (Strasbourg, Josias Rihel and Samuel Emmel, 1562), folio 6 recto, wood block illustration. From the Mundelein College Collection at the Newberry Library.
favored in Counter-Reformation Europe. A disproportionate number of titles were published in Venice. However, one of the few vernacular titles was an early edition of Antoine Arnauld’s *De la frequente communion* (Paris, 1644), an item complementing the Newberry’s strong Jansenist holdings. Among the neoscholastic theologians, Jesuit authors were prominent. These included Cornelius a Lapide, Thomas Sanchez, and Nicolò Mazzotta. Sumptuous critical editions of the Greek and Latin Fathers, like the first critical edition of the collected works of Saint Augustine published in Italy (Venice, 1729–35), were of monumental physical proportions with beautiful copper engraving frontispieces (Illustration 6). Microfilms of these works can never substitute for personally encountering the physical objects of which the imposing dimensions were intended to symbolize the majesty and power of reformed Catholicism. A copy of the Decrees and Acts of the Lateran Council of 1725, published in Rome, was illustrated with a magnificent engraving of a church council in plenary session.

In 1996, the Newberry, building on its prior success, solicited and received as a gift from the Seminary Library of the Divine Word Society located in Techny, Illinois, over seventy titles that formed the totality of that institution’s rare book collection. One title dated from the sixteenth century, at least sixteen from the seventeenth century, and over forty titles from the eighteenth century. This missionary order had been established in the late nineteenth century by a German priest, and its origins were reflected in the books. Indeed, in contrast to the Passionist gift, only one Divine Word volume was published in Venice, the greater part of the others being printed in either Germany or Austria, with a high proportion in the German language. These vernacular tomes, consisting largely of sermon collections and devotional works expounding the ideals of the Counter-Reformation, were intended for broad lay consumption. Also present was a smaller collection of eighteenth-century Parisian imprints, virtually all in the French vernacular and most either versions of the Bible prepared for lay consumption or treatises of either a devotional or pedagogic character. The gift included at least two works explicitly intended for the instruction of children. The following year, Concordia University in Oak Park presented to the Newberry its large rare book collection of over 1,250 titles, a quarter of which were German imprints dealing with Protestant and especially Lutheran theology. The entirety included five sixteenth-century, thirty seventeenth-century, and almost 100 eighteenth-century titles. The two collections complemented each other to create at the Newberry a splendid resource documenting the comparative use of German vernacular books in the rival Catholic and Protestant camps, from the late sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century.

In 2000, Father David F. Wright, O.P., Vicar Provincial of the Dominican Province of Saint Albert the Great, invited the Newberry to inspect its rare book collection housed in River Forest, and in February 2001 the
Order’s Provincial Council approved its gift to the Newberry. The collection was composed of over 1,100 titles of which almost all date from the eighteenth century or earlier. Dominican authors were especially well represented. Its four incunables included philosophical treatises of Albertus Magnus (Venice, De Gregoriis, 1492) and three volumes of the Sermons of Vincent Ferrer (Cologne, Heinrich Quentel, 1485). Of particular import was the second edition of the first comprehensive collection of Thomas Aquinas’s Opera in eighteen volumes (Venice, 1593-1594) in its original binding, with early printed labels, and with pastedowns and endleaves formed from late medieval manuscripts (Illustration 7). The Lyon, 1517 edition of St. Antoninus of Florence had a beautiful engraved title page. Several editions of Hugh of St. Cher’s Postilla on the Bible, one of the two principal late medieval commentaries on the Scriptures, were of particular scholarly import and also constituted monuments of fine printing. Among other early editions was Joannes Ludovicus Vivaldus’ Opus regale (Saluzzo, 1507) containing a magnificent woodcut of Saint Louis, king of France. Overall, the strength of the collection was in moral theology of the Counter-Reformation with strong holdings for the Council of Trent, including the 1566 Aldine edition of the Catechismus Romanus. At the Newberry this collection complements the Passionist collection, with the ensemble offering to scholars a rare instrument for research on the history of Counter-Reformation printing in Venice, Rome, and Lyon. This gift is currently being cataloged.

IV.

The most recent strategy of the Newberry is to acquire rare books from cultural institutions whose primary mission in no way relates to the study of European history. In spring 2002, Cathryn McElroy Anders, assistant director of Lyndhurst (the home of railroad banker Jay Gould near Tarrytown, New York) indicated that this historic site administered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation was preparing to sell Jay Gould’s personal rare book library. After inspection in autumn 2002, the Newberry offered to purchase eight volumes from the Gould library: two fifteenth-century manuscripts and six incunables. In January 2003, the National Trust, seeking to make these materials available for scholars, agreed to sell them to the Newberry at 15 percent below their independently appraised value. One of the two manuscripts is an illuminated Book of Hours, copied in about 1450 in Flanders, possibly for export to Germany, as indicated by its marginal decoration and its coats of arms that appear to be Germanic (Illustration 8). The second manuscript is a northern Italian illuminated notarial cartulary of the second half of the fifteenth century containing charters from a series of churches in or near Vicenza (Illustration 9). The six incunables include a 1490 Venetian edition of Niccolo Perotti’s Cornucopiae, valuable for the history of the introduction of pagination to printed volumes (Illustration 10); a not yet identified edition of Landino’s Italian vernacu-
8. *The Jay Gould Hours* (Low Countries, ca. 1450), folio 189 recto. From the Jay Gould Collection formerly at Lyndhurst, now MS 188 at the Newberry Library.
9. *A Notarial Cartulary* (Vicenza, ca. 1470), folio 17 recto. From the Jay Gould Collection formerly at Lyndhurst, now MS 189 at the Newberry Library.
lar *Formulario di epistolae*, as well as Venetian and Augsburg editions of 1474 and 1476, respectively. None of these volumes have ever either been fully cataloged or recorded in any published census of medieval manuscripts or incunable editions.

In the century ahead, vigorous collecting has every promise of preserving the role of the research library as the premier laboratory of humanism. As the Newberry’s example indicates, cooperation among institutions can augment the corpus of primary source material by bringing rare, hitherto unstudied, and inherently thought-provoking objects into a venue where scholars can avail themselves of them. In fact, the Newberry’s innovative electronic online cataloging, based on a new and evolving paradigm of the book as object, provides for scholars of history and literature an overview of these materials that in former times would not have been possible. By providing an avenue for searching its newly acquired collections for their artifactual characteristics in addition to their textual content, the Newberry’s new collections of old books may well contribute to unparalleled opportunities for a new generation to rewrite the history of literature, books, and reading from the late Middle Ages to the end of the eighteenth century.

**Acknowledgments**

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**Notes**

1. See, for example, Jauss (1979). The words “manuscript,” “scribe,” “codex,” and “incunable” do not occur.
3. For additional details, consult Jones & Saenger (2000).
4. Numerous editions of it have been added to the library as part of the en bloc acquisitions discussed below.
5. In 2001, a private donor, Thomas A. Stump, provided the Newberry with the library of a nineteenth-century Mennonite minister that included a significant gathering of German and Dutch vernacular works, which has further enriched this sector of the Newberry’s collections.

**References**


The Elmer L. Andersen Library: Accomplishing the Impossible

DONALD G. KELSEY

ABSTRACT
Using the planning, design, and construction of the Elmer L. Andersen Library as a case study, this article explores the variety of planning and design issues that must be addressed in the building process. The Andersen Library is unique for its site selection and for the successful joining of eight archives and special collection units in a single building. This exploration looks at how the internal library planning meshes with the architectural design process; how chance events can present innovative design opportunities; and how the political process can affect funding priorities and other realities.

INTRODUCTION
More than any project undertaken at the University of Minnesota, the building of the Elmer L. Andersen Library was believed by many to be a virtual impossibility. A complete description of all that went into the planning, funding, engineering, designing, and construction of the building that became the Elmer L. Andersen Library would far exceed any reasonable bounds. This article focuses on those issues central to these five aspects of this building's creation.

The planning challenged us because never at the University of Minnesota, or as far as we could tell anywhere in the world, had so many archives and special collections been brought together in a single building and combined with a high-density storage center. Securing state funding for the project was difficult. Explaining such an innovative idea in simple language was next to impossible. Elements of mined space engineering were all successfully used for many years in other building projects, but the combina-
tion of all these engineering techniques in a single building was unique. Even the construction process resulted in several engineering solutions being developed in the field while the building was under construction. This added to the novelty of the engineering and construction accomplishment.

This project represented a personal challenge as well. In my role as the Library Facilities Planner for the University of Minnesota Libraries, I coordinate the writing of the building program statement and serve as the principal liaison between the library planning group and the design team. My position also has responsibility for organizing the lobbying effort once a project is presented for funding. Finally, I am responsible for planning and executing the move into the facility. Despite all of these obstacles and challenges, the Elmer L. Andersen Library is now a reality, serving its users more successfully than we imagined.

A Brief History

I suspect the origins and development of the archives and special collections at the University of Minnesota are not unique. With the exception of the University Archives, many of the collections grew out of the research interests of individual faculty. The founding of the University Archives in 1959 resulted from the need to organize the historic records of the university in preparation for the celebration of its centennial. The facilities support for the collections, or more properly the lack of support, is probably not novel. Many of the collections began in a single room in a corner of an existing library building. Often the collections were staffed on a part-time basis. As the collections grew, they outstripped their quarters, triggering a series of moves from one location to another for the next twenty-five to thirty years! Many of these moves were described in sketchily written records as “temporary.” The “temporary” home for the Immigration History Research Center in an old coffee company warehouse lasted for twenty-five years! Housing special collections and archives like these in such poor quarters went beyond benign neglect. While these quarters had nothing to recommend themselves, many of the university’s special collections, most notably the Children’s Literature Research Collection, the Immigration History Research Center, and the Social Welfare History Archives, have risen to national and even international prominence.

There was recognition for many years that something needed to be done with the archives units, but what that “something” should be varied widely. The Immigration History Research Center got as far as developing a schematic plan for a new building on the land adjacent to their coffee warehouse home. The curator of Special Collections proposed a special collection center to be built on open land adjacent to the Humanities and Social Sciences Library. There was no thought given to the idea of combining with other archival units, not to mention including a high-density storage center. There are token mentions of a need to address the space require-
ments of these collections in the library annual reports dating back to mid-1960. Each biennial capital plan for the libraries also mentions this cluster of unmet building needs. More and more often we were confronted with the "archives problem" and the growing need for some sort of storage solution for the general collections. It was not until 1989 that the university received a legislative appropriation of several million dollars for architectural design of the former main library building on the campus. Included in that appropriation was $150,000 for "a predesign study for the Minnesota Library Access Center."

THE PLANNING

With planning funds in hand, a building advisory committee was formed, bringing together people representing the collection and user stakeholders. Ten archives and special collections were candidates for inclusion in the program. Early in the planning process it became clear that two of the collections had such a strong tie to the libraries that housed them that they best remained where they were. A program was written describing a building with appropriate staff and user space and 2 million volumes of archive and special collection storage. The program also called for 2 million volumes of high-density general collection storage. It made good operational and political sense to designate MINITEX Library Information Network as the operating unit for the proposed storage center, so space for their operations and staff of over 100 was added to the program. (MINITEX is an interlibrary resource-sharing network based at the university and operated by the State of Minnesota since 1971.)

The decision to develop a building program combining eight archives and special collections was not a simple one. With the exception of the University Archives, each of the other seven collections have well-developed friends' groups on whom they depend for volunteer and financial support. These friends' groups are often an important part of the network that identifies and cultivates additions to the collections. A strong individual identity for each unit was an essential planning requirement.

At the same time, there were practical and political forces working in direct opposition to the concern for individual identity. General support for higher education in Minnesota was declining. Only those building projects demonstrating rigorous economy of design were getting support. It seemed almost a foregone conclusion that significant efficiencies would result from bringing these eight units together in one location. As a result, the building planning committee was charged to write a program statement with as many shared operations as possible.

The ideal site for the building was on the West Bank of the Minneapolis Campus where the humanities and social science faculty was located. (The Mississippi River runs through the Minneapolis Campus, rather than along its western edge, since a campus expansion in the early 1960s that
crossed the river to what is now the "West Bank." While this location made the best programmatic sense, the West Bank Campus is severely landlocked, both by the river and a residential/business community.

While the early building programming effort was going on, I was invited to a meeting at the office of the University Architect, where two faculty members from the university's Underground Space Research Center were making a presentation. This research center began in the 1960s and was devoted to studying the development and applications of mined space. The focus of the presentation was on the ways mined space could be used to expand parking on the campus. In the course of the presentation one of the faculty observed that once a mined space is created and closed again from outside weather influences, the space maintains a constant year-round temperature of 57°F and a relative humidity around 70 percent. This observation immediately caught my attention. While 70 percent relative humidity is too wet for paper storage, 57°F, on the other hand, is very close to ideal. Even more important in our part of the world is the prospect of environmental stability. The exceptionally dry conditions during Minnesota winters create a serious challenge to designing hospitable indoor environments for paper storage. Another passing observation in the presentation also caught my attention. The university had already negotiated an easement with the City Park Board on each side of the river from the street to the face of the river bluff in the event that mined space ever became something to be pursued. Not only did the possibility of mined space offer a design solution for our building, the political groundwork to make it happen was already in place.

We completed the building program and selected Meyer, Scherer, and Rockcastle, Ltd., to do a predesign study. As the predesign process got underway, I asked the design team to develop one conception of the building making use of mined space, just to see how it might work. If the collection storage component of the program was separated from the staff and user space and located in mined space, the site requirements changed radically. The massing study of an entirely above-ground structure already demonstrated that at least five acres of land would be needed. The closest piece of land that large was over a mile from the campus. The staff and user portions of the building could easily be accommodated on a much smaller piece of land, and there were several such possibilities on the West Bank Campus. The mined space concept caught the imagination of the predesign team, and of the four iterations they developed of the building, three made use of mined space.

The process to select the final design team began in 1994. It resulted in the selection of Stageberg Partners, Inc., with James Stageberg as the design principal for the building. The University Libraries already had two years experience working with Mr. Stageberg and his firm on the design of another project for the libraries. I don't think I have ever seen an architect so deter-
mined to get a commission as Mr. Stageberg was to get this one. He spent hours and hours of his own time visiting various archives and records storage centers around the country prior to getting the commission. In retrospect, Mr. Stageberg commented, "What architect wouldn't want a commission like this one . . . a chance to design a building that has never been built before?" The enthusiasm of James Svageberg was coupled with the enthusiasm and expertise of Charles Nelson and his associates, and a momentum was built around the project that carried us through some enormous difficulties in the months ahead. (Mr. Nelson was one of three faculty who founded the University of Minnesota's Underground Space Center. His private firm, CAN Consulting Engineers, has an international reputation for their geotechnical engineering expertise.) Charles Nelson's team of consulting geotechnical engineers was also part of the predesign team, informing the planning process with their expertise from the very beginning.

As the actual architectural design got underway, the tensions between individual identities and shared functions became more and more an issue for the curators' planning team. I began to understand more clearly the cautions offered by my library planning colleagues about our chances for success. The variety of opinions among the curators went far beyond the need for individual identity and began to touch on deeply held values defining good archival management practice. The most complicated of these design challenges centered on the planning for the research room.

Yielding to the pressure for shared functions, we wrote into the program a single research room supporting the user needs of all eight units. As we began to refine our expectations for the design of this room, sharp differences of opinion arose. In a word, there was no way to reach consensus. It is imperative that the hard work and open-mindedness of the curators' planning group be acknowledged. Never have I seen a group of professionals work harder to accomplish an end that would serve everyone's needs.

As our struggles over how to design the research room went on, the design team was developing the above ground footprint of the building. It was clear that the building would have four floors above ground, with the lowest and largest floor housing the MINITEX operations. The eight archive units would be distributed among the remaining three floors. How they would be arranged was not entirely arbitrary because some combinations of units resulted in a better fit than others.

About the time we thought we would come to total gridlock in our planning, three of the curators came to my office to see me. It was clear from the latest schematic plans we received from the architects that they would be together on one floor. Their reason for coming to me was to ask, since they were in basic agreement among themselves about how they saw the research room design, why they couldn't have their own research room on their floor? With the fundamental planning axiom—that subdividing space always results in lower efficiency—ringing in my ears, I was tempted to tell
them no immediately. Instead, I promised at least to bring the idea to the
design team. It turned out the design team was having their own struggles
fitting some of the required nonassignable functions and the larger pro-
gram spaces into the building. The possibilities of designing more than one
research room worked like magic to break the planning logjam for every-
one. The result is a building with three research rooms. Two of them are
quite similar in design. The third research room honors an aspect viewed
as essential by the two units who share it. This research room is totally inte-
rior to the two office suites and may only be entered by passing through
one or the other of the suites.

The architectural design team worked directly with individual curators,
doing everything possible to customize their office suites to meet their indi-
vidual needs. They also worked hard to design an entry to each suite that
reinforced a sense of individual identity. Part of this uniqueness was accom-
plished with individual exhibit spaces at the entrance to each suite support-
ing standing exhibits featuring the collection strengths of that particular unit.

SECURING THE FUNDING

Describing the predesign planning and the schematic planning in se-
quence as I have above does not accurately reflect the funding realities.
Since the Andersen Library planning was initiated by a predesign authori-
ization in 1989, there was an interval of five years before the architectural
design funds were appropriated in 1994.

In any given capital funding year, the University of Minnesota has three
or four times the number of projects on the table than they can bring to
the Legislature for funding. This makes the process of getting into the
university’s biennial capital request highly competitive. In our case, we
benefited greatly in the university’s internal capital request process by the
fact that the president of the university was himself a practicing researcher
and a strong supporter of the project. In 1994 the university went to the
Legislature with a request for $2.4 million based on a total project cost of
$41 million. It is typical in our state bonding process for a project, especially
the higher priced ones, to get an authorization for architectural design
funds in one biennial request with the construction funds coming a mini-
num of two years later.

Even though the design request is a fraction of the total construction
request, each capital project goes through the full round of committee
hearings and discussions. The hearing process was very instructive for this
project because it revealed a split in mind-set among the legislators. Half
of the legislators understood the importance of preserving primary research
materials to the research mission of the university. While they supported
the archive collections, these legislators did not think a high-density stor-
age center made any sense. The idea that we would keep books not in heavy
use made no sense to them.
The other half of the Legislature could see the value in the storage center, especially since it had the potential to reduce crowding in the libraries in their legislative district. The storage center held out the hope for them that there would be fewer requests for library construction in the future. This group of legislators did not understand archives, thinking the university really ought not to be in the business of collecting rare and unique materials anyway. They saw this as the responsibility of the Minnesota Historical Society, for whom they had just funded and constructed a new building.

Nevertheless, we were successful in securing the design funds so the planning process could continue. We came away from the experience with a sobering reality check. It was clear that securing the construction funds would face serious opposition in the Legislature. With projects the size of ours, there is rarely more than one opportunity to bring the project forward for funding. We knew we could not miss our chance.

Even before the 1994 Legislative Session adjourned, we set to work building our legislative strategy for the 1996 session. A retired legislator who was a vocal supporter of the project told us that the single most effective way of influencing legislative opinion was through direct constituent contacts. With this advice in hand, we took the membership lists of all the friends’ groups and matched up every legislator with two or more constituents, preferably with no direct connection to the university. Through the MINITEX network, we mobilized the libraries across the state, asking them to contact their legislators and tell them how important the building was to their library and their legislative district.

The results of our efforts began to show late in 1995 as we prepared for the 1996 legislative session. The University of Minnesota’s professional lobbyist began to report back that legislators were asking her, “Why does everyone think this is such an important project?” We realized that all of our hard work over the spring and summer was paying dividends.

Meanwhile inflation adjustments drove the cost of the building up to $43.1 million. As we entered a new round of legislative committee hearings, the question that was impossible to finesse was, “What would this building cost if you didn’t build it underground?” The only honest answer to the question was $12 million less. Each time this question arose, our hopes for success dimmed.

Again, describing this after the fact makes the whole process seem much simpler than it actually was. During the final weeks of the legislative session, those of us who were key supporters of the project were at the Capitol an average of eighty hours a week!

When the final bonding bill was adopted, we secured an authorization for $38.6 million, $3.6 million less than we requested. The loss of this money sent us scrambling back to the drawing board and resulted in a redesign of the building from three caverns to two. The two remaining caverns were somewhat larger than originally planned, but the loss of the third cavern
meant the growth capacity was shortened from the twelve to fifteen years we predicted to somewhere between five and eight years. Nevertheless, we had cleared the legislative gauntlet and had secured the construction funds for the project!

**The Construction Challenge**

The first phase of construction was mining the cavern spaces out of the soft sandstone layer underneath the harder limestone layer. The limestone was to form the roof of the caverns. The river gorge afforded us direct access to the sandstone, allowing for cheaper horizontal mining rather than vertical. The shaping of the limestone face of the entry into the bluff required some blasting of the limestone. A site investigation of the neighboring buildings revealed that the art building situated immediately to the north of our site was filled with very fragile asbestos. Before any construction work could begin, we had to fully abate this building.

This lay description of the process of mining the cavern spaces is also a serious understatement of what actually occurred. As I sat in each week’s construction progress meeting, the precision of the engineering and the wealth of information brought to the project amazed me. The geotechnical engineers knew well in advance where every water-laden seam in the limestone was located. This was critical information because the project was mandated to take extreme care to collect all ground water and dispose of it safely to protect against the possibility of any environmental contamination.

Without going into thousands of words of highly technical description of this phase of the construction, suffice it to say that four construction machines were invented specifically to undertake various aspects of the mining for this building. The engineering and construction industries have recognized the building with five national building awards for excellence in various aspects of engineering.

With the twelve months of mining completed, we had two cavern spaces inside the Mississippi River bluff, each measuring 65 feet in width, 22 feet in height, and 680 feet in length. (Four football fields can be housed in the caverns with room to spare!) The next phase was the construction of the prefabricated concrete storage buildings inside the caverns, the connecting link through the limestone ceiling to the surface building and the surface building itself. The second phase of construction took an additional seventeen months to complete.

The concept of a building-within-a-building for the storage chambers is an important feature of the building’s design. These interior storage buildings are completely encased in a continuous rubber membrane, an inch of insulating material, and a foil vapor-barrier to protect against water intrusion of any sort. The vapor-barrier also prevents moisture migration from the more humid cavern spaces into the storage buildings. The cavern conditions form a kind of environmental “cocoon” enveloping the storage build-
ings and making it a relatively easy matter to maintain the 62° F. and 50 percent relative humidity operating conditions inside the storage chambers.

The storage chambers and the surrounding cavern spaces each have separate ventilating and air-conditioning systems. The pressure balance between the storage buildings and the caverns is positive so all airflow is from inside the buildings out rather than drawing unconditioned air into the storage environment.

To date, the only significant disappointment in the construction of the building is the original loss of funding resulting in one fewer cavern than in the original design. The practical impact of this loss has been felt most keenly by the archive collections. They moved into the building at about 85 percent of total capacity rather than the hoped for 70 percent. The storage center is also filling more rapidly than we hoped. The storage center problem is more manageable since we have more direct control over the rate at which we accession materials into the storage center than we have over archive collection growth.

One indicator of the dramatic improvement the Andersen Library represents over the previous storage conditions for these collections is reflected in the difficulties the mechanical engineers had trying to balance the relative humidity systems when we first occupied the building. The engineers were concerned there was a serious flaw in their design until we pointed out it was very possible the collections which were already moved into the building were so dry they were acting like a gigantic sponge soaking up moisture as fast as it could be pumped into the air. It took about four months after the collections were moved in before readings approaching the design conditions for relative humidity could be recorded.

WHAT THE ANDERSEN LIBRARY HAS ACCOMPLISHED

First, the building has rescued these valuable primary research materials from an almost certain premature destruction. Had that early demise not resulted from the abysmal environmental conditions in which most of them were stored, the imminent threats of fire or catastrophic water damage would have done the trick. Nearly as important as securing the preservation future of these collections, the Andersen Library has had a dramatic effect on the use of these materials.

Because the building is located less than a thousand yards from the principal users, it has become a magnet not only for collection use but for a wide variety of meetings, conferences, and symposia on topics related to one or more of the collections. The Andersen Library opened to the public shortly after the start of the spring semester in 2000. With no particular fanfare surrounding the opening of the building to the public prior to the official grand opening almost four months later, initial use was close to what the collections experienced in their previous locations. All eight of the collections combined could only demonstrate use statistics of a dozen or
so users per day prior to their move into the Andersen Library. By the end
of the semester, this number had climbed to over fifty per day, and now it
regularly runs considerably higher. Compared with user statistics in the
typical academic research library, these numbers are low, but keep in mind
that this building is entirely a special collections facility with a reasonably
select user population.

A more telling statistic is the use of the conference center that was
designed into the building. This center totals about 2,200 square feet of
space that can be used as a single room or subdivided into three smaller
rooms, two rooms, etc. In the first month Andersen Library was open, there
were twelve meetings held in this conference suite. The second month
number climbed to twenty-eight; since then this space supports an average
of over fifty meetings a month. The events include: multiday conferences,
some with national and international audiences; classes meeting in conjunc-
tion with collection materials from one or more of the collections; and social
events that their planners desire to be in one of the nicest buildings on the
campus. These educational events have become a major part of the overall
outreach effort of the University Libraries. Even the social events have poten-
tial for research and teaching, since the conference center is immedi-
ately adjacent to an exhibition area, featuring a thematic exhibit year-round.
Participants at all of the events hosted in the Andersen Library are free to
roam around the building and discover on their own the rich treasures con-
tained in these collections.

Another important feature of the design is the security control in the
building. Access to the storage chambers is particularly rigorous. Other than
the occasional chaperoned tour of the cavern spaces for groups interested
in the design and construction of the building, the storage chambers are
normally closed to direct public access. The excellent security the Anders-
en Library provides for the collections it now houses supports the effort to
get collection descriptions into the national bibliographic utilities. This
visibility, both in the bibliographic utilities and on the various Internet Web
pages designed by the individual units, is drawing much greater attention
to these resources. We are confident that use of these unique materials will
continue to increase.

In conclusion, the design and construction of the Elmer L. Andersen
Library has enabled the University of Minnesota Libraries to ensure the
long-term preservation of their most valuable information resources. The
innovative combination of mined space with a modest surface building al-
lowed the building to be located immediately adjacent to the academic
disciplines most likely to rely on these resources for their own teaching and
research. Locating the building in such a central location on the campus
has already resulted in many accidental discoveries of the exciting world
of primary research materials. Seeing actual diaries, letters, manuscripts,
original architectural drawings, and original illustrations for children’s
books, to mention but a few of this building’s treasures, has sparked interest in new and exciting ways to learn.

This article would be incomplete without a few words about Elmer L. Andersen, after whom this building is named. It is unique that the university chose to name a building after a living individual, but in this case the choice could not have been more fitting. Elmer L. Andersen is a former governor of the state and a member of the university’s Board of Regents and its chair for a number of years. He is a lifelong supporter of education in general and libraries in particular. The library that bears his name is now the home for his private library, a collection of over 16,000 volumes noted for the many rare items it contains. Governor Andersen’s remarks at the dedication of the building sum up the importance of this library best of all. He said, “And what nobler purpose can there be for a University than to gather up the prizes of a culture, preserve them, propagate them, make them available so that the best of what has gone before can be preserved and built on.”
Special Collections Outside the Ivory Tower

SUSAN M. ALLEN

ABSTRACT

Special collections materials are not only to be found in academic libraries; they can be found in museum, public and national, and independent research libraries as well. The focus of this paper is on independent research libraries, especially those who are members of the Independent Research Library Association (IRLA).

IRLA members are eighteen private, nonprofit research and education institutions. Their focused collections are developed to support research rather than an academic curriculum. They serve scholars and researchers internationally with their eminent collections. They provide access on-site and increasingly online. They will be challenged in the future by the need for increased financial support, changes in scholarship and scholarly communications, and the need for increased visibility.

WHERE CAN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS BE FOUND OUTSIDE OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES?

It is a mistake to assume that special collections of rare materials are only to be found on college or university campuses in the United States. Some of our richest sources of rare books, manuscripts, photographs, maps, prints, and other rare materials are to be found in at least three other types of libraries: museum libraries, public and national libraries, and independent research libraries. Museum libraries such as the Frick Art Reference Library and the library of the Brooklyn Museum of Art in New York, and the National Gallery of Art Library in Washington, D.C., house and make accessible, among other materials, rare books, extensive photo study collections of art objects, rare art exhibition catalogs, rare photographic col-
lections, and important institutional archives relating to museum collecting since the nineteenth century. Some American public libraries are world famous for their extraordinary special collections. For example, the New York Public Library (NYPL) collections are as extensive as those of many national libraries. The Boston Public Library has many rare collections and is known for its Americana imprints, early children's books, and Frankliniana, to name three. The Detroit Public Library holds the Burton Historical Collection of material on the Northwest Territory. The San Francisco Public Library has called its Special Collections Department "The City's Museum of the Book." There one can find collections on printing, binding, typography, and papermaking.

Our national libraries house significant rare materials as well. The Library of Congress has separate divisions for rare books and special collections, geography and maps, manuscripts, music, films and recorded sound, and prints and photographs. All of these divisions hold rare materials. The Smithsonian Institution Libraries' collections include 40,000 rare books and 1,800 manuscript groups. Even the National Library of Medicine has special collections of manuscripts and oral histories.

Independent research libraries as a category and as a group of North American special collections libraries are often less well known and less understood than special collections in academic libraries, museum libraries, and public and national libraries. Therefore, the remainder of this paper will be devoted to removing the "bushel," so to speak, from these libraries so that their "light" may shine for all to see. To do this, I will address the following five questions: 1. What and who are independent research libraries? 2. How is collection development different in independent research libraries? 3. Whom do these collections serve? 4. How have these libraries approached access, especially digital access? 5. What new risks do independent research libraries and their special collections face?

**WHAT AND WHO ARE INDEPENDENT RESEARCH LIBRARIES?**

Independent research libraries are just that: independent. They have no ties to federal or state governments. They are not a part of a state educational system. They are not a part of any college or university. They are private and independent and have their own charter or act of incorporation. In the eyes of the I.R.S. they are designated not-for-profit institutions. Gifts they receive are tax deductible. They derive major financial support from endowments and often must seek additional funds and gifts-in-kind to survive and prosper. They are governed by boards of trustees, and their chief executive officers report directly to these boards.

Their collections are of national or international significance and are not merely local or regional in character. They are "research collections of such depth and breadth as to be capable of supporting sustained research in a variety of interrelated subjects and fields" (IRLA, 1987, p. 2). They have
collections of the quality necessary to attract scholars and researchers from all over the world. They are committed to making these resources available to this extramural community even if they have an internal community to serve as well. All qualified readers will be served with “the kinds and amounts of service expected of major [academic] research libraries” (IRLA, 1987, p. 2). In general terms one would say independent research libraries are “organized research and education” institutions (IRLA, n.d., p. 1). Scholars are served not only by collections. They are also “served through fellowships, seminars, conferences, and institutes, as well as through such publications as catalogs, guides, monographs, journals, and books.”

In 1972, fifteen libraries that at the time saw themselves as fitting the profile described above founded the Independent Research Libraries Association (IRLA). They were all research libraries; they were all independent; and they were all supported through private funds. These fifteen were: the American Antiquarian Society, the American Philosophical Society, the John Crerar Library, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Linda Hall Library, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Huntington Library, the Library Company of Philadelphia, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Pierpont Morgan Library, the Newberry Library, the New York Academy of Medicine, the New York Historical Society, the New York Public Library, and the Virginia Historical Society.

In the mid- to late 1960s, a number of these libraries were “deemed ineligible for federal funding under the Higher Education Act of 1966 (HEA) and then threatened with classification as ‘private foundations’ after the tax reforms of 1969” (Bergman et al., 1996, p. 52). This meant that, even though they benefited from NEH funding, other federal funds for libraries under the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA, now LSTA) and the HEA were not available to them. In response to these troubles, IRLA was born. A lobbying effort led by Lawrence W. (Bill) Towner, Librarian of the Newberry Library, brought about the reversal of these interpretations. This effort was followed by congressional testimony made by Towner on behalf of independent research libraries and in support of the expansion of the appropriation for the NEH. “In this testimony by Towner before a congressional committee in 1973, the Independent Research Libraries Association made its first national public appearance” (Towner, 1993, p. 253). In his prepared statement, Towner spoke compellingly of the important special collections materials held by independent research libraries. He said,

We have placed on the table a package of materials—statistics and brief statements—from our individual libraries that we hope you will examine at your leisure. But, let me observe in summary, that we hold in our collections more than twenty million volumes, a large percentage of them rare and costly, and more than forty million unique manuscripts dealing with the history and literature of Western Civilization. These library materials represent a priceless asset of the American people,
gathered together through private efforts, and preserved and made available to scholars, whether academic or lay, throughout the nation. Finally, because our collections reach beyond the bounds of a single city, state, or region, and because our readers come from every state in the union, as well as from abroad, we are truly national libraries, serving a national clientele, and a national purpose. (Towner, 1993, pp. 256-257)

In 1976 when William S. Budington's article, "To Enlarge the Sphere of Human Knowledge": The Role of the Independent Research Library," appeared in *College & Research Libraries* there were still fifteen IRLA members. Today there are eighteen. Fourteen of the founding institutions remain members. The more recent additions to the group are the Hagley Museum and Library, the Winterthur Museum, Garden, and Library, the Research Library at the Getty Research Institute, and the Canadian Centre for Architecture.

The taxonomy of the origins of independent research libraries that Budington presents is useful to understand the diverse nature of the collections represented by IRLA members. The Library Company of Philadelphia came to be as a subscription library "at a time when the college libraries were unaccessible [sic] and unsuitable to general usage and public libraries were as yet undeveloped" (Budington, 1976, p. 302). IRLA libraries taking their roots in scientific societies are the American Philosophical Society, founded in Philadelphia by Benjamin Franklin, and the New York Academy of Medicine. Historical societies include the American Antiquarian Society, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the New York Historical Society, and the Virginia Historical Society. The NYPL Research Libraries is the one example of a "free public service" (IRLA, n.d., p. 15) library although it is actually now a private, tax-exempt corporation. Libraries founded by collectors include the Huntington, the Morgan, and the Folger libraries. In 1887 a bequest of Walter Loomis Newberry brought the Newberry Library into being. Other bequests in the twentieth century made possible the Hagley Museum and Library, the Research Library at the Getty Research Institute, the Linda Hall Library, and the Winterthur.

**How Is Collection Development Different in Independent Research Libraries?**

Understanding the varied origins of independent research libraries is key to beginning to understand how the collections of these institutions were first developed, and how they continue to develop in the twenty-first century. Historically, the two scientific societies supported certain disciplines of study, namely the history of science, evolution, genetics, biochemistry, modern physics, and medicine. In the beginning the historical society libraries had a specific region's history to collect; however, now all five are national in scope. Those libraries founded by collectors had certain core collection
strengths that were formed by the interests and tastes of their founders. For example, the American Antiquarian Society, founded by the printer and collector Isaiah Thomas as a historical society, quickly became national in its scope due to the important Colonial American newspaper collections and imprints collected by Thomas and then given by him to the Society. Henry E. Huntington was an avid collector of British and American history and literature. When he built a library building for his book and manuscript collections on his estate in San Marino, California, and invited researchers to visit, it is not surprising that scholars in English and history were the first to arrive. Those institutions founded by benefactors generally had given areas of collecting established very early on in their histories. It is important to note that none of the independent research libraries formed their collections to support a degree-granting academic program of any kind.

Academic research libraries, including their special collections, develop their collections to support a curriculum and the specific research interests of their faculties and student bodies. Independent research libraries have no such constraints on their collecting interests. They do not have to sway to the changing winds of academic interests and curricular fads. They do not have to serve up what the public demands, as do public libraries. This is both a wonderful freedom and a risky venture. As noted above, in most cases the ways in which the independent research libraries were founded had an immense initial impact on how they developed their collections. For example, the Research Library at the Getty Research Institute began in 1983 as a small curatorial library of 20,000 volumes in support of the curatorial staff and specific collection strengths of the J. Paul Getty Museum. Set free from this agenda, and required to support research more generally in the history of world art, architecture, and archaeology, it has broadened its collecting and grown to more than 800,000 volumes, including significant holdings of rare and unique materials.

Over time, independent research libraries, especially those founded in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, often driven by fiscal constraint have needed to do the opposite. They have sharpened their collecting focus to establish substantial expertise and identity in limited, specialized subject areas. For example, "The American Antiquarian Society, by 1900 discontinued its interest in anthropology, archaeology, ethnology, and ethnography... The Newberry stopped trying to be a general reference library..." (Budington, 1976, p. 313). In another case, "the Library Company of Philadelphia, in the 1930s and 1940s was uncertain of its mission, ... from 1943 to 1955 it was, in fact, operated by the Free Library of Philadelphia. Affiliation was considered with the University of Pennsylvania, the American Philosophical Society, and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. A new location next to the last-named institution was decided upon in 1960; in a cooperative mode, the society now houses the manuscript holdings of
both libraries, while the Library Company cares for the two rare book collections. A new role as a fully research-oriented library was finally arrived at by the company” (Budington, 1976, p. 313).

Each institution has its own unique way of making decisions regarding collection development. There is no one decision-making model of best practice or organizational structure across IRLA institutions, as one might find in academic libraries. Budgets do vary, but all seek appropriate gifts-in-kind to build on collection strengths and perhaps to begin new areas of collecting. Generally, collecting rare materials is primary to IRLA institutions. Collecting these rare materials is often opportunistic (just as it is for special collections departments in academic libraries). Adding supporting and reference materials is often secondary.

**Whom Do These Collections Serve?**

By focusing on rare materials in specific areas and by building eminent, noncirculating collections, an IRLA institution “supplements” the special collections in academic libraries in a meaningful way. “In a very real sense, the collection thus shapes its readership, which tends to be not exclusively local but regional, national, international, and of high scholarly repute” (Budington, 1976, p. 300). Each institution has its own definition of “qualified reader,” and its own specific requirements for gaining entrance. In some cases, that may include the general public, genealogists, and local history buffs. In general, scholars, scientists, and graduate students affiliated with academic and cultural institutions around the world and independent scholars with appropriate credentials may gain entrance. One or two official IDs are often required. This may seem a bit elitist, but in defense of the image in his prepared Congressional committee testimony, Lawrence W. Towner pointed out that IRLA libraries as a composite “hold some 13–15 million volumes and provide, annually, nearly one million research days free of charge” (Towner, 1993, p. 266).

New constituencies sought by some IRLA institutions and actively served by all their Web sites are secondary teachers and students, undergraduate students, journalists, writers, artists, and families. All exhibitions sponsored by IRLA libraries are open to the public. Many are free. For years the Newberry Library through its Research and Education Program has collaborated with a consortium of liberal arts colleges in the Midwest to bring undergraduates to the Newberry as a part of a seminar for which each student receives degree credit at his or her home institution. The American Antiquarian Society has established a special fellowship program for creative and performing artists and writers, including filmmakers, “whose goals are to produce imaginative, non-formulaic works dealing with pre-twentieth-century American history. Successful applicants are those whose work is for the general public rather than for academic or educational audiences.”
How Have These Libraries Approached Access, Including Digital Access?

The American Antiquarian Society’s innovative fellowship program for creative and performing artists and writers is but one example of how independent research libraries have attracted readers to their collections and made them accessible to those at a distance lacking funds for travel. Many IRLA libraries have offered research fellowships (both pre- and post-doctorate) supported by grant funds received from NEH, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, other foundations, and private donors. This support is seen as crucial for the health and vigorous use of these noncirculating libraries. If researchers who need to use the materials in the collections cannot come for economic reasons, the libraries’ natural constituencies do not have access, and they are not served. The Folger, American Antiquarian Society, Huntington, and Newberry libraries (the subgroup of IRLA known as “FAHN”) have led the way in establishing extensive fellowship and educational programs to bring readers to their reading rooms. Print publications have also been an important way in which IRLA libraries have provided access to their collections.

In regard to digital access, now all IRLA libraries have Web sites that may be used by their constituencies and the general public. The IRLA organization also has a Web site that hot links to all member Web sites. Nearly all have library catalogs available on the Web, and those who do not are working on it. IRLA libraries have been slower than academic libraries to automate their catalogs. This has been due to limited financial resources and to a lack of technical infrastructure, in some cases. However, as a result, they have not suffered any negative consequences of being on the “bleeding edge” of information technology. As they have developed their online catalogs, most have contributed catalog records to RLIN to make their resources better known. (Fifteen of eighteen members of IRLA are members of RLG.) Six contribute finding aids for manuscript and archival collections marked up in Encoded Archival Description (EAD) to the RLG Archival Resources database. And in California, the Getty and the Huntington have contributed these finding aids to the Online Archive of California, a database within the California Digital Library.

Now some digital content is coming out of IRLA libraries and being made available as a part of RLG Cultural Materials, a database of digital images and text to which any library may subscribe. The American Antiquarian Society, the Huntington Library, the Linda Hall Library, and the New York Academy of Medicine are all RLG Cultural Materials Alliance participants, and their collections are represented in the RLG Cultural Materials database by some digital material.

It has been difficult for IRLA libraries to keep up with academic libraries in making digital products available commercially to their readers. These products include online indexing and abstracting services as well as full-text
journals and e-books. The readers that come to IRLA libraries on a sabbatical or research leave from the academic community are accustomed to accessing these resources in the libraries in their home institutions. They are disappointed when they find they will not have the same level of access during their leave. Hopefully, this will prove to be a temporary problem as IRLA libraries analyze their budgets and find ways to make available the digital products basic to the disciplines they collect and required by the scholars who use their collections.

**WHAT FUTURE CHALLENGES DO INDEPENDENT RESEARCH LIBRARIES FACE?**

The greatest strength of the independent research library is its freedom to be creative in its programming. It answers to no one but itself. Towner spoke of this in his 1973 testimony: "our independence and our freedom from the constraints of parental institutions allow us a greater flexibility and opportunity to innovate, within the limits of our means, than otherwise would be the case" (Towner, 1993, p. 257). This strength is also the independent research library’s greatest challenge. Since it is free, it has no one to take care of it in hard times. It must be self-reliant and resourceful in finding ways to fund everything innovative it may wish to do. In the current economic downturn, endowments of all nonprofits have declined, and as a consequence, hard choices must be made about what may or may not be accomplished. Since digital projects are expensive, some may be placed on hold. Furthermore, while the stock market and endowments have declined, the prices of rare materials have not. This will surely have a negative impact on acquisition of new materials. IRLA libraries will need to depend to an even greater extent on donors of both monetary gifts and gifts-in-kind to sustain and build their collections and programs. The economic decline is likely to follow a four- to six-year cycle, during which time IRLA libraries should not be tempted to spend a larger portion of their endowment income than they currently do. A large dip into endowments would only lead to serious financial troubles down the road. Furthermore, if the current economic difficulties lead to cuts of special collections departments in academic libraries, the role of IRLA libraries in the production of new knowledge from primary source materials will become even more critical.

Following on money, the second most serious external challenge facing independent research libraries may be changes in the way scholarship in the humanities is done and reported. Certain kinds of scholarship have come in and out of fashion, but, heretofore, collections at independent research libraries have been flexible and allowed for new uses. For example, as bibliography and textual analysis went out of fashion in English departments across the country, the history of the book and the study of publishing history came in. New uses were found for the same old rare books and manuscripts. If scholars come to rely on digital collections for their research
REFERENCES


2. The New York Public Library is among the most beautiful independent research libraries in the United States, (2016).


NOTES

The need for independent research libraries is growing, and their role in supporting the mission of independent research libraries is becoming more significant. These libraries are often among the most beautiful in the country, and their collections are constantly expanding. With the rise of digital libraries, these institutions are becoming even more important to researchers and students. The libraries are often located in university campuses and are often supported by wealthy foundations.

Library Trends/SUMMER 2009
Mutually Assured Survival: Library Fund-raising Strategies in a Changing Economy

LISA BROWAR AND SAMUEL A. STREIT

ABSTRACT
This essay examines the current international economic disruption and its effect upon the scholarly and academic community, an effect that is exacerbated by what appears to be a fundamental shift in donor philosophy. Taken together, these factors are forcing academic and cultural institutions to reevaluate traditional areas of support in light of broader societal pressures. The implications for research libraries, including their special collections departments, are profound, and much of this essay is devoted to strategies for coping with an unfamiliar and competitive fundraising environment. The approach is to stress the need for librarians, including those in special collections, to develop a long-term vision and strategy based upon a flexible working knowledge of the evolving goals and mission of the parent library and institution. Additionally, the essay emphasizes the necessity for understanding the broader philanthropic environment and the tools required to exploit philanthropic opportunity, from planned giving and investment vehicles to donor-advised giving instruments.

INTRODUCTION
Traditionally, academic libraries in general, and special collections libraries in particular, have derived their operating budgets from a combination of sources. Operating budgets are the cumulative result of funds provided from tuition revenues, university allocations, endowment income, and monies raised annually from a variety of sources including individual donor contributions in the form of cash gifts, gifts-in-kind, and bequests; and grants made by corporate and philanthropic foundations and govern-
mental granting agencies. The recent economic downturn, with its far-reaching effects on the for-profit, nonprofit, and governmental sectors of the American economy, has imperiled each of these sources, threatening the continued flow of financial support into academic libraries and endangering the future growth of their collections.

In addition to pursuing development initiatives in support of their own programs, special collections libraries have long provided leverage for larger institutional fund-raising efforts by providing exhibitions, private viewings of their most prized collections, behind-the-scenes tours, limited edition publications, and exclusive venues for dazzling receptions, dinners, and gala events all designed to impress and entice donors. The public relations aspect of special collections librarianship, always an important component of the work, will not diminish as fund-raising becomes increasingly competitive. In fact, the opposite is likely to be true.

For better or worse, special collections libraries are perceived as possessing an element of glamour and exclusivity shared by museums but missing from general research libraries. The one-of-a-kind aspect that attaches to special collections along with the well-publicized prices of many acquisitions, the rarefied atmosphere of auction houses, and the members of the literati and glitterati so often associated with museum culture combine to obscure the support given to research and teaching, the sometimes back-breaking work of acquisitions, and the many quotidian tasks that comprise the daily reality of the jobs along with the rigorous intellectual preparation that the profession demands. Nevertheless, maintaining this glamorous façade will be important as library and institutional fund-raising enters an environment of foreshortened expectations. As special collections librarians and institutional development officers work harder and longer for every dollar raised, dependency on the public personae of special collections librarians, their work, and their workplaces will increase.

Working alone or in tandem with their development officers to generate income for their own collections or for the larger institutions in which they reside, special collections librarians can take preemptive measures to shore up current or anticipated fund-raising shortfalls caused by prevailing economic conditions. Their ability to respond to these circumstances will require the creation and implementation of long-term strategies designed to mitigate the effects of an unfavorable economy. Successful implementation of such strategies will depend to a great extent upon three things: the ways in which the market economy affects the nonprofit sector; an understanding of the changes in the philanthropic environment brought about by the market economy; and a working knowledge of the latest investment strategies and giving instruments available to and used by private, corporate, and foundation donors.
How the Current Market Economy Affects Philanthropic Giving and Receiving

Citing data collected by the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Philanthropy News Digest* observed recently, "a shaky economy and plunging stock values have caused organizations and individuals to scale back charitable donations across the country, prompting nonprofits to find new ways to raise funds to further their missions" (Foundation Center, 2002b). This observation encapsulates the fallout experienced by the economic recession begun nearly two years ago and accelerated in the aftermath of the September 11th tragedies. Among the many newspaper stories documenting the recent decline in charitable giving, the *New York Times* reported on the impact curtailed giving is having on some cultural organizations,

Shrinking endowments and a new wave of philanthropic thriftiness have compelled many organizations to lay off workers, to leave staff positions unfilled, and to tell grant seekers not to bother. (Strom, 2002b, p. A27)

Tamar C. Podell, vice president for planning and development at Lincoln Center, Inc., qualified the situation further by noting the three distinct ways in which giving will be impacted by current and anticipated future economic conditions:

The economy is soft, which means reduced earnings, which translates into concerns about corporate giving. Then there is the stock market decline, which we fear might have a negative effect on year-end giving by individual donors, and finally, the foundation support that we have come to greatly appreciate is most likely going to be reduced. (Strom, 2002b, p. A27)

Another New York City fund-raiser, referring to the recent inability of certain individual donors to fulfill pledge commitments, framed the situation this way: "Tack a list of dot-coms, telcos, venture capital firms, financial services companies, and tech companies to a wall and throw a dart. I guarantee you'll find an executive that can't live up to a commitment he made to an institution" (Strom, 2002b, p. A27).

According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*,

Efforts to raise money lagged in the immediate aftermath of September 11, as some institutions stopped fund-raising altogether or did not solicit from donors in the New York or Washington areas, sometimes for months. Then, late in the fiscal year, the stock market slide began, imperiling the relative wealth of donors. (Van Der Werf et al., 2002, p. A27)

These events delivered a veritable one-two punch to academic and cultural fund-raising, severely curtailing the immediate flow of revenue and dramatically altering long-range fund-raising plans designed to meet future goals and priorities.
It is important to remember, however, that the current philanthropic slowdown began not with the events of September 11th, but with the widespread Internet business failures setting this most recent recession in motion, followed by volatility of the capital markets, a sharp drop in corporate profits, and slower growth of personal income. When adjusted for inflation, data show that charitable giving in 2001 declined by some 2.3 percent over the previous year, a trend that has continued throughout 2002. According to American Association of Fundraising Council (AAFRC) Trust for Philanthropy chair Leo P. Arnout, charitable giving “fits the pattern we have seen during previous recessions. In six of the eight recession years since 1971, giving dropped by one to five percent when adjusted for inflation” (Pulley, 2002a, p. A27).

Support for all charitable causes, including education and related initiatives, fell in 2001 when adjusted for inflation. Similarly, gifts from living individuals, which account for nearly three-fourths of all giving, declined by 1.7 percent when adjusted for inflation. The Giving USA report informs that estimated corporate giving suffered the steepest drop, declining 12.1 percent, to $91.1 billion, an inflation-adjusted decline of 14.5 percent (Pulley, 2002a, p. A27).

In contrast to corporate giving, foundation grants grew by 5.4 percent in 2001, to an estimated $25.9 billion, an inflation-adjusted increase of 2.5 percent. The Foundation Yearbook’s extended analysis of estimated foundation giving in 2001 suggests, however, that a weak recovery from the nation’s first recession in ten years, along with two years of declining equity values, will mean, at best, no increase in foundation giving for 2002. This prediction is borne out by advance warnings ranging from giant foundations such as the Ford and Gates foundations to local community foundations across the country (Foundation Center, 2002a).

Just as the recession has impacted the fortunes of private donors and philanthropic foundations and their generosity, so too has it affected the financial health and well-being of universities and their endowments. The New York Times reports, “the investment losses incurred in this recession mark the first time since the early 1970s that universities have lost money on the endowment investments two years in a row” (Zernike, 2002, pp. A1–24). According to the National Association of College and University Business Officers, universities lost an average of 3.6 percent on their investments in the fiscal year ending in June 2001 (Zernike, 2002, pp. A1–24). Public and private universities have been similarly wounded, but private universities have absorbed a greater impact because they depend on their endowments for a greater share of their budget than do public universities (Zernike, 2002, pp. A1–24). Programmatically, the repercussions have ranged from serious to catastrophic, with hiring freezes, layoffs, and postponed or cancelled building projects that would have resulted in additional classrooms, laboratories, dormitories, and medical facilities. Ironically, the budgetary shortfalls caused by losses in anticipated endowment income have
increased institutional dependency on the largesse of philanthropists who have sustained similar investment losses since the recession began.

This recent economic volatility may well emerge as a continuing factor in twenty-first-century fund-raising. With widespread corporate retrenchment taking place throughout American industry, the near- and long-term economic forecasts do not bode well for corporate and family philanthropic foundations and individual investors who habitually contribute a percentage of their incomes to nonprofit organizations. The fallout from declining corporate revenues and individual investment income will mean, at the end of the day, that development officers raising funds on behalf of nonprofit institutions, including special collections librarians endeavoring to maintain the flow of philanthropic dollars into their libraries, will have to work harder and longer, and live with more disappointment than usual, to sustain their funding bases.

As special collections librarians and their development officers spend increasingly larger amounts of time raising funds, the opportunity cost associated with this activity will increase, making fund-raising a more expensive organizational proposition than ever before. Every hour a special collections librarian spends raising money instead of performing collections-based tasks, the cost of that hour is known as the "opportunity cost," or the cost associated with the activity, in this case, fund-raising. If in the current economy a librarian has to spend twice as many hours raising amounts similar to those prior to the economic downturn, the opportunity cost of raising that money will double.

**Changes in the Philanthropic Environment**

For development officers and others involved in fund-raising and portfolio management for cultural and educational institutions, the severity of these economic repercussions has been compounded by recent shifts in the funding priorities of corporate, foundation, and private philanthropists away from higher education and cultural initiatives. Educational and cultural institutions dependent upon financial support from philanthropic agencies have been left scrambling to reformulate not only fund-raising priorities but also strategies that heretofore yielded lucrative results from individual and corporate donors.

Higher education, particularly the liberal arts, has been disproportionately affected by this new economic reality. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* notes,

> During the downturn, some budget items, predictably, have received the lion's share of attention: faculty salaries, tuition rates, and construction spending. But the budget items that support intellectual life are much smaller and much more vulnerable, so many academics believe they will not be able to bounce back when the economy recovers. (Smallwood, 2002, pp. A10-13)
As the principal support of intellectual life on most university campuses, academic libraries fall into this category. The fear of never regaining lost financial ground is palpable. Penn State English professor Michael Bérubé notes, “Imagine that flush times return in 2006. I can’t believe any state legislator will be saying, ‘OK, now let’s pour money back into the library.’ That’s not going to happen” (Smallwood, 2002, pp. A10-13).

Compounding the decelerating pace of philanthropic giving is the geopolitical instability that has unfolded in the months since September 11th, capturing the attention of many philanthropic organizations. More than a few organizations have opted to focus their diminished financial resources on issues pertaining to nation-building and world health crises, assigning a lower priority to their largesse on behalf of education and culture. Simply put, at this particular juncture, corporate and foundation philanthropists have less money to give away largely due to an economic recession. The bulk of philanthropic resources available for distribution are subsidizing humanitarian relief. For many philanthropic organizations, the problems of historic and cultural preservation pale in comparison to the gut-wrenching needs of starving children, land mine victims, the Third World AIDS pandemic, and human rights abuses.

Acknowledgment by grant makers that the problems faced by higher education are not as compelling as they once were is a serious blow to fundraising in the educational and cultural venues. Elementary and secondary education, early-childhood education, early-childhood development, and health and medical programs are competing successfully with higher education for foundation funding, as evidenced by the Atlantic Philanthropies’ announcement in early 2002 that it was abandoning its higher education programs, which had accounted for 60 percent of its grants. Atlantic announced that it would shift the focus of its philanthropy to issues of disadvantaged children, aging, and biomedical research and public health. Atlantic’s president, John R. Healy, said of his foundation’s new philosophy, “We expect to reduce our investment in higher education and generally in nonprofit sector research in the U.S.” (Pulley, 2002c, p. A28).

Atlantic Philanthropies’ shift mirrors similar transitions in other philanthropic organizations that are redirecting resources away from higher education toward other areas of the nonprofit sector. The Pew Charitable Trusts has, according to Susan A. Urahn, Pew’s director of education, narrowed its focus in higher education to concentrate on issues of early education. Objecting to any characterizations of Pew’s altered practices as a shift, Urahn calls it a “trimming.” Gail C. Levin, executive director of the Annenberg Foundation remarked, “There was a concern that not enough was being done to strengthen public elementary and secondary education. There has been a heightened awareness of the great need in those K-12 years.” Deborah J. Wilds, a program officer at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation said, “I think many foundations are trying to focus on the ar-
cas that they see as having the greatest needs and the greatest problems. That has tended to be, increasingly, K–12 education" (Pulley, 2002c, p. A28).

In a climate of diminished philanthropy driven by changes in focus by foundations, corporations, and individual donors, universities increasingly are strategically redirecting their fund-raising initiatives. This may mean repackaging traditional and ongoing needs in order to adjust to contemporary giving trends or, more radically, shifting institutional priorities significantly so that they will have greater appeal to external imperatives. For universities, this often means demonstrating and emphasizing the positive role they play in society at large, for example, creating links to K–12 education, national health issues, or sharing resources via the Internet. Suffering by contrast are funding initiatives that are perceived as emphasizing "thing over people" or areas of teaching and research that appeal, or seem to appeal, only to a limited number of scholars or to have no "practical" benefit. The humanities, perhaps, are at a greater disadvantage in this regard than either the sciences or the social sciences in that the humanities often are associated in the public mind with elite cultural expression, distant historical subjects, or artistic endeavors that are of less urgent consequence in hard economic times than are issues of world hunger, AIDS and cancer research, or explosive global politics.

THE NEED FOR A LONG-TERM FUND-RAISING VISION

While desperate times traditionally call for desperate measures, traditional tactics such as the wholesale cancellation of important but expensive serial titles and other similarly dramatic gestures taken to mitigate rising acquisitions costs will not by themselves stanch the bleeding that research libraries are currently experiencing. Neither will piecemeal nor opportunistic fund-raising efforts mounted in support of stand-alone projects, nor those that capitalize on the whims of individual donors. The long-term survival of research library collections, programs, and services will necessitate comprehensive strategies that include not only voluntary and involuntary belt-tightening, but also a philanthropic vision that resembles a personal investment strategy as much as it does an institutional fund-raising plan.

The vision that will protect library collections and services from erosion is one that grows its funding bases through careful planning, fund management, and diversification. Just as shrewd investors build and maintain diversified investment portfolios, never depending on a single investment for both growth and income, so should a library’s fund-raising plan strive for similar diversification. No fund-raising strategy should ever depend exclusively upon one or even a few select donors to achieve fund-raising goals.

This long-term vision is likewise predicated on librarians and their development officers becoming more conversant with the nonprofit sector and the philanthropic environment in which their organizations attempt
to raise money. It is also dependent on the ability to take the long view. The creation and implementation of long-term rather than immediate fund-raising objectives holds the key to institutional solvency and survival.

In order to devise long-term effective fund-raising strategies it is now incumbent upon librarians to acquire financial skills and political aptitude by submerging themselves in areas of expertise that were previously thought to reside outside their spheres of interest or influence. Librarians must understand why the fortunes of the nonprofit sector are linked to those of the government and corporate sectors, and how their own institutional fortunes are thus affected. Awareness that the realities of a market economy can and do influence the nonprofit sector in ways that eventually impinge upon philanthropists and their support of educational and cultural institutions, including libraries, is a first step to understanding the need for long-term strategies.

It is essential for librarians to learn that they can influence philanthropic behavior the same way development officers do by matching programmatic needs to the categories that most frequently attract external financial support. But in order to be successful, librarians wishing to become fund-raisers must build up their knowledge base and become comfortable discussing investment strategies, market fluctuations, and nonprofit management as they are explaining the intricacies of electronic databases. Additionally, they must be able to approach donor constituency building in a comprehensive manner that simultaneously connects their organizational missions to public relations campaigns while relating the philanthropic community’s interest and financial resources to their libraries through fund-raising. Finally, they must be able to capture the attention of potential donors and philanthropists at a time when competition for the diminished philanthropic dollar is stronger than ever. Whether they realize it or not, librarians have the capacity to persuade donors to make long-term investments in their programs in the same ways that investment counselors advise clients on matters of personal finance. In short, librarians must learn to think like entrepreneurs and strategists, like investment bankers with one eye on the bottom line and the other on the horizon.

Building Up a Knowledge Base

A substantial body of literature devoted to the practical aspects of library development has accrued in recent years. Donor prospect identification and cultivation, major gift solicitation and stewardship, friends programs, events planning, and leadership competencies comprise the substance of much of this valuable reading, offering sound practical advice for novices as well as those experienced in library fund-raising. A recently published essay by Mark D. Winston and Lisa Dunkley is typical of the genre. In their article entitled “Leadership Competencies for Academic Librarians: The Importance of Development and Fund-raising,” Winston and
Dunkley stress leadership qualities such as adaptability, effective interpersonal communication, and good decision-making as essential for effective academic library leadership in general and fund-raising in particular. Providing lists of fund-raising responsibilities and core competencies for academic librarians involved in development and fund-raising, they note,

The data suggest that today's fundraising professional needs to be able to identify gift opportunities through strategic planning, to create successful solicitation and cultivation plans, and to provide stewardship to donors. In a library setting, obtaining these requisite skills can be challenging. Previous experience is a highly valued asset, and most librarians will not have professional fund-raising experience when they enter the profession. Yet, they need to have these skills to be successful in future leadership roles. (Winston & Dunkley, 2002)

Although true, this observation does not address a critical oversight pervading most of the available literature devoted to library fund-raising. That is, emphasis on the importance of a fundamental knowledge of the nonprofit sector and the way in which it is financed, without which librarians' efforts to create, advance, and facilitate philanthropy may falter.

In his extended study, America's Nonprofit Sector: A Primer, Lester M. Salamon, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, remarked, "if health is the largest component of the American nonprofit sector, education is the second largest. One out of every five dollars of nonprofit expenditures is spent by nonprofit educational institutions" (Salamon, 1999, p. 95). He reported that in the mid-1990s education expenditures were only half as large as those for health care, but nevertheless represented 7 percent of the gross domestic product. One percent of the amount spent on education was designated for library services.

Salamon analyzed that income in the form of tuition and other fees provides at least 70 percent of total revenue for private colleges and universities. Government agencies provide approximately 17 percent of total funding. The remaining 13 percent of financial support for private schools is derived from the combined revenue from private gifts, grants, contracts, and endowment earnings. In contrast, he noted, public colleges and universities receive 45 percent of their income from tuition and other fees, relying on government support for almost 50 percent of their income, and on private gifts, grants, contracts, and endowment income for the remaining 5 percent. Regardless of the disparity in their funding sources, philanthropy provides the third most important source of funding for both public and private institutions of higher education. Yet, this third component of private and public school revenues often means the critical difference between initiatives moving forward or dying for lack of financial support (Salamon, 1999).

Information of the sort offered by Salamon helps contextualize the place institutions of higher learning, including libraries, occupy in the
nonprofit sector, while throwing into sharp relief the economic and philanthropic environment in which fund-raisers function in the best of times. It is essential for librarians with fund-raising responsibilities to ingest this knowledge and maintain its currency by keeping apprised of proposed legislation affecting charitable giving as it moves through Congress, changes in tax laws as they pertain to charitable gifts and bequests, and marketplace fluctuations affecting the overall economy.

COPING WITH THE NEW REALITIES OF FUND-RAISING

With so many donor priorities now fixed on solving problems whose solutions are more urgent or visceral than those presented by academic libraries, a reappraisal of fund-raising objectives, strategies, and investment practices must take place within higher education, and specifically within libraries. As development professionals are waking up to the new realities of fund-raising in an altered environment, so too must librarians if they are to achieve success in securing outside funding.

Contemporary and future fund-raising will require librarians to express more than their institutional missions and case statements to funding agencies and donors. It will assume a level of expertise that extends beyond events planning, stewardship, and familiarity with a donor’s intellectual and philanthropic passions. Successful fund-raising will demand librarians who comprehend on a profound level the societal importance of their work and who can persuasively convey this importance to sophisticated grant makers whose charitable predilections may not have leaned traditionally toward higher education, much less toward research libraries. Those librarians and library development officers able to make their institutional cases to individual donors and funding agencies (that may regard such investments as outside their philanthropic missions to cure disease and educate disadvantaged children) will succeed in the new funding environment.

Academic libraries, as integral components of their parent institutions, inevitably have been drawn into this shifting world of twenty-first-century philanthropy. Many are viewed by senior institutional administrators as being less relevant to the newer goals and priorities of the university. Just as the parent institution is compelled to justify itself as worthy of support, so must the library demonstrate that it is essential to the ongoing mission of the university and to the betterment of society at large. Simply chanting that the library is the heart of the university will no longer suffice—if it ever did. Proof is now required that the heart is still beating.

The task of successfully positioning the academic library within the context of a harsh economy, changing patterns of philanthropy, and institutional relevance is not, indeed cannot, be solely the province of the library’s development office or that of the university. As Susan K. Martin, writing in the Journal of Academic Librarianship, states, “A library director intent on operating a successful development operation will need to devote
time to fundraising . . . The amount of time may increase to 25–50%, and perhaps more than 50% during a capital campaign" (Martin, 1998, p. 8). Martin does not limit library participation in fund-raising to the director, however. She adds, “Other members of the library staff will participate in the development process. A few people are obvious candidates: the head of special collections, the curator of manuscripts, and the gifts librarian” (Martin, 1998, p. 8).

Aside from participating in library development work in general, what are the implications for special collections departments in the current economic and philanthropic climate? In the best of times, special collections units are all too frequently viewed within the library as being outside the mainstream and peripheral to the library’s core mission, a situation that can lead to marginalization. In the present environment, this common situation may easily be exacerbated to the extent that the library is not made aware of the centrality of special collections to the larger enterprise and not convinced that existing funding should be sustained or that increased funding should be a high priority. As the library overall cannot rest upon sacred bovine laurels, neither can special collections departments.

The exhortation to librarians to be active participants in fund-raising is, as noted elsewhere in this paper, well covered in the professional literature. The remainder of this paper will acquaint librarians, including those in special collections, with new philanthropic approaches, the principal instruments of charitable giving, and the new breed of financial advisers who can be of assistance in navigating the choppy seas of economic doldrums, donor shifts in philanthropic focus, and institutional reaction to both challenges.

Pioneered by latter-day philanthropists, such as Bill and Melinda Gates and Paul Allen, who acquired their wealth during the tech boom of the 1990s, the concept of “venture philanthropy” has transformed modern charitable giving. Not unlike the Peace Corps with its practice of teaching hungry populations to grow their own food rather than depend upon charitable gifts of grain, venture philanthropists provide “seed money” for innovations that will result in societal benefit but will become ultimately self-sustaining. Although the high-tech bubble has burst, evidence of the persistent impact of venture philanthropy suggests that at least some of the new styles of giving that emerged in the 1990s may have a permanent place in philanthropy (Marcy, 2001, p. B13).

In 2001, the Chronicle of Higher Education pointed out,

There are at least two compelling reasons why we in higher education should review our fundraising methods in the wake of the high-tech boom. One is that aggressive and substantial donors from the high-tech sector are still with us and are likely to remain so, even as the shakeout eliminates some of the less viable dot-com enterprises. The second reason is that many, if not most, of the new high-tech donors are also baby boomers. (Marcy, 2001, p. B13)
It is predicted that the members of the baby boom generation stand to inherit the bulk of the wealth projected to transfer from the World War II generation. Although reduced by the stock market slide of recent months, this inheritance, while smaller than the originally anticipated $41 trillion, will still be magnified with the repeal of the federal estate tax signed into law by President Bush as part of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001, and thus it represents a considerable philanthropic resource.

Noting the important differences between traditional donors and new venture philanthropists the *Chronicle* continued,

> The traditional donor wants to leave a legacy. The new donor often wants to change the world, and wants to do it now. The traditional donor invests in established institutions while the new donor may have a suspicion of established institutions. The traditional donor expects a gift to lead to a predictable outcome but the new donor may be more willing to embrace nascent or risky ideas. Traditional donors take on volunteer leadership roles defined by the institution. New donors may expect to contribute not only financial resources but also their expertise. (Marcy, 2001, p. B13)

Soliciting gifts from venture philanthropists may not be right for every library context. Some may not be able to accommodate an additional level of participation from donors who have invested in innovative library initiatives. Yet, the opportunity to join an enthusiastic, entrepreneurial, results-oriented donor with strategic library innovation makes a compelling case for the consideration of venture philanthropy.

Foundation support and contributions from individual donors or venture philanthropists obtained to fund innovative programs or for the purpose of leveraging additional financial support does not address the need to identify and secure funding for other, more traditional programmatic needs. These needs must be accommodated through the use of internal operating funds and the acquisition of assembled external support, usually in the form of traditional modes of giving such as gifts-in-kind to be sold for the benefit of the library and major gifts of cash.

Bequests, particularly those negotiated as a result of a donor’s estate planning efforts, can provide useful, specifically targeted support for a library’s areas of need while matching a donor’s philanthropic objectives. Librarians may be able to influence a donor’s estate planning efforts by suggesting bequests that will ensure that the donor’s interests and influence will continue beyond the length of his or her life.

Gifts-in-kind, in addition to providing items that are incorporated into a library’s holdings, may also take the form of items lying out of a library’s collecting scope that are sold to provide funds that will support a library’s collecting mission. Before contemplating a sale of gifts-in-kind, tax laws pertaining to sales of donated property must be thoroughly investigated.
Major gifts are typically gifts of cash in excess of $50,000 given for specific purposes. Major donors are those usually defined as persons contributing sums of this size to a single nonprofit organization within the immediate past two years and who maintain at least $1 million dollars in a discretionary advisory account (Fund Raising School, 2001a). As a rule, major gifts are not spontaneous donations but rather are the result of fairly lengthy cultivation efforts on the part of librarians and their development officers. Cultivation efforts are carefully planned and executed. They are based upon extensive research into a donor’s background, finances, giving history, and philanthropic objectives and may be protracted over months or years before actual donations are made.

The imperative to devise the kind of longer-term development strategies that will secure a library’s future can be obscured by the clear and present need to identify and obtain funds to subsidize more immediate needs. Subsidizing annual operations, capital and discretionary projects, and the programs that enhance the quality of extant library service frequently precludes consideration of some of the most overlooked fund-raising tools available. Planned giving instruments can provide libraries with endowed income that can help secure long-term financial stability because the nature of the gifts relate most decidedly toward endowment development. Some development professionals view planned gifts as trade-offs for the near-term financial gain of major gifts. This somewhat short-sighted opinion fails to recognize planned gifts as provisions allowing donors to perpetuate their personal interest and influence into the future while frequently providing themselves with dependable sources of income in the form of dividends and/or tax benefits (Fund Raising School, 2001b). Planned gifts are more imaginative than lump sum donations given to supplement income-producing endowments, or major gifts given to support specific and finite initiatives.

According to Victoria Steele and Stephen D. Elder, authors of Becoming a Fundraiser: The Principles and Practice of Library Development,

Planned gifts are often grouped into three types: (1) bequests, (2) life-income gifts, and (3) other types of planned gifts. Donors make bequests through their will or living trust. Donors make life-income gifts by transferring ownership of assets, such as appreciated stock, to a [sic] library in return for which they enjoy an income, usually until they die, at which time the remainder of the gift comes to the library [sic]. The “other” category includes charitable lead trusts through which donors can provide an immediate benefit to the library, after which the asset is transferred to their heirs. (Steele & Elder, 2000)

Planned gifts are those that donors make in consideration of all other financial planning objectives in order to maximize the potential benefit of the gift to the donors as well as the charities. They also minimize the net cost of the gifts by virtue of tax considerations available to the donors. Sim-
ply put, planned gifts enable donors to commit portions of their assets to philanthropic objectives while receiving tax considerations (deductions or lowered tax bases) and still receiving the benefits of the donated assets.

Planned gifts tend to be large and present an opportunity for institutions to work with donors who may not be able to make lump sum gifts and acquire assets that might otherwise be unavailable. Planned gifts may produce revenue that is available on a regular basis for operating expenses, and they may be used as a basis for future estate planning for their donors (Steele & Elder, 2000). In addition to bequests, some of the more common planned giving instruments include trusts, life estate gifts, assignments of copyrights and/or royalties, charitable gift annuities, charitable lead trusts, charitable remainder unitrusts, charitable remainder annuity trusts, and life insurance, along with gifts of appreciated stock and securities. Librarians seriously engaged in formulating long-term development strategies should become conversant with the ways in which these gift instruments work so that they can discuss their use and implementation with donors and institutional development officers. While librarians may encourage certain donors to consider various planned giving instruments as part of their personal long-term investment strategies or estate plans, no librarian should ever dispense estate planning advice or tax advice to a potential donor, nor should a librarian attempt to execute a planned giving instrument. Planned gifts can be exceptionally complicated instruments to construct and execute, and they require the services of lawyers, accountants, or other tax and estate planning professionals.

The item with the most potential value in a library fund-raiser's tool kit is the donor-advised fund. As investment vehicles, donor-advised funds have been available since the 1930s. But today they are being recognized for the flexibility they offer contributors and the wealth they can bring to institutions. Like the offspring produced by the marriage of a planned giving instrument and a mutual fund, a donor-advised fund offers donors investing in it the benefit of dependable income in the form of dividends and offers institutions the long-term prospect of a share of the principle assets in the donor-advised account after the donor's death. Furthermore, donors have the option to use some or all of their dividend income for philanthropic purposes, thus becoming eligible for additional tax considerations (Pulley, 2002b).

Similar to mutual funds, donor-advised funds assure that the sponsoring organization will receive a percentage of the profits generated by the fund. These funds differ from foundations in that they are exempt from federal taxes as well as from a law requiring private foundations to distribute approximately 5 percent of their assets annually. Unlike many planned giving instruments, gifts to donor-advised funds are irrevocable and are controlled by the fund (Pulley, 2002b).

Donors investing the usual minimum contribution of $10,000 in donor-
advised funds receive an immediate tax deduction that is more generous than the write-off on contributions to private foundations. Furthermore, donors to these funds have the ability to distribute money from their accounts for philanthropic purposes. During the life of the account, its investment profits may enlarge a contribution many times over (Pulley, 2002b).

Many colleges and universities are widening their planned-giving options by offering donor-advised funds to some of their donor prospects. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, the typical arrangement most donor-advised funds requires 50 percent of the assets in a donor’s account to eventually transfer to the institution. The remainder of the assets in the account may remain to generate revenue for the donor’s personal use, which could include direct gifts for other philanthropic purposes (Pulley, 2002b).

According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, “while the concept is just beginning to take off at colleges, donor-advised funds have been growing quickly elsewhere” (Pulley, 2002b, pp. A31–32). Fidelity Investments was one of the first investment companies to anticipate the baby boomers’ increase in demand for wealth-management and philanthropic services and established the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund in 1992, a nonprofit entity that offered the first so-called “commercial” donor-advised fund. Today it is the largest such fund with total assets of about $2.6 billion. Other investment firms quickly followed suit, and now donor-advised funds are offered by Charles Schwab, the Vanguard Group, American Express, Goldman Sachs, Bear Sterns, Salomon Smith Barney, and TIAA-CREF (Pulley, 2002b).

Cornell University was among the first academic institution to create a donor-advised fund in 1986, followed by Harvard, Brandeis, Thomas Jefferson, and Yale Universities, along with the Universities of Florida and Maine. Boston University has recently established a donor-advised fund and has observed, “The donor-advised fund empowers the group to act in a far bigger way than its members could individually.” The contributors to Boston University’s donor-advised fund plan to raise and designate funds for worthwhile projects as needs arise (Pulley, 2002b, pp. A31–32).

Many financial planners predict that donor-advised funds represent the philanthropic wave of the future. “Donor-advised funds are the first step toward modernizing giving,” says Cynthia L. Egan, president of the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund. “My prediction is that, over the next decade, millions of American households will have donor-advised funds” (Pulley, 2002b, pp. A31–32). If these funds emerge as the popular philanthropic vehicle they are expected to be, librarians and their development officers would be well advised to acquaint themselves with the ways in which donor-advised funds work and how their institutions may benefit from them, so that they may suggest these investments as charitable options for their donors.

For donors, librarians, and development officers finding themselves as bewildered by the number and variety of complex giving options as donors
may be, help is available from a new and growing breed of consultants known as philanthropy advisers. Similar to certified financial planners (CFPs) who typically advise clients about investment strategies and/or retirement planning, philanthropy advisers help would-be donors to achieve their philanthropic objectives through investment strategies and vehicles. The Social Welfare Research Institute at Boston College estimates that as much as $50 trillion will flow into nonprofit organizations by the middle of the twenty-first century, much of it from the newly wealthy, many with little experience in making large charitable gifts (Strom, 2002a). Among those becoming philanthropy advisers are members of the Rockefeller family, one of America’s foremost philanthropic families. “The family is becoming increasingly large, and we have an ever-growing number of like-minded philanthropists who want to join us in our efforts,” said Tara Rockefeller, a fifth-generation descendant of John D. Rockefeller (Strom, 2002a, p. B3). Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisers will offer advice to clients in need of help in developing and managing their charitable giving. Philanthropic advisers will help donors construct charitable giving plans and personal investment strategies that make use of planned giving instruments, available tax benefits, and other tools that assist in maximizing the benefits to donors and recipients of charitable gifts.

THE “PROPER” ADMINISTRATION OF WEALTH: MUTUALLY ASSURED SURVIVAL

After mastering an understanding of market forces, the philanthropic environment, and the array of available investment products, librarians will be challenged to create and market compelling case statements of need that will capture the attention of potential donors and their philanthropic advisers. It is therefore advisable for library fund-raisers embarking on new development strategies and initiatives in a revised philanthropic climate to recall the wisdom of Andrew Carnegie on the subject of charitable giving. Carnegie, the poor Scottish immigrant who, with fellow industrialist John D. Rockefeller and investment banker J. P. Morgan, laid the foundation for contemporary philanthropy as it is practiced today, was acutely aware of the responsibilities conferred by wealth on those who had more than their share. Understanding Carnegie’s philosophy of giving can help fund-raisers comprehend philanthropic motivations and inclinations, and thus help in strategy formulation.

Carnegie understood that the possession of wealth carried with it societal obligations. He implored the wealthy to view their personal fortunes as being held in trust for the public good and observed in his famous essay, “The Gospel of Wealth,” “the problem of our age is the proper administration of wealth.” Carnegie further suggested that in establishing philanthropic foundations, the wealthy should use them not for the relief of immediate needs (i.e., charity) but for philanthropy, “to provide ladders
upon which the aspiring can rise." Furthermore, Carnegie believed "the man who dies thus rich dies disgraced" (Carnegie, 1962, p. 29).

Although Carnegie preached his gospel of wealth to his fellow industrialists, his lessons apply to the philanthropically inclined of today. Many philanthropists can afford to distribute their money, like Carnegie, knowing that their personal futures are secure. Others of more modest means, but no less philanthropically inclined, may wish to incorporate their philanthropic aspirations within their long-term investment plans, thereby doing good by doing well. Regardless of a donor's personal means, librarians and fund-raising professionals should be well versed in the motivations behind a donor's charitable giving as well as in the forces governing the nonprofit sector and all the giving and investment options at their disposal to help a donor achieve his or her philanthropic objectives. For just as our donors will profit from long-term philanthropic and investment strategies, so will libraries benefit from long-term development strategies that are unwavering in their goals and objectives but flexible enough to respond to the volatilities of a market economy. It is only by taking the same long view that philanthropists and their beneficiary libraries will share a vision that will insure long-term institutional growth and survival.

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Public Services and Outreach in Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Libraries

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ABSTRACT

RARE BOOK, MANUSCRIPT, AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS libraries remain both more difficult and more forbidding to use than any other parts of most libraries. A shift from an ethos that emphasized acquisition, cataloging, and preservation has brought into new prominence issues generally grouped together under the rubric of “promotion.” This essay considers some of the ways in which this addition to the ethos of special collections has the potential to change for the better the ways such libraries are perceived and used.

INTRODUCTION

Many of the people who might otherwise use them, and even some who do, find rare book, manuscript, and special collections libraries both more difficult and more forbidding than any other part of a library. Long efforts to alter that unhappily persistent truth have met with only limited success.

First, the closed- or limited-access stacks and storage facilities inherent in the nature of rare book collections (my shorthand for “rare book, manuscript, and special collections”) prohibit would-be readers from browsing shelves to locate materials of interest.¹ The larger the collection, the more troublesome this prohibition becomes. For all of the improvements, at least as librarians see them, of online access and online browsing, such restrictions on physical browsing pose problems. Our readers tend to remain astonishingly less skilled than we like to imagine them at using tools that represent books rather than books themselves.²

Second, the generally persistent formidability characteristic of rare book collections and their staffs does not make them seem any easier to use than their closed stacks suggest.³ Students in particular may find them off-
putting. A conversation with a bright and caustic sophomore who uses medieval manuscripts at several American rare book libraries, about which she has strong—and apparently reasonable—opinions, recently reminded me of this ongoing truth in no uncertain terms. But faculty may have similar opinions. I even know some who find it easier to travel to great national or research libraries, where they expect tight restrictions and rules, rather than making an effort to use similar, perhaps the same, materials at home. At any rate, so they tell me, they will undertake such travel when conditions at home seem to them inappropriately out of phase with the ways they feel able to use other parts of their own institution’s library.

Many librarians suppose, or hope, that a major shift in staff attitudes has produced rare book collections and librarians far more welcoming to early twenty-first-century readers than their old, out-of-date reputation implies. Anyone who works in this field must be aware that readers have long regarded staff as major constituents of the formidability and repulsiveness of many rare book collections large and small. Nonetheless, staff nowadays prefer to believe that their own attitudes are welcoming and that readers have noticed and approve of this change. Indeed, some attitudes have changed. Whether they have in fact undergone a wholesale change in this pleasing way is, however, not always easy to believe—not if one actually listens to readers, at least when they talk about other collections. My own impressions, based on the anecdotal evidence provided by readers with whom I speak—faculty as well as sophomores, antiquarian booksellers as well as independent readers and researchers—are surprisingly dispiriting.

One basic attitudinal change is noticeable, however. It seems to me to have the potential to prove in practice more than merely rhetorical and able to act as a prod to genuine change, although it is still in its early days and such a judgment may be premature. Within university research libraries, the setting from and about which I write, the old, tried-and-true belief was that one’s job was to get it, catalog it, and preserve it. This approach has been slightly but significantly modified. We are now expected to get it, catalog it, and promote it. At least in some environments, preserving it is a desideratum, too, if possible. But in some very real sense, promotion outranks preservation. A greatly escalated sense of the need for promotion is a major new element affecting rare book librarians’ attitudes.

Of course, one could emphasize other factors conducive to changes of various kinds. Among them, surely, is the impact on librarians’ attitudes of the persistent need for funds at a time when the amount of needed funds seems greater, and the amount of available funds smaller, than in the past. But this need represents an exacerbation of an old condition. It is not new in the way that an emphasis on promotion seems to be.

My paper, then, aims to raise some of the possibilities for positive changes that attentiveness to promotion may produce.
THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF PROMOTION

If I am right about it, promotion on the scale implicit in the current climate is a relatively new element for rare book libraries and their staffs. Of course, library promotion is by no means something new under the sun. The public library sector has a long history of trying out varieties of promotional techniques. Moreover, many rare book collections already have a history, often a notable history, of self-promotion as well. Its current imperatives, however, have yet to be dealt with adequately. At present, I suggest, promotional goals derive less than used to be the case from administrative and staff desires to draw attention to materials that beg to be used, to present their institution as a desirable repository for collections, or to attract donors who appear to be separable from surplus dollars. Those traditional goals have not been abandoned, obviously. But the newer emphasis on promotion tends, first, to descend as a mandate from higher administrative levels, and it reflects rather different underpinnings.

When it comes down, this mandate is clearly driven by a climate of economic scarcity. The continued existence of library departments and provision of library services seems justifiable to cost-conscious institutional administrators, to whom library administrators report, only on the basis of user statistics. Directors fear, not entirely without reason, that institutional administrators may feel that a resource not used or clearly underused in relation to the costs required to maintain it really is unnecessary.

In this context, promotion involves imperatives other than publicizing new acquisitions, attracting new donations, and giving an attractive airing now and again to old holdings through exhibitions. Readers must feel invited and welcome to, and comfortable in, the rare book department. (Does this imperative suggest that senior library administrators are more aware than rare book staff themselves of the field’s failure to achieve real change in this respect?) Invitations must be active, not passive—readers, that is, need to be sought. They also need to know that the resources are truly theirs for use: the welcome must be real. Materials cannot be kept from them, whether through shoddy or slow cataloging or through deliberate lack of information (in order, for instance, to “protect” an unusual acquisition from the vicissitudes of use or to reserve a cache of letters for use only by Professor Big).

Relatedly, once readers arrive and have what they need in hand, they need a reading room situation that functions for them. Rare book librarians used to think about amenities that would be nice, if one could have them, in some vaguely imagined future. They have now to plan for and find ways to fund their acquisition and addition. Retrofitting reading rooms to provide outlets for laptops or a wireless environment; functional workstations as well as reading facilities; scanning as well as reprographic facilities; speedy turnaround for all forms of copying; onsite meeting and classroom space; provision of materials and technology for instructional and student
use in those non-reading room spaces—including rare books and manuscripts as well as online capabilities; quiet and pleasant surroundings: these are no longer "amenities" but necessities of doing business in a customer service-oriented environment. Rare book librarians must also perform services such as ordering materials—again, including rare books and manuscripts where they are available and affordable—for the use of specific classes and readers, a species of tailored reader services applied to a part of the library where such service has rarely been traditional.

An additional complication is that such tailored services—especially if performed on behalf of entire classes and not individuals only—may bypass or completely ignore the general circulation/restricted circulation binary. For example, by acquiring and making available rare materials for use as (in effect) classroom reserve reading, staff may expect to find in the materials so used signs of the stresses normally associated with overuse, even though such stresses are precisely what sequestration of rare materials into a separate, supervised department was originally intended to avoid. The administrative boundary between general and restricted circulation may serve librarians' needs, as well as what we perceive to be the needs of the materials themselves. But it does not necessarily serve needs—which may increasingly take precedence over the others—that readers perceive themselves as having. Many other reader needs have also made themselves felt and elicited positive responses at a variety of libraries.

The underlying assumption of the institutional structures within which rare book collections increasingly find themselves is, as a now somewhat creaky saying has it, "use it or lose it." A better mousetrap is a good thing to build—but it had better be advertised well, and then it had better live up to its advertising. A lot of competing mousetraps out there are just as good. If enough people don't need yours, then the parent institution doesn't need it, either. Or you.

**Exhibitions**

Traditionally, librarians used exhibitions and associated events to promote their collections. Normally mounted by library staff, they were based on materials already in the collections or drew upon collections an institution hoped to attract. A pedagogical purpose might be one of the benefits of such an exercise, but it was not always clear that the beneficiary of whatever pedagogy resulted was supposed to be a student. Catalogues might be published in conjunction with an exhibition, but their audience too was never entirely clear. In any event, libraries, far more poorly funded than art museums, produced very few catalogues of book or manuscript exhibitions with the scholarly stature and lasting value for which art museums seem routinely to strive in producing their exhibition catalogues.

More recently, however, some librarians have found it increasingly desirable, possible, and productive to promote collections and their spon-
soring institutions through exhibitions in the organization of which students or faculty are invited to participate as a form of public service and outreach. Involvement in the exhibition process brings people usually separated from collections by the user/staff divide into them on a quasi-staff basis. It enables them to become familiar with materials specifically relevant to an exhibition’s topic. In a collection strong enough to support an exhibition in the first place, there ought to be more materials than they began by knowing about. As an additional dividend, they may also become familiar with staff, with procedures, with the care and handling of rare materials, and with the exigencies of explaining such materials to their peers, to their students, or to a “general audience.” As a result, they should become comfortable in the collection and with its staff.\textsuperscript{11}

The process is pedagogical in every sense. Particularly when an exhibition can become a project that functions as part of a class, the learning payoffs both with respect to subject matter and to rare books generally—for a few students or for many, and for instructors—are likely to be high. So are the payoffs in good will, interest, and increased knowledge of local holdings from relevant faculty members.\textsuperscript{12}

The payoffs had better be high. However much such a project is class-, student-, or faculty-directed, library staff time and energy investments in it will be very great, too. This is why this kind of work needs to be thought of as part and parcel of “public service” in the current promotional environment.

Exhibitions usually involve associated publications (print, Web-based, or both, if budgets permit). Once again, involving students or faculty in the publication process presents new opportunities for outreach and perceived service to one’s core constituencies where payoffs (as well as staff time and energy investments) are likely to be high.

The major downside for such activities seems to be their costs in staff time. In addition, some staff will feel that a barrier between rare book collections and the public is a good thing. It encourages proper respect for the objects in the collections while inculcating a sense of their difference from other library materials. This sense reminds readers to exercise care in using rare book collections. Its diminishment or loss will seem a cause for regret. The added security risks of allowing students or faculty behind the reading room door may also disturb some staff members.\textsuperscript{13}

Any department that wants to make the effort to promote its use in ways here suggested will need to consider such issues, and others as well. But, I suspect that the current emphasis on use will push at least some departments to make the effort rather than not.

**Classrooms**

Exhibition projects offer one very useful route that rare book personnel can take toward forms of joint action not only with students but also with
teaching faculty. Such actions are important forms of promotion for rare book collections. In addition, the desirability of academic situations in which library staff serve as faculty, either in jointly conducted classrooms or in their own, though not common, can hardly be overestimated. In jointly taught classrooms, the setting itself requires collegial equality rather than maintenance of an implicit faculty/librarian hierarchy of deference. When the librarian is a class’s sole instructor, students and faculty who might simply assume, without much thought, the naturalness of that hierarchy can see librarians as participants in the educational process in ways that do not simply relegate them to the role of “servants of the servants of God.” Even with respect to apparently minor details—facilitating the ongoing use of rare materials in the daily work of a classroom, as opposed to one-time class visits to a collection—such classes become an aspect of promotion for varied useful ends.

An emphasis on the ongoing as opposed to “special” function of the materials; the demonstration of library staff’s specific expertise with respect both to a class’s general subject matter and also to the materials that class is using; the ways in which old cliches about form and content may be actualized when original materials are constantly on hand for examination and discussion; and familiarization of students—and faculty—with the accessibility and use of the collections and their staffs: these are benefits an ongoing classroom situation, whether exhibition-directed or otherwise, makes possible.

Such classroom ventures also have potential downsides, of course. The time investments a class demands are at least as great as those required by exhibitions and associated projects that involve rare book staff with other people’s classes. Preparation, devising papers and exams, advising and counseling students, and grading: these are highly time-consuming activities, even if one is teaching alone and does not also have to negotiate with a colleague about who will do what in class each day. A semester in which the ordinary demands of trying to be a decent librarian continue while one is also teaching may turn out to be very tiring—or throw surprising (and not entirely welcome) burdens on one’s library colleagues.

The Web

Usually considered as a means of “getting the word out about . . . holdings” (Abraham, 2001), the Web offers more than merely a site for advertisements and propaganda. Projects at a number of libraries—Web-based collections devoted to, for instance, Shakespeare, Renaissance emblems, American literature, or World War I—offer exemplary instances of an increasingly significant arena for librarian-faculty partnerships. Some of these projects represent library initiatives or faculty initiatives alone; others involve joint faculty-library undertakings. As showcases for both research and resources—in which materials are often presented in mediated and contextualized frameworks rather than simply scanned and mounted without explanation or interpretation of any kind—such sites offer clear advantag-
es to all participants. They also offer added value to their users. And by demonstrating an institution’s commitment to its users, through the provision of access to materials that some readers may have felt themselves to be too distant from to encounter easily in the flesh, they can be highly attractive. Some readers may eventually come to see such sites as invitations to rather than as substitutes for the materials they make available in facsimile. Distance to the contrary notwithstanding, they may decide to show up at one’s door looking for more of the same or for the actual materials whose image they have already encountered.

But these are very costly ventures. Time—and lots of it—is perhaps their most obvious requisite. In order to make a manuscript or a printed book available on screen, one must invest time in the tasks of planning, choosing, organizing, and interpreting texts, as well as scanning, mounting, choosing navigation tools, and so forth. The possibility of lost user statistics from readers who do not see the images as an invitation to visit the thing itself but for whom they are an adequate substitute for the original cannot be easily measured. But clearly such losses can be a cost, at least in this context. Of course, scanning and computer equipment, disk and server space, and technical expertise do not come cheap either. These projects require up-front layouts of real dollars, specialized bodies on the ground to do the work, and a real commitment to long-term growth and ongoing revision.

The major downside of such projects, otherwise so clearly beneficial to all participants, is—perhaps even more than the monetary costs they require—the possibility that those costs, the project’s time demands, or even its equipment’s and new staff’s constant encroachments on physical space will encourage one party or the other to disengage. Bailing out in medias res will win no friends. Librarians and faculty both need to give such projects considerable thought—and calculation in a literally arithmetical sense—before anyone embarks on them.

In a climate of promotion, however, one major upside to such projects needs emphatic statement. They offer what can often prove to be attractive funding opportunities for donors, foundations, and other funding agencies. Combining demonstrated commitment to principles that emphasize access and preservation while also providing tangible evidence of outreach and library-institutional (or interlibrary and interinstitutional) cooperation, such projects, if well conceived, almost sell themselves.

It is, of course, also true that anyone who has written a grant application will recall that, no matter how wonderful the project, the work such applications require diminishes no demands on one’s time.

Seminars and Other Discussion Groups

Forums other than classrooms or collection-based projects also exist through which library staff can come together with faculty and students to interact in ways that promote knowledge and use of rare book collec-
tions. Many academic libraries already have professional or all-staff library groups that provide regular occasions for discussion of issues or for visiting lecturers or seminars on various aspects of librarianship. These groups can and often do play useful roles in advancing librarians’ ongoing professional education. But they are forums for librarians to speak with one another; far fewer libraries have similar forums that provide for librarian-faculty (or librarian-student) interactions. But where these exist or can be established, in the library or the parent institution, the potential for successful promotion of collections and “de-formidabilization” of staff can be enormous.16

Now that the history of books and printing has left the insular environment of the library school for the larger scholarly world of the historical humanities,17 it is a topic that provides an obvious focus around which librarian-faculty/student groups can coalesce. The rare book library itself is an equally obvious locus for meetings of librarians, students, and faculty mutually engaged in ongoing explorations of this topic. By no means is the topic limited to historians, even though, as readers of this paper know, historians (e.g., Fevre, Martin, Eisenstein, Darnton) are largely responsible for its re-emergence into wide scholarly currency. Students and faculty in many disciplines—among them classical studies, literature, music, philosophy, and religion, in addition to history—have all begun to engage the ways in which their basic texts have been transmitted. Seminars—one-offs as well as ongoing seminars—that jointly discuss book history topics can thus engage a broad range of disciplines. Held on-site, they offer easy opportunities for libraries to show off their holdings while librarians themselves display a specific subject expertise from which faculty and students can learn.

At my own institution, a long-running seminar devoted to the history of books and printing (“material texts”) is close to marking its first decade [sic] of weekly, noncredit, purely voluntary sessions. These are open to students, faculty, librarians, and the public—anyone who cares to show up, in fact. This seminar is so successful that its attendance has pushed it out of the intradepartmental library space in which it had its origins. Its size now requires it to meet most often in another building on campus. Even so, the rare book collection still provides original materials from the collections needed for specific discussions. Library staff and faculty participate both in individual sessions and in planning the seminar. Speakers have included librarians, faculty, students, and visitors from off campus. The benefits of such association include a strengthening of ties among librarians, their colleagues, and the institution’s students, as well as a generally heightened awareness among those students and colleagues of resources—human, as well as printed or manuscript—in the local rare book collection. These are not benefits easy to quantify, but no librarian involved with the seminar has any doubt that they are significant.

The history of books and printing is surely the most obvious, but it is
not the only topic around which such library-student/faculty seminars can form. A far more general university seminar at my university dealt, again from an interdisciplinary point of view, with several aspects of cultural studies. Participation by librarians in this seminar was relevant and welcome. It provided an occasion for presentation and discussion of a paper that dealt with library issues from a cultural studies perspective. This paper was later published in a collection of essays that emerged from this seminar.18

Many faculties provide for such seminars, some with, others without, students. Whether they are interdisciplinary or located in only one of the disciplines concerned with the transmission of its own textual bases, these seminars offer considerable opportunities for substantive library-faculty/student collaborations. They need only to be seized.

Downsides, once again, exist—and need to be considered. Planning and organizing a seminar do not happen by themselves. Library spaces do not get used by groups of people without requiring that they be cleaned afterwards. One needs to think about such annoying but basic matters as whether food and drink will or will not be permitted, because some seminars, at least, are run analogously to the way many classrooms are run these days. How presenters and discussants will use and display rare materials (with or without food and drink in a room) needs consideration, and, time consumingly, the question may require different answers on each occasion such use is allowed. And—last but by no means least—if librarians are to participate in seminars in the same ways as students and faculty, then the demands of the time they will occasionally require to research and write a paper need to be considered with real care.

Creative Writers

One other obvious arena in which collaborative relationships between rare book librarians and faculty-student colleagues can be fostered will occur at institutions with creative writing programs. Where the rare book collection is not held to a chronological limit but is also interested in, say, the papers of living writers, occasions for cooperation with colleagues in creative writing can promote the collection in several different but complementary ways. Readings, by themselves or associated with exhibitions that take a work from manuscript to printed book, can demonstrate to a colleague who is also a potential donor that the collection is interested in documenting the present as well as the past.19 Such a demonstration may well have the additional pedagogical benefit of reminding students as well as faculty that one’s collection is not simply a mortuary for the safely dead but is also engaged with the not-so-safe alive and kicking.

As this paper was in progress, my library was mounting just such an exhibition. A poet from our faculty, another local poet, and a local book artist who had published remarkable editions of poetry by both of them were all subjects of an exhibition that looked at the process of collabora-
tion and its results. Was it simply accidental that both the pedagogical and the promotional advantages of such an exhibition seemed important?

For faculty, the library's interest in the work of one of their own speaks to its interest in them. For students, a living text hot off the press and beautiful to look at may have the potential to convey other messages as well. Students intuitively understand that "the" text of the long four-part poem printed in the 2002 book must be "the same" as that printed in four parts in four poetry magazines and again in the poet's forthcoming book (2003). However, their intuition is wrong. In that forthcoming book, the poem will be printed as two sections at the beginning and two at the end, with other poems between those sections, and also because in the poetry magazines it will appear as four separate works. None of these texts is identical. The poem or poems will never appear elsewhere as it or they appear in the 2002 edition. Lineation, some words, overall presentation, in fact, the very sense that it is "one" poem (which the 2002 presentation promotes), will all change when the poem(s) appear(s) in other formats. The text(s) will elicit different responses influenced by where readers encounter it (or them). How better to realize for students in an academic library setting the singularity and particularity of every book, even a modern machine-made one?

Small press publications as well as fine press or artist's books offer similar opportunities. In fact, whatever the formats of their publications, one may want one's writer colleagues to think of the rare book collection as concerned with the local and the living as well as the distant and the dead. Promotion, after all, means that librarians must be aware of the potential of creative writing colleagues as future donors of their own manuscripts and publications. It also means remembering that, as teachers, those same writers can send their students to the rare book collection to see older writers in original editions, newer writers in finely printed or artist's book editions, or the manuscript materials of any writer, so as to see what that writer's drafts actually looked like. But these writers should themselves feel welcome in the rare book collection and be familiar with its holdings.

In fact, librarians can celebrate not only creative writers but also scholars, not only poets but also essayists. Librarians who wish to promote a collection will find any publication noteworthy if a publication party for it can be used to showcase materials from the collections related to the new book. Such actions have easy payoffs. The book's author will be grateful. Other faculty will attend; even faculty who never pay attention to their library may nonetheless pay attention to one another. If they do so in a library setting, they may find materials of interest they did not know about and an environment more inviting than the one they had imagined (or, worse, remembered). Bringing related materials out on such occasions can also attract at least some of a teacher's students to primary materials even while communicating to the faculty that the library does keep an interested eye on their activities.
Here again, potential problem areas need consideration. Is a library located at an institution where it is likely to have many such publication events to celebrate? Or, are there just a few? Does it matter? Can the library celebrate some publications rather than all of them without causing pain, anger, and jealousy? Can the library, as a matter of clear policy intended to avoid pain, anger, and jealousy, celebrate only those publications that concern topics heavily represented in the collections? Does the collection have resources or interests that make creative writers attractive promotional (or development) prospects? Need those writers be faculty? Or is the library also interested in students and its nonacademic neighbors? Events, like anything else, take time, money, and people to plan, organize, and run. Are those resources in long or short supply? And last—a question that might have been asked at any point in this paper—how much overtime are staff willing to accept?

**ONE-OFFS**

The show-and-tell event involves a class visit to the rare book collection to see older or newer materials relevant to the subject of the class. Perhaps the class also receives some elementary bibliographical instruction in the use of the collection. These sorts of one-time events probably remain the most standard method through which rare book collections and their staffs promote themselves. They are usually conceived as events an instructor initiates by request and to which the librarian graciously accedes.

In truth, no laws legislate such an order of proceeding. Librarians who look for classes to which something of potential use to students (or faculty) might be found in the collections can always propose such a visit to instructors rather than waiting to be asked. Some instructors will not respond at all. Others may say no, but the very appearance of interest and activity may plant a seed that comes to fruition at a later date.

For those who do respond favorably, the opportunities such classes offer—and the questions they raise—are worth thinking about. Librarians know that a class on Shakespeare might want to see a 1619 quarto or a 1623 folio. A class on the American Civil War could be interested by pro- and antislavery pamphlets or the *New York Times*’ account of President Lincoln’s assassination. A modern American literature class might be pleased to see a typescript of Theodore Dreiser’s “The Titan” or a Cumington Press edition of Wallace Stevens. A class on the Holocaust, or modern Italian literature, or cultural anthropology, might all find first editions from the 1980s of Primo Levi’s paperback translations into Italian of Claude Lévi-Strauss interesting—all for completely different reasons. Not every one of these examples is equally obvious; but, on the whole, none needs deep thought. However, that does not mean that such classes need no thought—and here is where both the opportunities these classes represent and the potential issues they raise converge.
What, after all, does it mean for a class “to see” such materials? Is the sight of a First Folio worth a thousand words about it? If a thousand words are to be spoken even as the class looks at the Folio, who will speak those words?—the librarian, the instructor, the students, or all of them? In any case, why should students be interested in the Folio? Does one emphasize its monetary, iconic, or research value? What is the research value of one copy of the First Folio? Will that value be more clear to students if a quarto can be shown alongside the Folio? If one lacks a quarto, is a facsimile useful? Or does its presence detract from the original displayed alongside? If one lacks a Folio, is the Hinman facsimile good enough?

Practical as well as intellectual questions need to be asked. Whoever speaks, what does “showing” the First Folio to a class of students mean? May members of the class touch the book? turn a leaf? look at the endpapers? examine the binding? Does each American literature student get a leaf of “The Titan” to look at? What is the point of the exercise, both from the instructor’s point of view and from the librarian’s? (After all, they need not be after the same point.) What kind of information is the class visit intended to convey? From the librarian’s perspective, is it information about the materials? About the collections? About the staff? Or about any two of these, or all three of them?

Participation in teaching situations with faculty has already been mentioned, in a different context, as good—but all such situations require some joint discussion for a librarian to discover what an instructor’s expectations are, and vice versa. Thus, it requires a librarian to give some thought to his or her own expectations. It is at least conceivable that these may have less to do with “information” than with “attitudes.”

The downsides to such visits can be dramatic. I have spoken with several faculty members appalled by rare book librarians who did not permit an older printed book to go from graduate student hand to graduate student hand during a class presentation intended to introduce new graduate students to rare book resources in their discipline. (On one occasion I myself was that faculty member, teaching a class for future librarians visiting a rare book collection. What lesson did they learn?) Few readers of this paper will be appalled by such a prohibition at all. But from the faculty’s perspective, the prohibition arrived out of the blue, which strongly suggests incomplete communication on both library and faculty sides. Moreover, faculty in all cases felt that it sent the wrong message to new students about the attitudes they were likely to encounter in their efforts to use rare books at that institution. It is essential that librarians and faculty consult in advance and decide not only the purpose of a class’s encounter with rare materials (what should they know after the class is over?) but also the level of that encounter (what should they expect to do with the materials in class?).

When surprised by a librarian unexpectedly more protective of materials in class than had been imagined, an instructor’s anger and tension will
be conveyed to his or her students. A class visit is a one-time event, and stu-
dent relationships are forged primarily with instructors, not librarians. An 
instructor’s anger can produce student responses difficult to eradicate and 
lost readership impossible to measure. Damage may also affect librarian-
faculty relationships—and not only with the classroom instructor directly 
involved but also with those other faculty members with whom he or she 
speaks. Yet such surprises are easily avoided with a small amount of prepa-
ratory discussion.

Similar preparatory discussions for use of rare materials in seminars will 
help prevent potential surprises (which are always difficulties) in the one 
situation just as in the other. But it may finally be more important for any 
librarian, whether looking at a classroom or seminar or any other visit 
(friends, tourists, the public), to think realistically about the goals of show-
and-tell events. Librarians undertake these events in order to attract read-
ers: they function as one more form of promotion. If the visits have a ped-
agogical benefit—and I am quite certain they have—that is certainly a plus. 
But before any other goal they are meant to be attractive. Failure to plan 
in advance about how to approach issues that may repel rather than attract 
readers can result in an unpleasant group experience: the very opposite of 
what the librarian intended.

FRIENDS, TOURISTS, THE PUBLIC

At least some attention needs to be paid to external visitors, inadequately 
lumped together by the four words in this section heading. “The public” can 
include a third-grade class studying the Civil War, an art history course at a 
neighboring secondary school where students are looking in sophisticated 
ways at iconological issues in Italian sixteenth-century painting, or an Elder-
hostel group studying Jane Austen. “The public” may be a rubric that cov-
ers instructors and classes at nearby colleges or universities, which, though 
perfectly respectable, are not one’s own. It can include visiting book collec-
tors’ clubs, traveling alone (Rowfant; Grolier) or in combination (FABS), 
their members accompanied or unaccompanied by families and friends. It 
can include alumni gathered at homecoming or commencement or com-
ing alone to ask about an old book or inquire about what they should say 
about this part of the school to students whom they interview for admissions. 
It can include the local person who wanders in to see an exhibition; the book-
or manuscript-oriented person passing through town; the student who wants 
no rare materials at all but seeks only a quiet place to study.

Some institutions as a matter of policy prohibit visits from—or to— 
elementary or secondary schools. Some close the reading room to their own 
students who are not using rare materials. My own experiences include 
taking materials to elementary schools, accepting visits from secondary 
schools, allowing nonreaders to sit in spaces not occupied by readers, and, 
I think, all the other possibilities mentioned above, as well as some I have
probably forgotten. Even the third-graders were excited. Among the things they saw were the “Awful Event” issue of the New York Times reporting Lincoln’s assassination. They saw a copperplate of a Thomas Nast Lincoln, and a print of the illustration the copperplate produces. They did not see pro- or antislavery pamphlets, which seemed to their teacher and me to demand a level of reading and historical sophistication they were unlikely to possess. The class demanded some time and thought and conversation. It involved entrusting some uncommon materials to the vagaries of an automobile trip. Did a future scholar or librarian emerge from that class of third-graders? or a rare book reader? or—mirabile dictu—a donor? I will never know. I am satisfied that the pedagogical benefits of the visit were worth the effort anyway.

If promotion is a value, after all, then what is the function of saying “No”? The student excluded today who turns out to be a computer millionaire twelve years from now may well be disinclined to share her wealth with those who asked her to read elsewhere even at a time when she could see plenty of empty seats and pleasant, quiet surroundings. Elementary and high school students not welcomed when they were children are likely to have far less of a sense of having been excluded from something they did not know about, but of course will also be that much less likely to think of rare book libraries at all. Is there an advantage in their ignorance? For alumni and book collectors, library friends groups, and Elderhostel summer students, a somewhat more favorable attitude may be likely. Not only are they adults, but also each can be considered as a potential target for development efforts. Fair enough; but if what rare book libraries do is connected in significant ways to education and pedagogy, then perhaps these values ought to inflect the ways such libraries respond to all of their varied publics.

On the whole, an overall attitude of courteous welcome to general publics seems likely to have a spillover effect that will produce a positive impact on the attitudes with which staff greet more obvious publics, that is, readers. But it seems equally likely that an overall attitude of unwelcome to all but readers will negatively affect the ways in which staff greet readers, too.

Reference

The shift from traditional reference services in reference departments that are increasingly information-oriented offers rare book libraries a new potential arena for outreach and promotion. For obvious reasons, basic bibliographical skills must continue to be cultivated in rare book departments, but these skills are not reinforced for librarians who, like the growing number of students and faculty with whom they work, are image- and Web-oriented. Yet certain readers require just those old-fashioned skills. Their needs are not always met well or effectively by general reference staff who, well trained in information retrieval and Web-based systems, lack more
than rudimentary skills in locating information about manuscripts, archives, and older printed books.26

On the very day I moved the preceding paragraph from my preparatory outline to this text, another instance of what it describes crossed my desk. Neither a reader—a lifelong user (in fact, a seller) of rare books—nor reference staff could locate in our own collections a work that dates from the long ago year of 1996, written (to be completely fair) in Italian and (perhaps worst of all) part of a series. An online record seemed to indicate that we had something like it but did not reflect reality, as the reader explained to a rare book staff member with whom he later spoke. Reference staff had retrieved a book with the right call number, but it wasn’t the right book. They then advised the reader to request the right one through interlibrary loan. Because his research really involved a sixteenth-century printed book that the 1996 work concerned, the reader mentioned the problem to the rare book staff member. The rare book librarian’s search in online records, though not simple, eventually called up a record that did not appear to be faulty at all—and the right book was found. Most of the time the search required was spent in traveling to the book and then bringing it back to the rare book collection. A bit more time was spent discussing the incident with colleagues.

I am not alone in noticing many such experiences,27 and they at least seem to me to have become more frequent, particularly in the past three or four years. They are not simply indicative (although they may be also indicative) of a failure of library education to teach certain older skills at the same time it teaches newer ones. They certainly indicate that the skills reference staff require are themselves increasingly—and differently—specialized. But rare book staffs continue, of necessity, to specialize in older bibliographical skills, even as they learn to deal with a few specifically relevant Web-based databases (e.g., Early English Books Online). As a result, they seem increasingly to have maintained a kind of expertise that proves utterly necessary to some kinds of readers—and which it is not entirely inappropriate to trumpet.

My experience—extensive and increasing—indicates that undergraduates as well as senior scholars, antiquarian booksellers, and the public all find numerous occasions for such expertise. Some now come regularly, because of experiences like those described above, to consult rare book staff about bibliographical questions. Even five years ago, they would automatically have directed such questions to reference staff—and they would have expected, then, expeditious and accurate responses from reference librarians. Increasingly, however, this kind of reference is simply not what reference people do. The opportunity for rare book staff to take up this slack is very real.

Potential problems—in interdepartmental staff relationships, for one obvious example—probably need little comment at this point. Yet rare book
librarians who continue to provide services specifically book and manuscript oriented have significant promotional opportunities with at least some readers. By not condescending to those colleagues whose expertise necessarily takes them increasingly in other directions, some potential internal problems can be avoided while the advantages of such service are enjoyed.

**Some Tentative Conclusions**

The pressures rare book collections experience at present to change traditional practices and attitudes have elicited many different kinds of responses. These are as yet too many, too varied, and, in many respects, still too new and undeveloped, for useful systematic analysis. But one common denominator seems to cross institutional boundaries: an imperative to make such collections increasingly user-friendly, functional, and actively used parts of the larger library and educational institutions they serve. This does not seem an entirely unreasonable request to direct at units that, historically, have required resources disproportionate to the use they have allowed themselves to receive.

Many libraries, and not rare book collections alone, are experimenting with different approaches intended to achieve these goals. How they adapt their choice of materials—how, in fact, they adapt themselves—to heightened user expectations about contents, accessibility, and other environmental factors that influence users, are, at present, all matters in flux. Even things that once seemed basic for entire libraries, not rare book collections alone—for instance, the preservation criterion that governed rules on food in libraries—have given way before what seem to be the inexorable pressures of conflicting student demands. The reader who enters the main door to Alderman Library at the University of Virginia and looks to the left sees a food and drinks bar. Other libraries—mine, and perhaps yours, among them—are also adding or planning to add such facilities. A strict preservation perspective gives them the look of a self-inflicted and rapidly metastasizing cancer. But rightly or wrongly, preservation, though it remains a desideratum if possible, can be pushed aside quite easily to satisfy the desires of hordes of foraging undergraduates.

I grew up as an undergraduate using such a library long before its staff succeeded in moving the cafeteria—for all the right reasons—out of the building. I know far better now than I did then the costs to the library and its collections—insects and rodents, most of them fairly unpleasant—of having such a facility in the building. But I also know that the cafeteria's presence sure did pack 'em in—readers, that is, and into the library. It added a social dimension to the library that was important then and remains important now. It did not then, any more than newly established cafeterias will now, "supplant" in some mysterious way the intellectual work a library exists to promote. In what situations a library cafeteria's costs are outweighed by its benefits is not for me to say, but institutional administrators,
as the return of the cafeteria indicates, seem increasingly willing to incur those costs for the parent institution. They are unlikely to be amused by units—rare book collections, for instance—unwilling to open themselves to any costs that seem likely to promote increased use.

Not only rhetorically do library directors now emphasize a rare book collection’s ease of access, geniality of service, high-quality reference, and library-faculty interchanges, the latter with respect even to acquisitions. “We’ve always collected X” cuts increasingly less mustard in settings where X is no longer taught. Collecting for the faculty who are here, the classes that actually meet, rather than those that “should” meet, is what cuts the mustard at present. Acquisitions need programmatic justification. So do exhibitions, colloquia, symposia, publications, and other library events and activities. Increased cooperation with neighboring institutions may also be seen as a tactic to increase the rare book collection’s presence and its readership, at least where off-site users matter. Whatever it takes to promote use—to give a collection the sense that it is a vibrant and active research center in which students, faculty, readers, and librarians meet easily and cooperatively over joint ventures—is what senior administrators want.

They can afford no less. These goals are mandated not by senior administrators who hate or fail to understand rare books. Rather, they arise from not entirely unjustified fears that “elite” collections of materials may easily come to seem useless to student, faculty, and public cultures—and institutional administrators—increasingly dazzled by Web-based and other alternatives to traditional, older forms. True, certain theoretical tendencies currently at work in the historical humanities impel users to an increased regard for the material object, so in some instances such fears may prove at least partially misplaced as users show up at the rare book collection’s door. On the other hand, librarians fearful of “theory” may fail to notice, and thus to take advantage of, theorists’ interest in the material, which offers an opportunity to increase use markedly. Simply announcing that one’s got the stuff on the library Web site is no longer promotion enough, even if it remains necessary promotion, too. And, more to the point, theorists interested in the material object may still stay away from a rare book collection if they don’t feel genuinely welcome to use its material resources.

When libraries generally undergo organizational and other shifts that affect their short-term as well as their long-term futures, rare book collections that position themselves as part of such change—rather than as resistant or retrograde pockets of opposition to it—act wisely. Not all change is bad for rare book collections, after all. Changes in other areas of library service have already positioned rare book collections and their staffs well to provide kinds of services that can compensate for skills no longer emphasized elsewhere in the system. Seeing the changes called for as opportunities to enhance public and reference services and outreach—not difficult, since in fact they are all these things—may make them easier to
initiate. For those librarians who regard rare book collections as designed for use, they may even seem beneficial.

Notes
1. I have written elsewhere about issues posed by the prospect of allowing readers to browse rare book collections (Traister, 2000, pp. 73-74). The present essay offers elaboration of and additional thoughts about themes some of which were first aired in that essay.
2. An already vast and growing professional literature approaches this topic from several complementary perspectives. For a general (nonlibrary) audience, the issue is addressed from a pedagogical perspective by Joan Mann (2002): “The percentage of unsuccessful information systems is still alarmingly high,” she states as a premise (p. 253). Discussions specifically relevant to libraries are similarly skeptical. In “Revising Ready Reference Sites: Listening to Users Through Server Statistics and Query Logs,” Theresa Mudrock (2002) writes: “we have created and organized our ready reference pages in our own image with little explicit acknowledgement of the user’s needs and wants” (p. 155). Concerned only with ready reference tools in an online format, Mudrock need not consider the very much more complicated issue of finding printed or manuscript materials in an online environment. But here, too, well-documented problems affect readers’ abilities to locate materials, even modern materials, in this environment. The observation of Dennis Halcoussis, Aniko J. Halverson, Anton D. Lowenberg, and Susan Lowenberg (2002)—“users,” they write, “are normally more successful in conducting known item searches than subject searches” (p. 148)—is completely unsurprising. That observation is supported and expanded by Susan Augustine and Courtney Greene (2002). Rare book collections house materials that, hitherto largely unstudied, remain unknown. The difficulties readers experience in gaining access online to unknown items of modern vintage must be compounded when they require unknown materials of older date that are, in addition, not always written in English and may also present themselves in unfamiliar formats. Dr. Laurence Creider (Head, General Cataloging Unit, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces) informs me that “the concern of rare materials catalogers with issues of detailed description is . . . accompanied by . . . the realization that this [problem] entails increased intellectual access through expanded author and subject entries” (personal communication, 1 February 2003). The topic has been raised with respect to the revision of DCRB currently underway. I am grateful to Dr. Creider for making time to discuss this topic with me. In this note, my references are deliberately the most recent I can find.
3. A useful (and also a surprisingly moving) discussion of this issue, directed at European rather than American archival collections, is “A Word After: How We Found Mathias,” an “epilogue” to Craig Harline and Eddy Put (2000). Their discussion ought to be better known to the rare book and manuscript community than it is.
4. To be fair, I occasionally detect the various additional attractions of New York, Paris, or other major cities as a factor in such decisions—but not always. Where those attractions really are the underlying draw, however, only a severely limited number of places (those located, for example, in New York, Paris, or other major cities, perhaps) can hope to change faculty attitudes.
5. I doubt that the same attitudes prevail—or should prevail—in all rare book, manuscript, and special collection environments, despite the obvious inconsistencies such a doubt entails. Manuscripts, ipso facto unique, may, as a class, require an approach with respect to public service and accessibility different from printed books. The distinctive functions of libraries that serve educational institutions, even with their older books and manuscripts, seem to me also to permit attitudes different from those at libraries with responsibilities to large scholarly, research, and reader communities attracted by the sheer strength of their collections. I write from what is now a twenty-year background in a large university rare book and manuscript library. But it is one that sees its functions as at least somewhat distinct from those of such neighbors as the Library Company of Philadelphia, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the New York Public Library, or the Library of Congress. Nor is this a university rare book library, despite the riches of its holdings, with quite the same quasi-international responsibilities of a Houghton or a Bodley. I must emphasize that my point
of view about it—and what I therefore adopt as my "subject position"—is my own. It does not necessarily reflect an institutional perspective.

6. Terry Abraham (2001) emphasizes that "what we are doing now is not a break from the past but a continuation. There has been a revolution, but like most revolutions, much is retained and carried forward." A bit later, Abraham adds: "In the last fifteen years or so, we've been increasingly exhorted to be proactive about getting the word out about our holdings (as if we weren't doing that before)." The essay's title explains clearly its major point: "An online presence will make the library and the library's collections more visible, and extend it to a broader audience." I agree, with the modification that it is not only promotion of the collections that is at issue in the current climate. It is, most emphatically, use of the collections and enhancement of all factors likely to increase that use that senior administrators hope to achieve.

7. This idea may become increasingly prevalent among institutional administrators. The current climate of opinion (or of "opinion-passing-for-knowledge," some of it of librarians' own [I think suicidal] devising) encourages administrators to believe that, really, since everything is out there on the Web somewhere, no one needs to keep it—expensively—on-site.

8. See, e.g., Lawrence Clark Powell (1949): "the very nature of rare books and manuscripts—their scarcity and their value—means that they cannot be subjected to steady and heavy use" (p. 295).

9. To some of these raised reader expectations even nonuniversity rare book collections have had to respond. Better mousetraps to keep readers beating a path to the door nowadays require a new service orientation in many library environments. Evidence of such change is found in the increasing use of fellowships to bring readers to collections and the provision of housing officers—and housing—to permit them to live in high-rent districts while doing their research. The cycle feeds itself. What used to be the practice at a few IRLA institutions is now also the practice at some university libraries. Advertisements in the Chronicle of Higher Education and postings to specialized scholarly listservs both attest to these changes.

10. Edwin Wolf II, late librarian of the Library Company of Philadelphia, commented (at least in private) that the only real beneficiaries of an exhibition were the staff who curated it. He felt that the process of putting on exhibitions informed staff about their own institution's holdings that, before the exhibition, they knew far less intimately than afterwards. His was the point of view of an independent research librarian, but he never suggested that working in a different library setting would have altered this view of the function of exhibitions.

11. The engagement of academics, faculty, and students to work alongside curatorial staff in the preparation of exhibitions and their catalogs has long been a practice in art museums. Although the dollar figures on an item-by-item basis of works of art are ordinarily much higher than those attached to printed books or most manuscripts—which would seem to favor more restrictive practices in museums than in libraries—libraries took longer than museums to admit academics into the exhibition process. The practice is still less common than it might be.

12. Eleanor Pinkham spoke presciently about such involvement of students and faculty in rare book exhibitions at the 1982 RBMS preconference. Her paper—which has not, to my knowledge, been published—was based on her experiences as the director of a small college library (Upjohn Library, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, Michigan). The library had recently been given a surprisingly rich collection of older printed materials but had no traditions, either for use or sequestration, of such materials. Pinkham thought the materials ought to be made to function in the environment to which they had come. Her paper described efforts to bring instructors and students into the library to use the materials through the mounting of exhibitions and writing of catalogues that would be related to the subjects of various classes in the historical humanities. My recollection is that its readers, following the preconference, thought her essay too institution-specific in its focus for publication, a point of view with which I did not then and still do not agree. A number of people presently in the field of rare book librarianship emerged from that small college, in part because of their experiences as students in the kinds of programs Pinkham described. Her models would have been especially useful for people who work in smaller
and nonresearch university-based collections specifically. In addition, her general intelligence with respect to both the practical issues of promoting the use and usefulness of rare book collections and the more theoretical question of the function of such collections in educational institutions would have had, then and now, broad applicability. I am grateful to Ms. Pinkham and to Paul Smithson, associate director and technical services librarian at Upjohn Library, for their assistance with this note. The breadth of Pinkham’s views about the potential benefits from librarian-faculty cooperation in a variety of pedagogical contexts strikes me as more impressive than what I see as the far narrower perspective recently adumbrated by Mary Jane Scherdin (2002) in “How Well Do We Fit? Librarians and Faculty in the Academic Setting” (esp. pp. 247–252), published in Portal: Libraries and the Academy. An article in that journal’s next issue—Schmeising & Hollis (2002)—seems to me more useful: its authors provide a brief theoretical justification for the involvement of rare book libraries in the pedagogical process, quickly review the (not very copious) extant literature, and describe their own efforts at the University of Colorado, Boulder. In 1949, Lawrence Clark Powell remarked that “rare books have small place in the undergraduate program” (p. 295). Even in 1949, this view might not have been universal. See, for example, the reports on George Parker Winship’s class on rare books for Harvard undergraduates by Boies Penrose (1959) and Michael Winship (1999). The list of students who passed through this class—or, if it were available, a list of students influenced by Chauncey Brewster Tinker at Yale—might amuse rare book librarians nowadays who wonder where the next generation of collectors will come from. Some collectors may be born. Many others are made.

13. I have written about security risks posed by students in staff areas elsewhere. See, e.g., Traister (1994), esp. p. 33.

14. Institutions where library staff do not have faculty status differ about whether library staff can serve as faculty and differ on this matter inconsistently. Some institutions demand that any faculty member must have a Ph.D. as a terminal degree, at least in some subject areas; for them, the M.L.S. alone does not suffice. Other institutions have no provision at all for classroom instruction by people not part of the standing faculty. Some public universities allow M.L.S.’s responsibility for a class, others do not; some Ivies do not allow classroom responsibilities to library staff with Ph.D.’s while others do. In any setting in which library staff might also be able to teach, it is likely to be easier—and may also be politically (“promotionally”) more effective—to teach jointly with a member of the standing faculty. In my own institution, library staff work in a setting that does not grant faculty status to librarians. Staff may and several do teach, nonetheless, as adjunct members of various academic departments. They may do so alone, with other library colleagues, and with faculty colleagues. I know from many colleagues at other institutions that this situation remains uncommon. Personally, I am fortunate that my academic subject expertise is historical (the early modern period) and in a field (English literature) where local rare book holdings are strong.

15. My own experience is that these sites attract readers rather than offering simply a substitute means of using older materials. But that experience is not a valid basis for extrapolation. It reflects the fact that I actually meet readers who, attracted by the site, arrive at my doorstep. On the other hand, I never even hear about those readers whom it completely satisfies.

16. “De-formidabilization” processes work in both directions, of course. If we scare them, they also scare us; and it may therefore prove salutary for librarians to have occasion now and again to notice that faculty put on their pants one leg at a time, too.

17. Insular or not, library schools nurtured book and printing history studies through a very long and dry period of neglect by other academic disciplines.

18. Daniel Traister (1999), “‘You Must Remember This . . . ’: Or, Libraries as a Locus of Cultural Memories,” originally presented at a university-wide cultural studies seminar, now appears in Ben-Amos and Weissberg’s Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity.

19. A good reading is performative in ways that lectures are not. This may be the moment to remark that lectures, while they obviously continue to have a place among the various kinds of events libraries sponsor, ought not to be the only events libraries sponsor. The more able a library is to program events that are performative and presentations that use variet-
ies of media, the more attractive to younger (or to jaded) audiences that library is likely to seem.


21. The point is often made, e.g., by G. Thomas Tanselle (1989), *passim*, and succinctly on p. 55: “every text has been affected in one way or another by the physical means of its transmission; and ... every copy of a text is a separate piece of documentary evidence.”

22. One writer recently wrote to me about such matters, saying: ‘I’ve been taking my poetry students ... to the rare book room to see the artists’ books that present poetry. They love it. They want to know how to do it. They’re hooked. It’s good for them to see (since they are too young to know how it used to be) what the Internet can’t do.”

23. Other one-time events of many descriptions can be imagined, however. At my own institution, to offer a completely different kind of example, the retirement of a faculty member whose specialization coincided with one of the collection’s great strengths was marked by a one-day conference in her honor. The retiree’s former and present graduate students organized the event and constituted all but one of its speakers. The library chose to assist with funding, and some rare book collection staff participated in the event, drawing attention to resources in the subject area with then-current graduate students as well as with former ones, who now have graduate students of their own.

24. Librarians can also invite instructors teaching relevant classes to visit and investigate available resources in the collection for their courses. They can contact new faculty and offer them individualized tours within a short time of their arrival, showing them what is already present and learning what it might be useful to have available if it can be found and paid for. If they have established good relations with faculty, they may even make themselves and their collections part of the processes of recruitment of new faculty or new graduate students, providing one-on-one tours for people considering an offer of a position or admission.

25. The skills that Robert A. Seal (2001) emphasizes as most useful for reference librarians at the (more or less) present time, almost all heavily weighted towards computers and the Web, are indicative.

26. Is it necessary to say I speak about what I see as a condition of present-day reference without intending to criticize that condition? Reference staff respond, as they must, to the needs of the vast majority of their users. They have had to learn skills that focus, as those users do, on new technological and digitally based reference and research resources. They use tools rare book staff are far less at home in than they. For the reader whose needs focus on traditional books (and less traditional manuscripts), however, reference staff get far less daily reinforcement than rare book personnel.

27. Another such experience, as this paper reached completion, involved a couple researching the relationship of their 1891 second edition of a Mark Twain text to its first edition. They needed a bibliographical description of their edition. A reference librarian directed the couple to a biography of Twain, not to BAL—even though BAL (copy 1) is present in the reference collection; and even though biographical descriptions are not bibliographical descriptions. Directed to it by a rare book staff member, the couple found BAL (copy 2) in the rare book collection reference room, as well as the information they required.

28. The reorganization currently under way at the Brown University Library may suggest a model for other libraries, but even institutions that do not emerge with results that resemble Brown’s will almost certainly undergo a similar process sooner or later: libraries are changing. For information on Brown’s extensive reorganization, see http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/University_Library/MODEL/LTMG/, the library’s Web site charting its progress. “Process Mapping: The User-Centered Approach to Organizational Design,” a presentation by Rayna Bowley, Dan O’Mahony, Pat Putney, and Steven Lavallee at the Living the Future 4 Conference (University of Arizona, April 2002) is also useful. I need hardly emphasize how the “user-centered” focus their title foregrounds suits my theme. The confer-
ence Web site preserves a PowerPoint runthrough of this presentation: http://www.library.arizona.edu/conference/ltf4/pres/brown_files/v3_document.htm. Bowlby is preparing an article about the Brown reorganization for print but does not expect to complete or publish it before the new plan is implemented. I am grateful to Rayna M. Bowlby (Organization & Staff Development Office) and Rosemary Cullen (head librarian, The Harris Collection), Brown University Library, for providing me with this information.

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New Trends in Cataloging Rare and Special Materials

DEBORAH J. LESLIE

ABSTRACT

NOTE FROM THE ISSUE EDITOR: At the time of this issue’s printing, this report is the best official documentation of the American Library Association’s effort to update and enhance the Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (DCRM). Further progress on this important project can be found on the American Library Association’s Rare Book and Manuscripts Section Web site.

To: RBMS Executive Committee
From: Deborah J. Leslie, chair, Bibliographic Standards Committee (BSC)
Date: 9 April 2003
Re: DCRM Conference at Yale, 10-13 March 2003

I am pleased to report that the DCRM Conference, hosted by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library with support from Yale University Library, was enormously successful.

The specific goals of the conference as enumerated in the initial proposal letter we submitted to Alice Prochaska, Yale University Librarian, were to

1. Develop and articulate general principles of descriptive cataloging of rare materials as a whole;
2. Revise the existing DCRB (Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Books) rules based on newly-articulated general principles and on ten years’ experience cataloging with them;
3. Develop guidelines for collection-level cataloging of rare books, and for applying DCRM(B) to machine-press books, and finally
4. Produce a draft of DCRM(B) ready for public comment.

Twenty-five people converged on the Beinecke Library in New Haven for four full days of meetings, only nine months after the conference's conception. The daily schedule comprised four ninety-minute working sessions punctuated with generous break and lunch times, and evenings free. The conferees were each assigned to two of six working groups which met in alternating sessions, which in turn alternated with plenary sessions. In all, each working group had five working sessions and the conferees met together in six plenary sessions. Each working group had on average eight members, including a leader, a recorder, and the drafter of a position paper prepared well in advance. Indeed, the work of all the groups began several months before the conference commenced; this preparation helped ensure the highest level of productivity of the conference sessions. The committee chairperson led, and the BSC secretary recorded notes for, the plenary sessions.

Topics of the six working groups were
1. General principles of rare material cataloging (Joe A. Springer drafter, Jackie Dooley leader);
2. Transcription of early letter forms (Deborah J. Leslie and Benjamin Griffin drafters, Brian Hillyard leader);
3. Rare book cataloging of machine-press books (Manon Théroux drafter, Beth Russell leader);
4. Collection-level cataloging of rare books (Jain Fletcher drafter, Barbara M. Jones leader);
5. DCRB problems and lacunae (Deborah J. Leslie drafter, Laurence Creider leader),

The goals of the conference were largely fulfilled. As of this time, the statement of general principles for the cataloging of rare materials prepared by Working Group 1 has been disseminated. This statement will stand on its own as well as be used in the introductory material of DCRM(B) and the other DCRM components. Likewise, the discussion on when to create a new record has also been disseminated, formed by Working Group 6 into a new general rule, 0B1. Working Group 4's work on collection-level cataloging takes the form of an appendix to DCRM(B), and is also available for public comment.

The remaining three working groups, 2, 3, and 5, were structured around adding, deleting, changing, and rearranging existing rules; their products will be seen in a revised draft of DCRM(B). With assistance, the BSC chair
will integrate the results of the working groups and provide a rough edit for discussion at the ALA annual meeting in Toronto. After that time, the work will be handed to a small editorial team to refine the draft. Draft materials can be found at: http://www.folger.edu/bsc/dcrb/dcrbrev.html#dcrm.

We have begun discussions with the Library of Congress about publishing DCRM(B). They published *Biblio<graphic Description of Rare Books* and its second edition, *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Books*, but as an institution have had no direct involvement with this revision. Elizabeth Robinson, rare book team leader at the Library of Congress, is the BSC's liaison to LC and continues to attend meetings and involve herself in BSC activities, and was an active participant of the Yale Conference. In any case, no doubt the LC Cataloging Policy and Support Office will wish to review the document carefully. So while we do not yet have a publishing timeline, we nevertheless hope the whole process to be much expedited because of the productive work carried out by dedicated people in a location calculated to provide the best possible surroundings and conditions for our work.

The Beinecke Library under Barbara Shailor’s direction were wonderfully generous and considerate hosts. Not only did they provide funding, without which there would have been no conference at all, but demonstrated the depth of their commitment to its success by liberally devoting facilities and staff time. Their marked attention to the immediate and ongoing needs of the working sessions, and equally to our human comforts in lodging and meals, sets a model for practical and gracious hospitality at its best.
A Brief Look at Recent Developments in the Preservation and Conservation of Special Collections

Jennifer E. Hain

ABSTRACT
Due to the irreplaceability of materials as well as the innumerable variations in physical condition and storage needs, special collections present many challenges to preservation and conservation professionals. In reaction to these challenges, there have been many advances and changes within the fields of preservation and conservation. The goal of this short paper is to highlight some of the skills and technological advances that have changed the way special collections are preserved in reference to two approaches: item-level conservation and collections conservation.

One of the most fundamental aspects of special collections stewardship is preservation. Due to the irreplaceability of the collection materials as well as the innumerable variations in physical condition and storage needs, these collections present a great many challenges to preservation and conservation professionals. In reaction to these ongoing challenges, there have been many advances and changes within the fields of preservation and conservation that allow us to approach these collections more effectively than ever before.

In the past few decades, there has been a shift in philosophy about how preservation professionals approach special collections. Traditionally, special collections have been treated as collections of individual artifacts or small groups of objects. Conservation treatments such as binding repairs and paper mending have been done on a case-by-case basis, as individual pieces are used or acquired. This methodology is still valid for special collections; for instance, collections of incunables or the manuscripts of a famous author should almost always be approached in this manner. In cases of item-level conservation, books and other library items are considered
independently of their neighbors when treatment decisions are made and are treated in such a way as to maintain the most authentic representation of the original artifact as possible. Recently, this approach has been emphasized outside of special collections in such publications as The Evidence in Hand: Report of the Task Force on the Artifact in Library Collections, a CLIR publication coauthored by Stephen G. Nichols and Abby Smith (2001).

A more forward-looking philosophy concerning special collections conservation, however, is the view of a collection as a whole, or what has become known as collections conservation. Collections conservation, in reference to special collections, focuses on the use of preventative maintenance. This practice concentrates on such concerns as environmental controls, protective enclosures, and other nonintrusive means of preserving materials and utilizes them to lengthen the life of the collection as a whole, not as individual pieces.

The goal of this short paper is to highlight some of the skills and technological advances that have changed the way special collections are preserved in reference to these two approaches: item-level conservation and collections conservation. The developments discussed are by no means an exhaustive list of all the advances in the field but simply topics deemed by the author to be worthy of note.

**ITEM-LEVEL CONSERVATION**

Item-level conservation for special collections materials is rooted in traditional skills and techniques that have not changed for many centuries. In addition to these techniques, however, are many advances that have improved the reversibility, effectiveness, and speed by which conservation treatments are performed. Most recently, there have been a number of mechanical and chemical developments that have made the conservator's work easier. Of these, three that are worthy of note are the development of mechanical paper splitting, computers-assisted leaf-casting, and mass deacidification.

Paper splitting by hand has been utilized by conservators for many years to salvage those papers which are exceedingly brittle but for which lining or encapsulation may not be appropriate. This process involves splitting the two faces of a sheet of paper away from each other and reinforcing the paper core with the addition of new materials. It is only recently, however, that this process has been produced mechanically. Developed by the ZFB (Zentrum für Bucherrhaltung) company in Germany in 1994, mechanical paper splitting now offers an aesthetic paper strengthening option in addition to lining and encapsulation and has become affordable to larger institutions in Europe and even the United States despite the company's location (Zentrum für Bucherrhaltung, 2003). Although this process is still not commercially available stateside, it will undoubtedly be only a matter of time until there is either a U.S. provider or smaller paper splitting machines available for conservation labs to purchase.
The integration of computer imaging and mechanization as aids in pulp fills and leaf casting is also an example of the successful use of modern technology to improve a traditional repair technique. Leaf casting, a more mechanized version of pulp filling of paper losses, involves pulling a slurry of pulp and water through losses in paper with a vacuum pump over a fine screen. This method accelerates drying times and evens the coverage of paper pulp to losses over traditional pulp filling by hand. With the additional assistance of digital cameras, computer programs can now determine the area of loss for a flat piece of paper and approximate the amount of paper pulp to be added to a slurry for the leaf casting process to give an almost flawless fill.

Although by its very name not strictly an item-level treatment, mass deacidification bridges the gap between the invasive item-level repair and the less-invasive collections conservation methods. Mass deacidification is the integration of basic (pH > 7.0) salt particles into the interstices of paper to help combat the inherent production of acids as paper degrades. The development of this product has seen many trials and permutations over the past decades. Beginning with investigations into the use of Diethyl Zinc (DEZ), and moving onto the commercially produced Wei T'o and Bookkeeper products, mass deacidification has become increasingly more reliable and effective as well as less reactive with printing and drawing inks. The present affordability and reliability of mass deacidification treatment, in conjunction with the ever-increasing use of permanent paper in publishing, may very well lead to a future with less materials suffering from embrittlement. Indeed, although the mass deacidification process was initially designed for use on circulating collection materials, increasing numbers of rare and semirare materials are receiving this treatment.

**Collectons Conservation**

The field of collections conservation has seen many advances in the past few decades, and many of them even within the past few years. In the matter of environmental control, there have been several products introduced to the market that have made the monitoring of special collection environments a simpler task and have assisted in determining what environmental conditions are appropriate for specialized materials. These advances are in addition to the ever-improving reliability of HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) units, and the improved availability of cold (below 65° F) storage units.

Dataloggers have existed for some time, but only recently have they become affordable enough for most collection managers to utilize them. Dataloggers are small computers that record temperature and relative humidity and, in some instances, light levels. They are highly mobile and produced by a number of manufacturers. Through an interface with a PC, collection managers or preservation staff can determine how often the
environmental conditions should be sampled and monitor the storage environment of their collections. The information stored in the datalogger can be downloaded into Microsoft® Excel or other specialized programs for easy interpretation.

Building on the availability of dataloggers, the Image Permanence Institute (IPI) has developed the Preservation Calculator\(^1\) and is currently developing the Climate Notebook.\(^2\) These digital tools enable easy interpretation of the data collected from hygrothermographs, psychrometers, or dataloggers and translate this data into practical terms relating to the overall health of the collections. A more general tool, the Preservation Calculator, offers information relating to the general aging rate of library collections and the overall risk of mold in relation to temperature and relative humidity data input by the user. The Climate Notebook software, which recently finished its first round of field-testing, offers a much more in-depth view of the effects of storage environments on collections. By manipulating data sets downloaded from a datalogger, the Climate Notebook allows for an institution's personnel to view storage conditions over a period of time and relates those conditions in a variety of terms, including temperature and relative humidity variation, averages of those conditions over time, the natural aging rates for a variety of specific collection materials, and the risk of mold under those conditions.

Control of pests and mold, and their eradication, are also areas that have seen great advances in the past few years. In contrast to the zealous use of chemical fungicides and insecticides in the past, the practice of “Integrated Pest Management” has made great inroads through promoting the limited use of chemicals as well as utilizing controlled environments and other, nonchemical means of insect control. In many special collections, chemicals are used only as means of last resort and, even then, the chemicals used are much less toxic than those previously employed. In addition, freezing to kill adult insects and their larvae/eggs, the use of HEPA vacuums for removing dormant mold, and the use of oxygen scavengers and anoxic environments to kill insects have greatly improved the ability for preservation professionals to eradicate pests without unnecessarily exposing materials and themselves to harsh chemicals.

Storage environments have also seen great advances over the past decade. Although the preservation and conservation community has known for many years that acid neutral or basic (pH > 7.0) paper materials with no lignin are appropriate for the long-term storage of most library materials, some additions to this knowledge have given broader opportunities for advanced long-term storage for specific item types. The integration of molecular sieves into archival papers has allowed for the enclosures constructed from them to actually trap harmful off-gassed materials such as acetic acid from acetate film stock. Additionally, the use of impermeable films, such as the commercially available Marvel Seal, can be custom cut and
heat-sealed to make almost completely impermeable containers. These containers can be used in conjunction with desiccants and oxygen scavengers to produce highly inert storage environments.

In addition to traditional book and paper collections, another area in special collections preservation that has seen a great deal of progress is film preservation. The term “film preservation” is used loosely to include motion picture film and still photographic film, as well as microfilm. Some advances in this area include A-D Strips produced by the Image Permanence Institute, which can be placed in enclosed spaces, such as drawers and boxes, to detect the presence of acetic acid, the primary indicator of “vinegar syndrome,” or the chemical decomposition of cellulose acetate film bases (Image Permanence Institute, 2002a). These strips, made available commercially in the late 1990s, have greatly decreased the time necessary to survey film collections for vinegar syndrome, have increased safety by eliminating the need for people to “sniff” for film degradation, and have also allowed for the easy quantitative evaluation of the degree of acetic acid being off-gassed.

One last area of progress in film preservation is the recent ability to salvage distorted acetate negative images. This process, developed by the Chicago Albumen Works, essentially removes the image-bearing emulsion layer from the deteriorated base plastic, relaxes it, and duplicates it onto an interpositive or through digital scanning (Chicago Albumen Works, n.d.). Although complete image salvage is not always possible with severely deteriorated images, this method does offer an option for film preservation that was not possible ten years ago.

Although these highlights do not cover all the advances in special collections preservation and conservation in the past decades, they do illustrate the immense amount of research and development that has been taking place in this area. This is not in any way indicative that the task is even close to complete, however. As we better use technology as a tool to preserve our collections, so, too, do authors and artists use technology to aid in their creativity. As these technologies become increasingly more diverse and affordable, many acquisitions into special collections will include digital media for which there are no standards for preservation. The “conservation” of lost digital media through emulation, or by other means, as well as the continued access to the innumerable formats for recorded audiovisual materials, will be an area of much needed research in the coming years.

NOTES
2. For more information, see Image Permanence Institute (2002b).

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Moving Image Preservation in Libraries

PAULA DE STEFANO

ABSTRACT
WITHIN THE CONFINES OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS in libraries, an established practice of preservation for film and video collections is largely non-existent. By comparison, the scale of resources needed to achieve meaningful programmatic efforts to preserve them is far greater than the resources libraries have assembled for traditional paper-based preservation. Management of moving image collections requires specialized knowledge and expertise. Consequently, while a mature system of preservation technology and methodology exists in libraries today to achieve the systematic preservation of books and paper-based materials, preservation programs generally have excluded the same provisions to sustain the useable life of moving image materials. With this in mind, this article seeks to articulate the current landscape of film and video preservation in libraries and examine the barriers that have hindered the development of full-fledged preservation programs for them. It is unclear whether traditional library preservation constructs can effectively inform the development of techniques and methodologies appropriate to film and video preservation. Nevertheless, it is perhaps more important, at this point in time, to stimulate and encourage fruitful discussion that will lead to such development.

A SLEEPING GIANT IN LIBRARIES
The motion picture industry, film archives, and other cultural repositories with moving image materials have been concerned and active in moving image preservation for many years. Even before 1950, it was clear that the cellulose nitrate film used for motion pictures was extremely unstable, and many films were transferred to a cellulose acetate film base to
save their content. When that medium proved to be unstable as well, more transfers were conducted using polyester film. The Library of Congress, Museum of Modern Art, the George Eastman House, Universal Studios, and many other institutions and film archives have long been conscious of the fragility of film, aware of its importance as a record of human culture, and active in their efforts to preserve film collections. Analog video formats, including television broadcasting, present serious preservation problems as well as film and are held in many cultural repositories. In fact, libraries—the focus of this article—often have larger video collections than motion picture film. Here, too, efforts to preserve these materials have been ongoing for decades, albeit with a dissimilar approach to preservation than generally practiced within libraries.

The history and evolution of these efforts are recorded in the literature of the moving image profession alongside, although largely outside, the literature of the library community. The evolution of motion picture film restoration has occurred almost in tandem with a similar history of book and paper preservation in libraries. Until recently, though, there has been little crossover between these two groups about the means of preservation, even though both share common concerns about the disappearance of their valued film collections. No doubt, interesting parallels abound between the histories of the preservation efforts within these two groups, and it is likely that there are valuable opportunities to work collaboratively to rescue this medium that has so captured popular attention and so influenced cultures worldwide. Though preservation in libraries has focused more on the written word over the years, our culture has embraced moving image technology, and the importance of film and video in recording our history must be recognized. Truly, one cannot discount Ralph Sargent’s statement in the documentary *Keepers of the Frame* (Gitsch and McLaughlin, 1999) that “there is no more thorough a document of who we are than the motion picture.” Yet, collectively speaking, the unfortunate truth is that film and video materials held in most libraries nationwide have languished with limited, if any, resources dedicated to their preservation.

While the resources currently devoted to moving image preservation in libraries are clearly inadequate, it is important to dispel any idea that the field of moving image preservation is in an embryonic stage. Even though it is in its nascency in libraries, it has captured the attention of many film archivists for some time. Mann (2001) reports that

[i]n the decades spanning 1967 to 1977, moving image preservation gained a national platform for the first time. This platform was made possible through the creation of the American Film Institute (AFI) . . . . In the first decade of its existence, the AFI played a major role in determining how moving image preservation would operate in the United States for the remainder of the twentieth century. The AFI did not accomplish this monumental task in a vacuum; changing values and
priorities in the larger culture industry helped to stimulate a national moving image consciousness. (p.4)

Within the culture industry, however, libraries have been slow to address the preservation of these complex, machine-dependent formats of film and video, and it is the purpose of this article to examine the circumstances of their befuddlement and to elucidate constructively the problems inherent in fully taking on moving image preservation vis-à-vis the longstanding focus already in place in libraries to preserve book collections. This examination seeks to articulate the current landscape of preservation of moving images in libraries and archives and identify the major impediments these repositories face in developing preservation programs similar to those that exist for books and paper-based collections. When exposed and understood, these patterns of neglect and their underlying causes, in comparison to other preservation efforts, may signal a viable course of action to redress the woefully inadequate attention paid to these valuable cultural materials and permit a more promising future for these special collections.

**The Current Landscape**

There are practical reasons why libraries have not achieved methods of preservation for film and video collections that are comparable to those achieved in the book and paper area. One major obstacle has been the lack of an infrastructure to manage ongoing preservation efforts for these media. Banks (2000) recognized that, “[t]he imperative of frequent active intervention” for moving image collections “place managerial and economic demands on libraries and archives that are quite without precedent, and whose dimensions are only beginning to be realized” (p. 324). More recently, Gracy and Cloonan (in press) acknowledge the same in a forthcoming publication meant to serve as a “sort of moving image preservation primer to librarians and archivists...” (p. 4). Here, they attribute “the unfortunate state of moving image preservation in most cultural institutions to a combination of several factors: a lack of appropriate equipment needed to inspect and view such material, a lack of qualified personnel to care for and maintain both the materials and the equipment, limited resources for engaging in moving image preservation and reformatting activities, and an absence of sufficient description of these materials (outside of title information in an institution’s catalog)” (Gracy & Cloonan, in press, p. 3). In libraries, specifically, the lack of qualified personnel is even more substantial than implied in the preceding statement. There is a lack of technical skills and serious gaps exist among library professionals in their basic understanding of film and video history, as well as in their grasp of the various moving image production technologies. The overarching absence of the knowledge and experience needed to inventory and analyze the condition and needs of moving image collections paralyzes libraries and stymies efforts to organize and build ongoing preservation programs to care for these time-sensitive mate-
rials. Under these pressures—time, skill and scarce resources—it is understandable that libraries would be overwhelmed and daunted at the prospect of taking on the preservation of these additional materials. And, given the highly technical nature of moving image materials, no foundation for film and video preservation can develop in such a void.

Like unwanted stepchildren, a whole community of the past is packed away, out of sight—if not literally, then figuratively—by nonexistent resources for their care. Given the value and historic significance of film and video collections, it is difficult to reconcile such neglect. It is hard to imagine that any historian or librarian would not recognize the importance of such a pervasive medium. Could it be, simply that, on a practical level, films and videos compete mightily alongside books for scarce preservation resources in libraries? Books are a primary commodity in libraries and have been for centuries. And, the intent to preserve them is just as long-standing. Within the modern library profession, as Higginbotham’s (1990) research proved, preserving book collections dates as far back as the library profession itself in the United States (p. 4). Her book begins with the founding of the American Library Association in 1876 when preservation was already a frequent topic of discussion recorded in meeting minutes and in professional journals in the nineteenth century. In the last thirty years, a programmatic approach to preservation has matured rapidly and book and paper preservation is now a recognized component in library service. Even in the blizzard of digital technology that surrounds us, books are still the most heavily used materials within a library and, in a research and academic library setting, book collections are critical to a library’s raison d’être: to provide research support for faculty and scholars, as well as doctoral, graduate, and undergraduate students. Society’s dependence on the book to convey information may be changing, but the decomposition of millions and millions of books held nationally and internationally in research libraries continues to present an overwhelming threat and rising costs. Unable to fully cope with book preservation, libraries, unsurprisingly, have not produced equivalent systems of preservation for motion picture film and video collections.

Furthermore, film and video formats are varied, and they exist as composites of materials in many different shapes and sizes generally unfamiliar to librarians. If that is not off-putting enough, they also require specialized equipment and someone with the technical know-how to operate it: “No other art is so tied to machines” (Mast & Kawin, 1996, p. 7). Thus, when libraries first began to acquire and build film, video, and sound collections on a large scale, a specialty within librarianship developed to provide access to them. In those early years, libraries appointed audiovisual librarians to manage these materials and keep them accessible. However, these positions rarely included preservation responsibilities per se, although many audiovisual librarians did perform those functions without a formal mandate or program support.
OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME

The impulse to preserve any kind of artifact proceeds from the value assigned to the object or its content. That value is tightly bound to the artifact’s unique attributes and scarcity. Thus, in libraries, the preservation of rare books vs. those held in general collections follows different treatment paths. Likewise, moving image collections divide into two distinct types: collections of one-of-a-kind, genuinely unique materials, and collections produced in multiple copies and held by multiple libraries primarily to support the specific needs of their constituencies much the way book collections do. In effect, both types of moving image collections are likely to wind up in “special” or “specialized” collections in libraries simply by virtue of their format and their need for special playback equipment. However, it is important to be mindful of them as separate entities because the preservation treatments for these two categories of moving image materials differ in relation to their uniqueness and accessibility.

With that understanding, the longevity of unique copies of moving image materials, like rare books and manuscripts, is inherently more threatened because they cannot be replaced. They exist in one iteration and, as collections, often reflect a broad history of formats, including those that evolved since the early production of motion pictures in the 1890s (there were many, many competing technologies in the early decades of film), through the early stages of experimental video production starting in 1956, and extending into the ever-changing present day when moving images are also being produced in digital formats.

In some instances a virtual riot of multiple moving image formats exist within a single collection. Furthermore, it can be difficult to identify with any certainty what is visually contained on the media because 1. often older playback equipment needed to view the early formats no longer exists on-site, or 2. the condition of a single, unique film or video makes it too fragile to handle except by an expert with specialized equipment. Many curators and archivists wisely choose to wait until items can be copied before allowing access to them. Indeed, the fragile ones may very well have only one single playback left before loss of content occurs. As a result, handling is avoided, proper cataloging cannot be produced, and, in some cases, only the curator of a moving image collection knows the materials’ exact content.

In addition to competing against book collections, there are other, more fundamental reasons that moving image preservation receives only marginal consideration in research libraries. As mentioned above, there is an absence of experience and expertise resident in libraries to preserve these collections, and no network of standards or guidelines exists to point the way toward recommended practices. There are no organized management systems specifically designed to maintain and protect film and video collections and, unfortunately, the traditional preservation principles and methodologies that libraries have relied upon for books and paper do not
transfer easily to film and related formats. Exorbitantly high costs associated with the methods used to preserve films and videos compound the seriousness of the problem, and scarce resources in most library budgets to pay for these processes acts as a strong deterrent to progress. Given these conditions, it is obvious why strategies for moving image preservation in libraries have not developed.

**Advances and Training in Education**

While all of the above reasons conspire to form a dismal landscape, the challenges they present are not new to cultural institutions. In a spirited and inspiring call to action, Darling and Ogden (1981) identified a similar sense of urgency in research libraries faced with staggering numbers of deteriorating books and an equally daunting mountain of perceived obstacles. Their article, aptly entitled “Creativity vs. Despair,” also depicts a dismal landscape. Yet, over time, professionals were educated, ethics and standards devised and scientifically tested, and programmatic structures developed. In fact, library literature is replete with evidence of this development.

Harking back to the early days of book and paper preservation in libraries, Banks (1981) cited existing “gulfs in knowledge and experience” in the development of book conservation in libraries and suggested that the problem might be redressed through an “engineering” or “systems approach” that he depicted as follows:

1. a thorough analysis of the problem in question in the widest possible context; 2. design of a system to meet as nearly as possible the specific criteria identified in (1); 3. a search for necessary existing methods, materials, and equipment from other fields, if necessary; 4. and attempt, if necessary to have materials or equipment manufactured for the system designed; and 5. the making of any necessary alterations or compromises in an ideal system as dictated by (3) and (4). (p. 194)

The same suggestion applies handily to the need for a systematic approach to preservation for moving images today and, indeed, twenty years later Banks (2000), a consummate ambassador for preservation, updated his earlier observation (repeated, here, for the second time) when he aptly noted that audiovisual materials “place managerial and economic demands on libraries and archives that are quite without precedent” (p. 324). The key word in this statement is “managerial,” and Banks wisely recognizes that a management construct is the preemptive step before “economic” demands can be addressed.

Just as systems of management support today’s traditional preservation programs, systems of management must be developed to support parallel programs for moving image materials. The infrastructure that enables book preservation was built by trained professionals who agreed upon the processes and procedures required to achieve their goals and developed a foun-
dation of ethics and scientifically sound standards that, in turn, effectively addressed economic demands by fostering the credibility essential to raise funds. A solid administrative infrastructure for moving image preservation requires a cadre of professional experts trained specifically in film and video preservation methodologies to, likewise, develop ethical principles and scientifically tested, reliable standards to carry out their work. The first rung of the ladder is professional development. Without it, an infrastructure cannot be established, achievable preservation goals cannot move forward, and the moving image materials held in hundreds of special collections nationwide will continue to derive scant attention from the libraries and archives that collected them, even if funding was not an issue. Clearly, Banks knew this from past experience.

Prior to the degree-granting preservation and conservation program for books and paper, founded by Paul Banks at Columbia University's School of Library Science, the emergence of book preservation as a profession within the library community evolved slowly. In an article published in 1981, entitled "Education in Library Conservation," Banks recognized that, historically, "neither master nor apprentice often had the opportunity to study the conspicuously sound structures of early bindings... [thus] the technical challenges of binding, restoring and preserving new materials... soon went beyond the purely empirical ability of traditionally trained craftsman to solve" (p. 190). Furthermore, he observed, "Not only are empirical solutions no longer adequate... but the scale of preservation problems has escalated far beyond the ability of older, craft-oriented techniques alone to solve" (Banks, 1981, p. 190).

The same observations could easily be made in the realm of moving image preservation. In the early stages of film preservation efforts, much of the training and expertise was derived through on-the-job training. Borrowing Banks's words, "the scale of preservation problems has escalated" in this realm, too, well beyond what on-the-job training can solve. Later, early film practitioners obtained training through workshops, seminars, and occasionally short courses, all of which were offered only intermittently (Lukow, 2000, pp. 134–147). Most recently, Lukow (2001) says he observed firsthand, in his role at UCLA's Film and Television Archive, that college and university students were "creating their own concurrent or cross-disciplinary degrees by combining courses of study in film and television history, library science, or information studies" (p. 15).

There is a latent triangle of similarities underlying the professional development in the preservation fields of art, book, and now moving image preservation that is worth noting and may be useful to future research. Banks's (1981) article on conservation education in libraries culminates in a description of the emergence of the degree-granting program he founded for preservation and conservation of books at Columbia Univer-
sity (now at the University of Texas, at Austin). There he draws the readers’ attention to a similar pattern of professional development within the art conservation community. In the 1950s, the art conservation community established several organizations for practicing conservators within which they could meet and exchange information about ethics and advance professionalism within their field (Banks, 1981, p. 191). Ten years later, in 1960, the first university-based, degree-granting program for art conservation was established at New York University with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation.

According to Lukow (2000), the establishment of a master’s degree program at the University of East Anglia in 1990 “and the appearance shortly thereafter of its first graduates on the job market opened many eyes to a new sense of the possible” (p. 138). It took ten years to effectively realize “the possible” in the United States, but this year the University of California, at Los Angeles, (UCLA) established a Moving Image Archive Studies Program, a graduate-level program jointly administered by UCLA’s Department of Film, Television, and Digital Media and the Department of Information Studies. With support from federal grant agencies and foundations to develop and begin the program, the first class of ten students was admitted in fall 2002. On the east coast, New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts will launch a new master’s degree program, Moving Image Archiving and Preservation, in fall 2003. Together, these two programs represent the only two university degree-granting programs for moving image preservation in the United States. Both programs seek to address the need for history, social context, and theory, beyond the practical, hands-on aspects of film and video preservation.

Nonuniversity training programs, such as the George Eastman House School of Film Preservation established in 1996, along with internships, apprenticeships, and short-term courses, continue to be offered, but the need for university-based education is essential to the development of the profession itself. Similar to the professionalization of book and paper preservation in libraries, and art conservation before it, professionalization of moving image preservation will foster the development of shared ethics and scientific testing, resulting in much needed standards and practical guidelines essential to the widespread acceptance of the processes and procedures needed to support moving image preservation on a national and international scale. Professional development is an essential component in the basic infrastructure needed to propel film and video preservation forward in libraries and, although inchoative developmentally, the emerging trend toward university-based programs signals progress. It will take time and require considerable support, but its importance as an essential step in building responsible and reliable preservation programs for moving images cannot be underestimated.
Preservation Paradigms and Principles

Until the professional schools produce a cadre of specialists with the training needed to develop standard preservation practices for moving images, libraries must look elsewhere for effective program models. Where these models are borrowed from may critically influence the direction and success of future preservation initiatives and must be carefully chosen. Given these circumstances, Gracy and Cloonan (in press) are in agreement with the idea expressed here that moving image preservation finds a "parallel history" in "the preservation movement for paper-based library and archival holdings," and, thus, they reason that "because moving image preservation is tied to the larger cultural heritage movement, it has certain similarities in terminology and practice with other preservation traditions in libraries, museums, and archives" (p. 5). Furthermore, they suggest that other preservation traditions provide "an exemplar of how a concept such as preservation can be re-shaped to fit the needs of a particular group" (Gracy & Cloonan, in press, p. 5). Following this line of reasoning, a logical paradigm for future moving image preservation initiatives may exist in the management systems that support book preservation traditions in libraries, if not prescriptively, then perhaps in form and principle. A brief rationale for a programmatic approach to moving image preservation that draws upon book preservation practices follows.

A Programmatic Approach

Any conversation regarding programmatic constructs for moving image preservation must first embrace the recommendations brought forth in the National Film Preservation Board's (1994) Redefining Film Preservation: A National Plan. Their plan calls for program development based on a balanced approach with an emphasis on storage conditions that "extend the useful life of films, including those in the early states of deterioration," counterpoised with "selective duplication and restoration" programs (National Film Preservation Board, 1994, 13). This idea dovetails nicely with the comprehensive, programmatic approach that has come to define most preservation programs in libraries. The comprehensive approach is probably best described by Morrow (2000) in "Defining the Library Preservation Program," where, in addition to single item treatment, she emphasizes that "all library materials will benefit from umbrella preservation programs designed to protect them from extremes of temperature and humidity, prepare for emergencies, provide a proper storage environment, actively discourage theft and mutilation, and encourage proper handling and use" (pp. 11–12). In other words, a comprehensive preservation program includes a range of treatment options designed to provide realistic alternatives appropriate to the spectrum of objectives within an institution's overarching preservation goals. Ideally, these treatment choices are supported by a rational decision-making scheme developed in conjunction with a
condition assessment, use and handling patterns, and full recognition of the financial constraints of the institution.

**Existing Preservation Models**

In the realm of book and paper materials, preservation administration in libraries and archives seeks to organize and manage the retention of the repository’s collection for the long-term research and information needs of their constituents. This has always been more difficult for archive and special collection materials because of artifactual and unique attributes that must be preserved in their original format. The preservation of these materials are managed in two ways: 1. through reactive systems involving a range of conservation treatment methods; or, 2. through proactive systems involving preventive methods, such as carefully constructed storage environments and limited handling. Most circulating collections in research libraries are managed differently because they are largely redundant; that is, the book collections which comprise the bulk of their materials are available in multiple copies in multiple institutions. While the traditional preservation approach for these collections has been to retain original copies, when that is not possible the best alternatives are to replace an item with a new copy if it is still in print; or, when replacement is not possible, provide conservation treatments to strengthen and stabilize the item; or, if the text block and paper will not sustain conservation treatment, as a last resort, the textual information from the original copy may be transferred or reformatted onto a more stable, longer-lasting substrate, such as acid-free, permanent paper, or microfilm. Finally, if none of the above are possible (physically or financially) a protective enclosure will consolidate the item and diminish further damage from use and handling.

One of the strongest principles of library preservation demands that the information contained in an original book or document be preserved without alteration. This extends to physical elements as well as content. Nowhere is this taken more seriously as in the case of rare books and special collections where the container of the information, including the binding, text block, paper, typography, and the text itself, have attributes essential to the cultural value of the item. The science of library conservation permits sound methods to preserve these artifactually valuable attributes.

The goals and objectives of moving image preservation in libraries are likely to follow a similar strategy insofar as it must employ both active methods of film restoration and reconstruction, as well as proactive methods of proper storage and handling. In this respect, the national plan, as expressed in *Redefining Film Preservation*, provides the beginnings of a solid construct for a balanced, comprehensive approach to film preservation. Exploiting the benefits of cold storage and applying proactive methods to lengthen the life of any collection of cultural materials is highly effective. The science of cold storage is well established for film, and the rationale needs little
beyond the development of guidelines to achieve uniform application among other cultural institutions. But cold storage satisfies only one side of the equation for a balanced approach to film preservation. The other programmatic component needed to balance out a preservation program involves a system of selectively copying moving images, and the methodology to support this side of the equation is, as yet, underdeveloped. It is on this side of the equation that the idea, introduced by Gracy and Cloonan (in press), of “reshaping” other cultural preservation programs to fit the needs of moving image materials reveals the problems of an imperfect fit.

**Reshaping Library Reformatting Methods**

It is tempting to proceed with the line of thinking that existing duplication practices for book preservation may provide an adaptable methodology for motion picture film and video, but close inspection casts doubt on that idea. Beginning with terminology, the concept and context of duplication becomes confused and falters in translation between book and paper preservation vs. moving image preservation. For example, in film preservation parlance, “restoration” is a process used to restore visual quality to images where optical losses have occurred and “reconstruction” refers to a process of returning the narrative sequence, or scenes of the film, back to its original sequential structure (Read & Meyer, 2000, p. 70). In both cases, these activities are performed in a duplication process that succeeds when a preservable copy of the original is produced—confusing to the book conservator, whose application of these terms in book preservation represents treatment procedures meant to restore an item to its original state, rather than produce a copy. But, unlike books and paper documents, films are projected and viewed. The new medium must faithfully reproduce continuous images but, in most cases, need not actually be the original. In order to revivify a damaged or deteriorated film, the sequence of frames must be copied or transferred to another film base where they can be safely stored.

**Mechanics of Film Production that Affect Preservation**

Beyond issues of terminology, the process of duplication, as it relates to motion picture film (and video), does not easily translate from prevailing book preservation practices for mechanical reasons. Acceding to the idea that the reformatting of books to preserve content—in other words, microfilming or photocopying—correlates with the duplication of moving images to preserve content, the critical question is whether the programmatic procedures involved in one will suffice for the other. Below appear a few straightforward reasons why some of the principles and programmatic structures that support reformatting of books and documents do not correlate conveniently to moving image materials. In any conversation, citing the vast differences be-
between the technology of the book and the technology of film itself merely states the obvious; but, considered within the context of reformatting, the complexities between the two technologies appear in alio-relievo.

To add clarity to this point, it is useful to briefly enumerate the complex technical aspects of motion picture film as presented in various places in film literature but most comprehensively throughout the text of *Restoration of Motion Picture Film* (Read and Myer, 2000). In addition to the various cellulosic film bases used over the years as carriers of moving images—in other words, nitrate and acetate in its various forms—films can be found in numerous widths, or gauges (70mm, 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, Super8, and more) with various sprocket, or perforation, dimensions for which the “pitch,” or distance between sprocket holes, varies. When filmmaking became a profitable industry, these kinds of film elements were eventually standardized by the motion picture film industry. Nevertheless, libraries have collections that exhibit a range of these elements and, in fact, are more likely to contain film produced outside of the movie industry and their standards. Thus, in theory, library collections are more likely to exhibit a high variety of film formats.

Fortunately, film history is well recorded in the literature and documents the complexities and variations in film technology that emerged over the years since 1895 to provide moving images. First came motion pictures without sound, then with sound—first recorded on discs, then magnetically or optically recorded, then formatted with stereophonic sound. Films were first produced in black and white, then color was added, initially using a stenciling method, then using additive or subtractive color separations, followed by Technicolor in the 1930s and Cinecolor. A number of other separation technologies followed, culminating in a system that combines three color layers into one sandwich using a negative-positive system, or sometimes a direct positive (reversal) system (Read & Meyer, 2000, p. 43).

Simplistically summarized, motion picture film can be found on a variety of film bases in a multitude of gauges with various sprocket dimensions. It may be found in black and white, or color, and with or without sound. The various elements used to make a motion picture film complicate the restoration and reconstruction process, but the complexity does not end here because, of course, film must be projected in order to be viewed.

On the projection side, each element of film production has to work in tandem with a system capable of projecting it. Film rates measured in frames per second were used to record continuous images in the filming process that, in turn, had to be synchronized with the speeds of the projection system used to exhibit it. Synchronization extended as well to the sound and the color systems used in the film. Furthermore, projection techniques involved aspect ratios and image areas that also changed over time, initially from full-image projection, to an early industry “standard” format, to widescreen formats (including anamorphic formats, such as Cinemascope), and flat widescreen formats like letter box. In a documentary about film preser-
vation entitled *Keeper of the Frame* (Gitsch and McLaughlin, 1999), John Harvey, film enthusiast, testifies to the complexities involved in film projection when he describes the five-man projection system typically required to project Cinemascope!

In total, all of the technical elements of motion picture film referenced above combine to make reformatting, or duplicating, a very complex endeavor that requires far more technical experience and well-informed decision-making skills than is entailed in reformatting books. The fixed nature of the book drastically simplifies the duplication process. Indeed, in the book-bound library setting, the amount of technical knowledge required in order to mount successful motion picture film transfers is quite daunting.

Equally daunting is the technical knowledge required to mount successful transfers of video formats. Unfortunately, the problems encountered in video reproduction and preservation are just as troublesome and require the same, if not more immediate, attention as those encountered in motion picture film. Video formats and playback equipment are equally diverse and, even more so than motion picture film, present a formidable preservation problem because they are less stable over time and because duplication choices for video are less reliable as preservation formats. Whereas moving images recorded on chemically unstable nitrate and acetate film bases can be transferred to a chemically stable polyester film base, the current hunt to identify transfer media to preserve early video materials remains frustrating and problematic. In addition, obsolescence of the playback equipment is a greater problem for video formats and digitally produced moving images than motion picture film.

In addition to the mechanical difficulties that accompany the reformatting of moving image materials, the intellectual part of the preservation process, such as selection methodologies and content-related issues, raises other concerns. These concerns are invoked when existing copies of a film vary due to an editing process that may have combined scenes differently for different audiences, or when reconstruction of the content is necessary because parts of the film are too damaged to view. In this respect, duplication processes and procedures raise serious ethical issues that, in some ways, may coincide with established ethical structures followed in book preservation in principle but, perhaps, not in practice.

Because there is no other preservation choice, the decision-making applied to the process of film and video duplication is especially critical for moving image preservation purposes. “Since restoration can alter the quality of an image considerably, it is important to keep in mind that both activities, restoration and reconstruction, are subject to an ethics of restoration” (Read & Meyer, 2000, p. 69). Edmunson (1995) cautions that

The very nature of AV media gives rise to peculiar ethical issues. For example, when a film is copied for preservation from a deteriorating
base to a new one, the process—however scientific or exact—always involves subjective artistic and technical choices in which the manipulation or loss of some of the image and sonic content are available options. The loss of screen or sound quality is in effect the loss of information—the equivalent of removing vital pages from a book. (p. 251)

The film archives profession is currently wrestling with a broad array of ethical and standards issues, often hotly debated in their literature and listservs. Library preservation professionals must enter this debate and, presumably, reckon with the compromises necessary to adjust their experience reformatting paper-based materials to the properties and nuances of film and video. Opportunities for communication between these two professional groups are relatively scarce, and library administrators and funding agencies would assist the progress of moving image preservation greatly by stimulating opportunities for exchange between these two groups. One obvious way to achieve this is to fund attendance at professional meetings.

CONCLUSION

Most research libraries have well-established, even robust infrastructures for book and paper preservation and conservation, and the idea of simply replicating them to accommodate moving image materials, or absorbing film and video materials into current programmatic workflow, is conceivable in the former case, tempting in the latter case, but seems implausible in both cases. Without the requisite training, few preservation librarians would find it possible to initiate and responsibly administer programs for these dramatically different formats. In order to do so would require learning a whole new set of technologies.

In addition, a well-founded preservation program for moving images requires the development of a set of professional standards and ethics to support this work. Currently, there are none that have been properly vetted or professionally agreed upon specifically for library intents and purposes. Choices must be articulated and the pros and cons of those choices must be debated. Unfortunately, the questions that need to be posed and argued have not yet been asked, let alone answered. This process must proceed before standards and ethics eventually form the basis of a systematic preservation effort.

As libraries wait for the newly established professional schools to prepare the specialized personnel needed to direct moving image preservation programs, the fundamental question for them is, can they borrow from, or “re-shape,” existing preservation practices, as Gracy and Cloonan (in press) suggest, either in whole or in part? Or does moving image preservation call for a new, separately defined set of goals and objectives? The comparison to book preservation presented above does present a useful and convenient point to begin a course of inquiry. At the very least, it is probable that the
spirit and intent of existing preservation principles found in typical book preservation efforts can be translated to moving image materials. Beyond that, however, compromises will likely be needed. Much research and examination within the preservation community is needed to explore the programmatic models appropriate to moving image preservation before it can take its rightful place in the library setting.

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Digital Imaging and Conservation: Model Guidelines

JOHN F. DEAN

ABSTRACT

ARTIFACTS ARE NOW BEING INCLUDED in digital imaging projects at an increasing rate. Digital imaging staff are rarely experienced in the handling or disposition of artifacts and often regard the artifact as being "preserved" simply through the act of digitization. The guidelines refer to some of the problems likely to be encountered in the intersection of conservation and digitization and make some recommendations on procedures designed to address them.

The following examination of the intersection of conservation and digital imaging is drawn from guidelines proposed at the Cornell University Library. The words "conservation" and "digitization" represent two different philosophies and seem to operate in different worlds. Yet, an increasing number of digitization projects involve rare and unique materials, and scanning is often undertaken by staff who lack experience in the handling of artifacts. Sometimes attention is focused so intently on the technical requirements needed to produce and store viable images that ensuring competent care and secure housing for the artifact is given inadequate consideration.

Conservation represents the care of the original artifact in terms both of stabilization and treatment. The definition of an artifact, according to the CLIR Evidence in Hand: Report of the Task Force on the Artifact in Library Collections is "an information resource in which the information is recorded on a physical medium, such as a photograph or a book, and in which the information value of the resource adheres not only in the text or content but also in the object itself" (Nichols & Smith, 2001, p. 8). For exam-
ple, the way a book is bound, the materials used in executing the binding, the paper on which the text is printed or written, the form of printing and illustration, the decoration, and so on, are all potentially valuable pieces of information that should be preserved. In the context of these guidelines, an “artifact” is taken to mean an item that, when scanned, will be retained and returned to the collection.

Digitization represents the digital capture of the artifact, and this raises a number of issues related to long-term file maintenance, authenticity, copyright, etc. From the conservation standpoint, it is often tempting to regard digital imaging as no different from microfilming or any other analog photography, as all seem to reproduce the artifact. However, the ubiquity of access possible with digital conversion seems to add another dimension, and the special lighting requirements, exposure times, and handling concerns suggest that a different response should be made, especially as many analog reformatting tasks were traditionally the province of conservation. Every digital imaging project concerned with the capture of artifacts must involve the preservation of the digital image and the original artifact and, at the very least, digitization should do no harm to the original source document.

These guidelines thus seek to address the intersection of conservation and digitization but do not discuss the technology of digital imaging, as it is in this intersection that a peculiar set of problems can arise. It is anticipated that additional information will be added to the guidelines as experience and technological development inform our thinking. It is the overall goal of the curator and conservator to protect the artifact, minimize its physical handling, ensure that the scanning function does not cause any damage and that the artifact is stored or treated in a secure and stable fashion following scanning.

**BEFORE SCANNING**

When an artifact(s) has been identified for scanning and considered appropriate for postscanning sequestered retention by the curator, it should be examined by a conservator prior to any further digitization work going forward.

*Assessing Condition*

The conservator should assess the condition of the piece(s) and help to determine the circumstances under which the scanning can occur. Generally, the conservator will consider fragility, light sensitivity, binding structure, etc., as part of the assessment process but may also consider what treatment needs to occur before any scanning is undertaken. For example, a photographic image may need extensive cleaning before scanning to ensure that the piece is captured at its best. In some cases, large artifacts, such as drawings and maps, may need to be unrolled or unfolded and flattened by the conservator prior to scanning.
Determining Scanning Mode

The conservation assessment may also result in recommendations on how the item should be scanned. For example, a bound volume may need to be scanned using a book scanner with the appropriate cradle or by using a device for face-up scanning at an angle with a digital camera. The conservator should become conversant with the various scanning devices, including the use of special book cradles, such as the Linhof cradle, the Manfred Mayer cradle, and various other devices designed to avoid having books open to an 180-degree angle (Chapman, 2002).

Digital cameras are often chosen as the capture device of choice for larger items. There are many advantages to a digital camera over a flatbed or book scanner, which are apparent when faced with oversize materials, objects of different shapes, or extremely precious book objects, such as a bound manuscript. The flatbed scanner may be much speedier but is limited because of the platen size and the ability to process only two-dimensional objects. The book scanner can be successfully employed for the scanning of most books but is limited in terms of the size and shape of the object. A digital camera is capable of capturing oversize format items, such as large maps and drawings, and three-dimensional objects, such as sculpture (Hirtle & DeNatale, 1998).

Scanning

The handling of artifacts through the scanning process needs to be considered very carefully when rare materials are involved. In most cases, especially when scanning photographs, cotton gloves should be worn to avoid damaging the artifact. It is also extremely important to ensure that the resultant mages are properly “archived,” because if the images are not stored it could result in the constant rescanning of artifacts, a practice that should be considered unacceptable. Photographs, art-on-paper, and maps are especially vulnerable to rescanning. Because file sizes tend to be very large for these objects, a “scan on demand” approach may be adopted that is designed to produce a single, printable image without any attempt to save the images, and this should be avoided. It is also necessary to ensure that the artifact is scanned in the optimum manner to achieve the desired results, as a failure to do so might also result in rescans to improve quality down the road. Additional key considerations include:

Temperature and Humidity

When artifacts are delivered to the scanning area, it is important to consider possible changes in the ambient temperature and relative humidity, and adjust the time that the artifacts are out of the storage area according to the type of object. For example, artifacts written on parchment and bound in vellum are dimensionally unstable and will react to changes in the level of humidity. Such artifacts should spend only a short time in the
scanning area and should be held under restraint unless actually being scanned. It is important to monitor the temperature and relative humidity in the scanning area.

**Lighting**

Scanning devices, digital cameras, and analog cameras require significant amounts of light in order to capture the artifact at the correct resolution. Exposure to intense light, especially for long periods, can cause irreparable damage to artifacts. When using a digital camera, it is important to avoid having the artifact linger under the intense lights needed to accomplish the capture; thus, exposure should be as brief as possible.

Light damage is a function of the intensity of the illumination level and the length of exposure time. Illumination level is measured in lux or foot candles. Light exposure can be calculated in lux-hours or in millions of lux-hours, abbreviated to Mlxh. For example, an exhibition period of 1000 hours at 50 lux could be expressed as 0.05 Mlxh. A light-sensitive item illuminated at 100 lux for 50 days of 10 hours would be exposed to 50,000 lux hours, or 0.05 Mlxh, which would be the maximum amount of exposure for that item in one year.

Some items may be exposed at a higher light level for a longer period, although it is important to remember that exposure damage is cumulative; thus, later reliance on the scanned image rather than the original can significantly reduce exposure, and this can be sufficient justification for scanning. Before scanning occurs, a measure of the operating light level should be taken and a calculation done to try to ascertain the equivalent exhibition exposure limit for the item. In some cases, the use of intense light may be unavoidable, but the artifact should be exposed to it for as short a period of time as possible.

**Handling**

It is important that all materials be handled with care, but especially large, flat objects. These must be adequately supported over the entire dimension of the object by placing a chemically stable board or other appropriate support under the object when moving it from its folder to the scanning bed. Books should be opened carefully to avoid acute opening, which can cause severe damage to early binding structures, and the page opening should be held down with a strip of polyethylene tape if this does not affect the scanning.

**Security**

When artifacts are removed from storage for scanning, they should be accorded the same general level of security as when they are secured in closed-access storage or in the rare book reading room. Scanning should thus occur in a secure environment, with staff and user access to the area carefully controlled. Artifacts should be returned to the vault or other sequestered area when scanning has been finished for the day.
AFTER SCANNING

When items have been scanned and the work considered complete, some consideration must be given to the stable storage of the original artifact. In some cases, artifacts may be returned to their original storage containers, but in others, new storage containers must be used. Recommendations made by the conservators during the early assessment stage should now be taken into account. Large artifacts that have been unfolded or unrolled will need to be housed in configurations different from those used before.¹

Folders

Folders that are too small or filled with too many other artifacts need to be replaced. In many cases, old folders that may now be acidic and worn should be replaced and discarded. Oversize folders, designed to support storage in steel flat files (map cabinets) should be slightly smaller than the size of the file drawer or exactly half the size of the drawer.

Boxes

In a similar fashion, boxes may be too small, inappropriate, or too acidic. They should be replaced.

GRANT-FUNDED SCANNING PROJECTS

When staff are preparing grant proposals that involve the scanning of artifacts, it is extremely important to take into account the cost of conservation work or rehousing supply purchases. Postscanning rehousing can be quite expensive, especially for large numbers of artifacts, and any conservation treatment hours must be calculated into the grant request.

NOTES

¹. See http://www.librarypreservation.org for information on housing, especially for oversize artifacts.

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Special Collections in an International Perspective

ALICE PROCHASKA

ABSTRACT

This article considers the treatment of special collections in libraries in North America and the world. It looks first at issues of providing access for an increasingly broad and diverse readership but with limited resources. Questions of the ownership of unique materials are then considered, with special reference to claims of national heritage and the difficulties confronted by libraries that hold iconic material from other cultures. Finally, the article looks at some implications of the electronic revolution. While digitization can provide worldwide access to unique materials, it also leads to increased demands for access to the originals. The article concludes with this paradox, setting a context for dilemmas that will increasingly face special collections librarians.

INTRODUCTION

Research libraries define their "special collections" in different ways. The term can be a convenient definition for any research materials that fall outside the main collections of current publications, serials, and monographs. It can be used to mean almost any library material that is more than 100 or 150 years old. In some libraries, newspapers also fall within the category. In others, certain electronic materials (for instance in art history and related fields) come under the special collections purview. Area studies collections may be termed "special," either in their entirety or in respect of the nonstandard materials they contain. Sometimes archival materials are included under the rubric, but in certain libraries they will be distinguished from special collections; and often they will be separated institutionally, with archivists and manuscript librarians belonging to two quite
distinct professional groups. Beyond the English-speaking world, although often the terms used translate into "special collections," there are yet further permutations. Generally but not always, rare books and manuscripts are brought together as special collections. Beyond that, the term is almost infinitely elastic.

For the purposes of this essay, special collections will be defined as broadly as possible. It is a noticeable feature of the large professional associations such as the American Library Association (ALA) and the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) that their sections on rare books and manuscripts increasingly take into account materials in other formats and also increasingly share conference sessions with librarians responsible for audiovisual materials, art collections, and newspapers. There are growing numbers of conferences, publications, and Web sites devoted to collaboration among libraries, museums, and archives. The Research Libraries Group (RLG), international in its scope and multidisciplinary in its range of interests, is perhaps the most notable institutional example; and in its turn it has inspired smaller-scale collaborative projects among its members. A strong common concern in all these areas is that of conservation; that is, the special treatment and repair of library materials in order to ensure their long-term preservation as artifacts. Preservation of digital materials and the use of both microform and digital surrogates for the purposes of preservation are also live issues in the community of special collections librarians.

An overview of the ways in which libraries across the world treat their special collections would be instructive in many ways. The issues involved are political and social as well as cultural, and speak to the problems of constrained resources that most world-class research libraries face, but in widely differing degrees. These few pages cannot do more than provide some signposts toward that overview. I consider here three themes from an international perspective: policy and practices governing access to special collections; debates over the ownership of rare and valuable cultural materials; and some of the ways in which the electronic revolution is affecting librarians' and archivists' treatment of special collections.

**Access**

During the IFLA conference in Beijing in 1996, parties of visiting librarians received a warm welcome at the National Library of China (NLC), one of the largest libraries in the world. We were shown treasures from their special collections, including manuscripts, maps, and scrolls dating from the classical period. On asking who was able to see these collections, we learned that access was restricted to "important people." The International Congress on Archives, meeting in Beijing the following week, received a similar impression of closed collections and limited access. Yet, the number of people employed as librarians and archivists in the People's Republic of Chi-
na is impressive, and they pay careful attention to the care and conservation of their collections, as we privileged visitors learned from our tours of various facilities. And, nearly seven years on, the current Web site of the NLC reveals a series of services based on special collections in the areas of classical Chinese culture and local history and genealogy, open to all those who hold NLC readers’ tickets, and that privilege is open to anyone over the age of eighteen. A separate visit to the Institute of Historical Studies in Beijing revealed another interesting division in access policies. At that institute, scholars are free to study original primary source materials and rare printed books from dates up to the mid-nineteenth century. Materials beyond 1850 are treated as “modern,” not historical, and I was told that historians do not handle them. I met scholars working at the institute on seventeenth-century taxation records which were a goldmine of social and economic information about the lives of the Chinese educated and business classes in that period. Both the documents themselves and the research based on them seemed closely parallel to materials in European archives, so that for a seventeenth-century historian, access in both China and the West seem to be not so very dissimilar. The picture of access in China is complicated by the vastness of the country and by the widely differing treatment of cultural assets, including libraries, among the ethnic minorities that are now governed from Beijing. A further complication in a swiftly changing scene is the role of cultural diplomacy in opening up great untapped treasures, whose very existence, in some cases, was denied until recently.

As the archives of eastern Europe have been opening up since 1989, an almost unmanageable flood of hidden archives and rare and unique collections of papers, books, works of art, and other materials has become available, or at least known to scholars, for the first time since the era of the second world war. Access to these materials is sometimes constrained in the countries of eastern Europe by dire problems of preservation caused by disasters such as the floods of autumn 2002 along the Danube and the Balkan wars of the 1990s. An international community of scholars could do nothing to protect the great National and University Library of Sarajevo from destruction by bombing in August 1992. With it were lost many priceless manuscripts and incunabula documenting the history of one of Europe’s great cultural and religious crossroads, from the later middle ages to the late twentieth century. Tragedies of this kind have been known throughout history, since the fire that destroyed the ancient library of Alexandria. They illustrate pointedly the truism that there can be no access without preservation.

Similarly, access to special collections may be denied not by the destructive forces of war or by secretive political cultures, but simply by shifts in the fortunes of a nation or region over a long period of history. The contents of the caves at Dunhuang, on the silk road in central Asia, are now the subject of intensive documentation, digitization, and research, thanks to the
efforts of the British Library, the National Library of China, Northwestern University, and the Mellon Foundation, among many others. For something like a millennium, these treasures remained sealed in their caves, overlooked as the silk road trade diverted to other routes and the monastery that had inhabited the caves ceased to exist. It took the competition among Russia, Britain, France, Germany, and Japan, while their agents engaged in what has been called "The Great Game," struggling for power in the near east and central Asia, to trigger the early twentieth-century expeditions to the region. Trophy-hunting scholars like Aurel Stein uncovered these documents and took them away for study in scholarly institutions across the globe. Intensive work by scholars of many nationalities has gathered pace during the past ten years and now provides a model for worldwide collaborations on rare materials. Much more recently, the growth of interest in African studies has led both African and American scholars to work on ancient documents of the Tuareg people in sub-Saharan Africa in ways that may change profoundly the accepted chronology of African civilization. If history and climatic change had taken some different turns, and Timbuktu had held its own as a center of trade and civilization, these collections might now be well-preserved symbols of international learning; or, they might have suffered a similar fate to that of the manuscripts in Sarajevo in some bitter war such as is all too familiar elsewhere on the African continent.

In those parts of the world where libraries and cultural materials have been relatively protected, the questions surrounding access may have less to do with war, upheaval, and decline and more to do with the agendas of local and national governments, and those of freestanding organizations of learning. These questions can be virtual battlefields nevertheless. Within any one society, expectations of access to special collections will vary enormously. A state historical society in the U.S., or a local history library or county record office in the United Kingdom, or a communal library in France may have more in common with each other than they have with national or university libraries in their own respective countries. In these and many other countries, direct public funding from local taxation provides the basic imperative to give the widest possible access to rare or unique historical resources. Since the 1960s at least, changes in the amount of leisure people have to spend and the way they spend it have led to an explosion of interest in genealogy and local history, placing huge demands on collections that were not made for such heavy use. Often, shortage of staff leads to restricted opening hours, but it is rare to find libraries of this sort limiting the use of their special collections by demanding letters of introduction or proof of scholarly standing.

The public entitlement to access extends also to most dedicated archival repositories in the public domain, certainly in the English-speaking parts of the world. Public records, whether defined as the records of central or federal government or more locally, are governed by the public responsi-
ability to ensure that they are preserved in an ordered way and made available to the public without undue restrictions. Librarians, archivists, and curators may try to deflect overuse of the collections, or unrealistic service expectations on the part of members of the public, by various means. Special exhibitions satisfy a large part of the requirement for public access; specialist bibliographies, worksheets for school classes, and referral services to professional researchers—these are some of the common devices for managing a demand that can be unpredictable and, in its nature, often underinformed. It is the common experience of most professionals managing reference services in public library special collections and public archives, anywhere in the world, that most enquirers will be using the service for the first and probably only time. No basic level of knowledge can be assumed, and although many queries will be similar ("How can I discover the history of my family? My house?" etc.), each will require separate research.

Libraries that have been established expressly for scholarly purposes approach the question of access to special collections rather differently but often provide a similar level of service in the end. The rarity and fragility of many of their collections require that there should be restrictions on access. Few people make direct use of these collections compared with the users of general, current collections. The result of these two factors is generally to reduce the number of staff that any institution feels it can devote to the provision of a public service. Opening hours in the special collections reading rooms of research libraries are shorter than in the main body of their parent libraries. Even though these primary sources are the raw material of new knowledge, and through the published work of scholars feed into the bloodstream of learning and popular culture, they do not command the attention of library administrators in the same way that heavily used serials or current monographs do. A vicious circle is set up, whereby the relative inaccessibility of the collections removes them further from the main agenda of their parent libraries, and the shortage of resources leads special collections librarians to impose further limitations on access. Manuscripts, maps, graphic materials, and all kinds of evidence from a vibrant human past are consigned to the realms of arcana.

**Ownership**

Special collections, however, often include publicly treasured relics. The very rarity that makes them difficult to handle and awkward to fit into the policies of busy libraries gives them also a potential glamour. Exhibitions, glossy publications, and television programs feast on special collections. Leading research libraries take pride in the great names attached to their collections, from the mandatory Gutenberg Bible or two, to the papers of statesmen, authors, musicians, and other renowned figures. Concentrations of archives from particular subject and geographical areas open up important new fields of research. As these collections become known through the
work of scholars, different nations or regional groups contest the ownership of archives and of single items which may be seen as cultural icons. And, as the public promotion of special collections gathers pace, the attachment of people representing the places of origin to the materials they have lost will only increase.

There has long been tension between North American collectors and learned organizations and European governmental policies that are designed to protect cultural heritage within its original context. Export licensing laws within the European Union differ from country to country but are governed now increasingly by common practices and agreements. Export of certain cultural artifacts is prohibited absolutely in some countries. In the United Kingdom, the export licensing system is governed by the "Waverley Criteria" that define the importance of the material concerned to the national heritage. Manuscripts are "zero rated" for export purposes, meaning that any manuscript material more than fifty years old, whatever its monetary value, must be accompanied by a license before it is exported, and the purchaser may be required to deposit microfilm copies with the British Library. In the case of rare books, a value is specified, above which material may not be sent out of the country without a license. The granting of an export license may be deferred, normally for not more than three months, in order to give a national institution the chance to raise funds to purchase the material at the price that it fetched when sold for export. Although only about 1 percent of all material to be exported is subjected to such deferral, the few cases can cause diplomatic difficulties and occasionally become causes célébres.

Further tensions exist within Europe, where definitions of cultural value vary, and the interests of the trade are sometimes seen as inimical to national interests. It will be interesting to watch how the common practices of the EU may be affected by its enlargement to include countries of eastern Europe from which cultural property has hemorrhaged until very recently. Will those countries become more restrictive in their approach to retaining cultural heritage? And if so, how will they enforce their restrictions? With London serving as one of the hubs of the international trade in works of art, rare books, and manuscripts, other European nations keep a particularly close watch on material passing through Britain. Meanwhile, reflecting a trend that is identifiable in other western countries including the U.S., there is evidence within Britain that the value attached by government to library materials, as compared with works of art in museums and galleries, is increasing. During the past few years, a growing proportion of export license deferrals imposed by the British government's Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art has related to archives and manuscripts; and a similar increase is noticeable in the proportion of grants for manuscript and archival acquisitions given out by the Heritage Lottery Fund since it was established in 1995. A trend can also be discerned toward more
recognition of certain sorts of archives: those of architectural, engineering, and construction companies, most recently.\(^5\)

Government regulations and intergovernmental agreements form only part of the picture of contested ownership. Centuries of private enterprise by scholars and connoisseurs transported special collections around the globe, long before the development of a mature trade and its regulation. Additionally, rare and precious items have featured in the war booty of marauding armies since ancient times. While at one time it was mainly museum objects that attracted attention and became the subject of claims between governments or cultural groups, now manuscripts, archives, maps, and photographs are all subject to claims of illegitimate ownership.\(^6\) At the British Library, a paper presented to the board in 2000 identified nineteen separate items or collections that were then subject to claims for restitution, or potentially so.

Just one item on the British Library’s list was the entire India Office Library and Records, the potential subject of complex claims to ownership. These collections include archives created by servants of the British government, many of them working in London, as well as the logs of British ships, the records of births, marriages, and deaths of British citizens overseas, the service records of British soldiers, and so on. Such materials might seem to be objectively at least as much at home in a library in London as they would be in South Asia. But some other treasures of the collections derive from the private collecting activities of generations of scholars and amateurs who adventured throughout Asia for some three and a half centuries. Their admiration for the civilizations whose materials they collected was palpable, and the records and library collections of the East India Company and the India Office contain great treasures of mixed ancestry: drawings by Asian artists commissioned by the British and by British artists traveling in India; diaries and paintings that document harmonious interchange and intermarriage as well as conflict. Some of the scholars whose activities left legacies in these collections founded schools of Asian studies, like the great orientalist Sir William Jones (1746–1794), some of whose manuscripts traveled from Asia to Britain and then back again to join the collections of the Bengal Asiatic Society, which he founded. It was Jones who established an understanding of Sanskrit as parent of the Indo-European family of languages and whose many interests contributed enormously to a worldwide tradition of scholarly work on Asian civilization. Such legacies will continue to be subject to debate, but the question of where Jones’s manuscripts, and those of many others, “belong” will always be complex.\(^7\)

Another history complicates the question of the Ethiopian manuscripts and many other treasures seized by British troops from the palace of the emperor Tewodoros after the battle of Magdala in 1868. Tewodoros himself had been gathering early Christian manuscripts together from monasteries all over his empire. But, their capture by the British army removed
them altogether from the region of origin, and they still reside in the British Library, where they are consulted by scholars and examples are seen by hundreds of thousands of visitors to the public galleries. The history of Ethiopia and the region since 1868 suggests that these important materials would be more vulnerable to the accidents of war and climate there than in London; and there is some reason to believe that Ethiopian authorities are glad to have copies rather than the responsibility of caring for the originals. Yet, who could claim that the original theft was justified, and who would condone similar captures now?

Additional attention focused on the provenance of the special collections in European and North American library holdings with the development of an international movement in the later 1990s to identify works of art and other valuable material that had been taken from their rightful owners during the Holocaust period, roughly 1933 to 1945. About a year of meticulous bibliographic research and trawling through the British Library's archives revealed no material that had been wrongfully taken from Jewish owners, as far as it was possible to establish. This fact is less surprising if we bear in mind that several committees, under the auspices of several national governments, had devoted huge efforts during and just after the second world war to identifying and restoring stolen treasures. The indignation meted out to previous generations by present-day journalists and campaigners for neglecting the issue did less than justice to the efforts of war-time museum curators and librarians. Nevertheless the campaign focused usefully on the obligation of each generation to pay the most meticulous attention to the provenance and proper ownership of the materials in its care. The Web sites that now exist listing works of art and special collections acquired in the 1930s and 1940s, for which provenance cannot be established with total certainty, stand as a reminder to the consciences of us all. And the movement for return of World War II looted material continues, with one notable landmark being the return of the Smolensk Archive from the United States to Russia in the fall of 2002.

Meanwhile, the medieval Tuareg manuscripts mentioned above are the subject of strenuous efforts to maintain the cultural autonomy and pride of the people to whom they belong. The World Amazigh Action Coalition issued a press release in June 2002 announcing that the Timbuktu High Commission, mayor, and religious leaders authorized Isa Ag Mohammed, Amazigh of Mali, “To retrieve, confiscate, and return all ancient manuscripts which have been scanned or photocopied from the libraries of Timbuktu by US private concerns, without specific authorization of the Mali government or the local authorities of Timbuktu to use these manuscripts.” The text goes on to plead for awareness that funding should be provided for the preservation of Malian cultural heritage, and asserts that African scholars understand better than Americans the cultural context of Timbuktu’s literary heritage. It includes a call to “the University membership of our US
community" to promote awareness of the Amazigh heritage of Timbuktu and Mali. These special collections remain in their place of origin, but the dilemmas of those who care about them have much in common with others. The attention of the international scholarly community is courted and needed; but foreign scholars nevertheless are expected to maintain an intellectual distance.

**The Electronic Revolution**

The opportunities and hazards of the electronic environment constitute an inescapable context for custodians of special collections in all parts of the world in the twenty-first century. In theory it is now possible for libraries to provide digitized access to unique materials for all, via the Internet. Practical problems are triumphantly surmounted in some cases: the Library of Congress *Memory of America* Web site with over 7 million items now in digital form and the British consortium for digitizing historic materials, formed more recently under the auspices of the New Opportunities Fund, a distributor of lottery money, are just two examples of wide-ranging national projects. Other collaborative projects based on particular themes proliferate. Most large research libraries have their own programs to digitize materials to be mounted on the Internet. Online catalogs including at least collection-level descriptions of special collections and often far more detailed finding aids are now the norm. In the archival sphere, great strides have been made to create searchable databases from multiple sources.

Ownership, it might seem, must be a less important issue when access can be shared so readily. Of course there are problems, but the Internet environment constantly invites new solutions. It is worthwhile to pause at this point, however, to consider some of the serious underlying problems, which make progress toward the goal of shared access slow and painful. Prohibitive costs, not only in the technical accomplishment of this goal, but far more in the editing, sorting, and preserving of the original materials before and after they are digitized, create an obvious barrier. A number of familiar and traditional difficulties underlie the costs.

Rigorous standards of description are part of the responsible librarian’s or curator’s job, as much in the virtual world as in the physical. Every librarian who has run a project to digitize materials knows that common descriptive standards are still in their infancy, even though great strides have been made with the adoption of “Dublin core” and “Encoded Archival Description”; and the Open Archives Initiative and other new initiatives increasingly enable organizations to share their metadata. Without adequate description, digitized text and images are of little value to researchers, be they scholars or people with a more general interest. Creating those descriptions is laborious. There are fundamental tensions in research libraries and archives between the desire to give an electronic life to some of their more
lustrous special collections, already described and available on-site, and the
need to produce primary catalog descriptions of material that nobody even
knows they have. In the U.S., the Association of Research Libraries (ARL)
is now drawing attention to this problem through a Special Collections Task
Force. The dimensions of the problem are unknown, however, and only
a few of the member libraries have as yet surveyed their uncataloged col-
clections. In the United Kingdom, the Access to Archives (A2A) project
focuses on the need for basic, first-generation cataloging as well as on pro-
viding Web access to existing nonelectronic finding aids. Meanwhile, inter-
national projects to create shared standards of description and, in some
cases, common “authority files” to identify the names of persons, places, and
organizations lead in yet another promising direction, with yet more im-
lications for the use of resources. Several European initiatives led by the
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin illustrate the possibilities.

If cataloging represents one major problem, preservation is another.
Manuscripts, rare books, and fragile materials in other media cannot be dig-
itized without being opened and placed on scanning machines: and all too
often that means pressing on fragile bindings or risking some other kind
of damage. Once digitized, the library then faces the fundamental problem,
can this material be preserved in the long term? At present, international
research libraries continue to rely on microfilm as a preservation medium,
even though acetate microfilm itself has a tendency to deteriorate and in
some cases has become unusable. The whole issue of digital preservation is
the subject of intensive study in the research library and publishing com-
munities. Several pilot studies have been financed in the United States by
the Mellon Foundation. To date no dependable solutions to the problems
has been found. This is an issue for librarians in all fields. Serials, govern-
ment Web sites, digitized course materials, and expensively purchased da-
tabases all pose the fundamental question of whether libraries can keep
these materials for use by subsequent generations of readers. In all cases
there are difficult decisions to be made about the costs of preserving mate-
rial in both paper and electronic formats, continuing access to electronic
“ephemera,” and almost innumerable additional problems. For special col-
clections the question arises, is it worthwhile to digitize materials for shared
public access if we cannot guarantee long-term access to the electronic ver-
sion? It is right to ask whether scarce resources are not better devoted to
providing descriptions of material that has not yet been cataloged.

Practical questions about the feasibility of producing electronic versions
of special collections, and the desirable aim that first they should be ade-
quately described, present librarians with enough dilemmas to occupy in-
numerable meetings and budgetary discussions. Behind these questions
there lies also a set of philosophical and ethical dilemmas. From an inter-
national perspective, some of these are particularly important. First of all,
can we ever “solve” problems of ownership and access by creating mass
access to catalogs and digitized versions of text and images? Early evidence suggests that the electronic revolution may in fact be producing the reverse effect. As members of the public all over the world become far better informed about the cultural materials that are derived from their heritage, their desire to see the originals increases. Librarians are finding that mounting a digitized version of a rare manuscript on the Internet leads to noticeable increases in visits to see the original. As with microfilm, so with electronic reproductions: the viewer will not necessarily trust that the version seen on the screen is a faithful representation of the original. This perception is objectively right. Although digital versions of inaccessible materials can hugely increase the number of people who benefit from seeing them, and often the quality of reproduction is so superb that the viewer may see details better than in the original, there is no full substitute for seeing original materials personally.

The same may well be true, though the evidence is harder to collect, with demands for restitution or repatriation. Then comes the question, can a responsible library consider restoring original materials to a legitimate claimant and keeping the digital surrogate instead? That depends on numerous conditions: whether scholars will have access equally in the region to which the original has been restored, whether the region of the original is able to provide adequate care and security, and whether there is in fact one single region or nation with a legitimate claim to ownership. In the realms of scholarship and cultural identity, which are in themselves two widely differing areas of human experience, what are the borders of an international community of learning and civilization, and where are the borders of national identity? What is common heritage, and how is its definition shifting?

Librarians who have charge of special collections will find themselves ever more often at the center of these and some other profound dilemmas. While, increasingly, solutions seem to lie in collaborative partnerships between libraries at regional, national, and international levels, such projects are in themselves difficult to sustain. Librarians need a shared ethic to guide them and to guide the organizations that employ them to care for the shared inheritance of human experience. Within the next decade, the technological potential for both exacerbating and meeting these dilemmas will develop ever more rapidly. It is to be hoped that we can between us develop with commensurate speed a framework in which to meet the challenge.

NOTES
1. The Jesuit library in Shanghai, created by Jesuit missionaries to China from the seventeenth century onwards, is one example.
2. For an accessible short description of the collections as they were before their destruction, see the Bosnia page on http://www.geocities.com.
3. A voluminous literature now exists, both electronic and in print, relating to current research on the silk road and to the Dunhuang caves in particular. The British Library Web page, http://idp.bl.uk, describes the work of the B.L.'s International Dunhuang Project.
established in 1992, which is now collaborating with the National Library of China, and contains links to numerous other sites. The British Library Studies in Conservation Science is a continuing series of scholarly papers on Dunhuang manuscripts. Volume 3, Dunhuang Manuscript Forgeries (2002), edited by Susan Whitfield, is the most recent. See also Susan Whitfield (1999). The Mellon Foundation’s sponsorship of a comprehensive scholarly investigation of the Dunhuang caves is described at http://www.mellon.org/otheractivities/ARTstor/ and a press release describes the work of art historian Sarah Fraser, at Northwestern University, at http://www.northwestern.edu/univ-relations/observer/stories/02-08-02/exploration.html.

4. The complex history of Timbuktu, a city founded by Berber people in about 1100 A.D., is briefly described in the campaign literature of the Tazzla Institute for Cultural Diversity (http://www.tazzla.org).


7. For a biography of Jones, see G. H. Cannon (1964); for a brief description of his collections, see S. C. Sutton (1967).

8. The Association for the Return of Magdala Ethiopian Treasures, led by Dr. Richard Pankhurst, the distinguished historian of Ethiopia, has a Web site at http://www.afromet.org, which includes text of an address made by Richard and Rita Pankhurst to the British House of Commons.

9. The papers of the British committee chaired by Lord Macmillan from 1943 to 1945 are at the British Library, in Additional Manuscripts 54577–54578.

10. See Lauder (2002).


13. http://www.nof-digitise.org describes the principles behind this project, which is collecting together digital images from large and small libraries, archives, and other organizations across the United Kingdom.

14. The National Register of Archives (http://www.nmc.gov.uk/nra), now nearly eighty years old, provides extraordinarily wide-ranging information about archives in Britain, while the recently formed Access to Archives project, based at the Public Record Office, (http://www.pro.gov.uk/archives/A2A/) complements this information with a rich collection of archival finding aids describing the holdings of large and small, local and national repositories in great detail.

15. Established in 2002 with Joseph A. Hewitt, university librarian of the University of North Carolina, as chair.

16. At Yale, the university library has carried out a survey as part of its strategic planning process and identified a list of uncataloged collections whose titles alone cover more than seventeen pages. Estimates of the amount of work required to catalog all of these run into decades.

17. The MALVINE and its successor, LEAF, projects bring together libraries cataloguing in five different European languages, with funding from the European Union, to attack the problem of describing modern literary manuscripts. Both are based at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, where a German national project, Kalliope, is also working to provide nationwide open manuscript descriptions. See the respective Web sites, http://www.malvine.org, http://www.leaf.org, and http://www.kalliope.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de.

REFERENCES
The Role of Displaced Book Collections in Culture

EKATERINA GENIEVA

ABSTRACT
SHOULD RARE BOOKS TAKEN during times of war as “trophies” by the enemy be restored to their original owners? This is a controversial but increasingly important issue for special collections libraries worldwide. Attempted restitution brings about a new set of losses and problems. Any rules or policies for such restitution will, at least for the time being, include complex legal and political considerations. It is important to consider that while the value of an individual book might not be so high, the same book as part of a collection might be very valuable. The German book trade and libraries, and their relation to the Soviet Union after World War II, is a major case study in the problems surrounding restitution of cultural property—in particular, the lack of bibliographical citations for much of the material. Librarians should consider the creation of a bibliographically sound, all-European register of rare books.

As strange as it may seem, the problem of cultural valuables displaced as a result of war holds a very low ranking among the cultural issues discussed. Yet, the very roots of this problem are related to basic cultural archetypes, compared to which all legal and political aspects are secondary. Originally, victors treated captured “cultural valuables” (as we call them now) as material valuables and, at the same time, as sacral ones. In modern civilization cultural and sacral values have merged in many ways: the fruits of other people’s spiritual culture are their sacred objects, so to appropriate such objects means, consequently, to defeat the enemy’s spirit. That is why the issue of “trophy” objects of art and books is so important to the tolerant mentality that will not stand either victory or defeat in the spiritual sphere.

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Although in practice museums of international significance can hardly get established without violating the property rights of defeated peoples, in theory the thesis stated in the international law about the inadmissibility of forced removal of cultural valuables undoubtedly prevails—at least, it is universally recognized that they should not be treated as purely material valuables. On the other hand, a full-scale physical restitution of the war trophies accumulated for centuries and particularly after World War II is hardly possible without new losses and offense. But, this burning issue has recently been the subject of wide speculation so often that it is not worth discussing it here in detail.

It is far less that another specificity of the issue of displaced valuables is recalled and, no matter from which side it is approached, it remains contingent: it is finite. It is finite and the number of the valuables is calculable, so that, compared to the entire cultural wealth of humankind, it is not so large. Even if it includes unsatisfied claims of the previous centuries, the share of indisputable valuables will greatly exceed the number of controversial ones. And, if the number of disputable items is finite and limited, the solution of the connected problems is possible. Of course, it will take time to work out such a solution. Obviously, it will be framed not by a simple and unambiguous formula, but rather by a more or less (it is desirable, certainly, not excessively) complex system of rules. After all, it will come to the point when legal and political aspects will stop being the problem of interest to humankind as a whole. Private disputes will remain and will be settled in legal form, and probably there will be new findings to which—in one way or another—the existing system of rules will be applied, while the political objectives, which are currently being tackled in connection with the issues of the displaced valuables, will cease to exist. What happened will not change, but the topicality will stay in the past, and this certainly is wonderful.

However, before all this happens, there is reason to study the issue from another angle: What role do the displaced collections, as they are at present, play or will they play in culture? This time we shall talk about book collections: First, because it is natural for a librarian, and secondly, because in some sense they are more indicative than artworks. In the case of artworks, there are very valuable objects that are few in number, and in all or most cases there is a possibility to come to an agreement on a certain form of compensation (ideally—on a return). Books, however, are very rarely as valuable as masterpieces of fine art, so that only large collections are valuable, while the value of every separate volume is relatively low. The collections as a rule split, thereby losing their value, and since simple and barbarous decisions like “leave everything” or “immediately return all,” as it is already obvious to everyone, are not possible. All negotiations become much more complicated.

Thus, the major value of displaced books is in the fact that they previously were and virtually remain the constituent parts of collections. Since, with reference to World War II, the matter mainly concerns libraries of the Ger-
man-speaking countries, this context is even more obvious and significant. From the point of view of libraries, Germany is a very peculiar country. First of all, it is the homeland of book printing. For many decades it was "supplying" the whole of Europe with its masterpieces of book printing, and consequently it was the main center of book trade and collecting of books of the early period. In a majority of other countries (except Italy) more or less valuable book collections of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are almost exclusively the result of purposeful effort, while in Germany they formed naturally. Besides, Germany was the country with the largest number of universities in Europe, and that is why this is where the large collections of books of more or less public character started to develop pretty early, in contrast to those of monastic or aristocratic libraries. The multiplicity of cultural centers along with the disastrous consequences of the Thirty Years' War resulted in decentralization of the German library system. As it is well known, there is no all-German national library, per se, and previously the Bavarian Royal Library to some extent compared to the world's largest book depositories. Other German libraries are much smaller, but then they supplement each other, each having a special feature. Not without reason the national bibliographic center of sixteenth-century books is located in Gotha, and the center of seventeenth-century books is in Wolfenbuettel; both are former capitals of small states. Lastly, in the eighteenth century the central geographic situation of Germany in Europe and the cultural hegemony of France resulted in a curious situation. The German libraries accumulated collections of both national and foreign—especially French—books, while German books were poorly disseminated in other countries. For example, what we know about the libraries of Polish magnates is that, even in the Austrian territory of Galicia, they contained a majority of French books. In the countries to the West of the Rhine, there were more readers—and consequently collectors—of German books. The increasing number of French bibliophiles were interested in books mainly due to their elegance, and German books were not remarkable in this sense. Germany again very naturally turned out to be the central depository for the all-European book culture but, to stress it once again, it was a dispersed depository. The wealth of the collected matter in various languages could only compete with the ones of the countries beginning to join the European culture—America and Russia before the catastrophe of 1917.

The defeat in World War II left the German libraries with vast, often visible to the unaided eye, breaches. But the losses were not unsystematic. First of all, parts of libraries that were recondite or strategically prepared for evacuation were moved to the USSR. The Soviet specialists from "trophy teams" had their own logic; the distribution of the books among Soviet libraries was not accidental either (this question is not properly studied yet). Thus, to the Soviet Union came not a random pile, but rather a strategically organized selection of books. Vicissitudes of their further fate to a large extent ruined this wholeness, but not completely. In any case we deal
with remarkable fragments of large collections in the aggregate modeling of the history of the European book from its emergence until at least the French Revolution.

In any case, the fact that the collections spent a considerable part of their life in Russia is culturally significant. At the same time it is important to note that their fate was very different: a lot was unclaimed and even perished, but a portion of the books, also sizable, gained a new life in Russia.

To a certain extent, the displaced books filled up the gaps that the Soviet authorities themselves had made in the culture: when books arrived by cargo carloads, censorial supervision and ideological control were less strict. Perhaps if not for the war, the scholars in this country would never have received many important theological and philosophical texts of previous centuries. This is not a justification of illegal actions, when the cases were illegal indeed, but rather a reiteration of the statement that residence in the Russian libraries is a significant detail of the biography of books and book collections.

That is why even in those cases when the necessity to return books and book collections to their previous owners is absolutely unquestionable, the matter cannot be reduced to just this fact. To return the books of the Sarospatak Reformed College in Hungary could have been possible on the basis of preliminary lists and a publication of a catalog prepared by the specialists of the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature. However, the creation of this catalog did not precipitate anything: the return as it was remains an event of the future. The catalog has not so much put information on these publications into scientific use as it has recorded a certain stage in the Sarospatak collection’s biography. Such experience should by no means remain unique. It is regrettable that some owners when discovering parts of their former collections try to “skip” the procedure of bibliographical description, thinking that it makes no sense at all. An opportunity to return a collection is, at the same time, an opportunity to comprehend what has happened to it, and every reasonable human being should take interest in this.

If the question of the physical restitution of the collection in accordance with the Russian law cannot be on the agenda now, the necessity of presenting its scattered parts to the scientific world is only more obvious.

In other words, displacement of book collections in space, even violent and barbaric displacement, is in itself an essential fact of culture. To neglect it and pretend that it has no significance is to impoverish human culture while, on the contrary, to record and comprehend this fact means to enrich culture.

But the question can be posed more profoundly, although at the same time more practically. As it has just been stated, the displaced book collections as a whole turned out to be a model of the world book collection. In a certain sense the existence of such a model is a unique chance for devel-
oping a world bibliography, which is not to be missed. Currently, there are few bibliographies of historic book studies. Only in one large European country—in Germany—the basis of the national book repertory of the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries has been established. And even there, out of the number of completed publications only the united catalog of publications of the sixteenth century meets the minimal requirements of modern bibliography, although the work on the union catalog of the works of the seventeenth century is going rapidly and a large part of it is already accessible via the Internet. The national summary of old printed books described de visu is a pride of Hungary, and Spain and Poland possess indexes created by the great effort of the bibliographers of the old school. All the rest of old printed book production either has a fragmentary bibliography—regional, subject, etc., where the smaller the fragment the more chances for its description to come into the world—or is dissolved in gigantic catalogs—the National Union Catalogue, the British Library Catalogue, or Le Catalogue général de la Bibliothèque Nationale de France, for example. Moreover, there is no catalog or at least index of the Venetian books of the sixteenth century! The saddest thing is that all projects of creating international catalogs or indexes would stall at the early stage. The world union catalog of incunabula was started in the 1920s and stopped because of World War II; was an attempt to renew the work in the 1950s did not advance further. Index Aureliensis—a united index of sixteenth-century books—is also not completed, and the international projects on later publications are not even mentioned (if not to take into account the CERL database, which is being composed as a mosaic made of small pieces and like any electronic database will hardly ever provide a full overview). Paradoxically, the most complete bibliographic data on European books remains NUC, achieved by the cut-and-paste method, that does not set forward (also impossible for such a large-scale undertaking) any scientific objectives. Furthermore, the union catalog of incunabula and the Index Aureliensis were planned in the epoch of ideological confrontations. That is why they did not include Russian libraries, and for the Index, even the libraries of Eastern Europe were excluded. The losses of World War II distorted the picture even more. The bibliographers of the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature working with international catalogs not once came across the indication that the books they were holding had been marked as losses. Sometimes the situation is even worse: it is more often that the librarians at the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature find books that were not even introduced to the initial card file. On the other hand, it is clear that a European united catalog of at least the sixteenth century is vast and close to impossible: many hundreds of thousands of titles in hundreds of libraries should be included, and there should be a uniform description (which does not exist in NUC and CERL) that is rather in-depth to provide a reliable identification of any copy (this is missing in Index Aureliensis).
As a reminder—after the expatriation of books from German collections, in Russia appeared a new book wholeness representing the books of all Europe, and not just those of a single country. Their numbers, compared to the collections of all of Europe, are quite visible. Altogether, the USSR received, as known, about 11 million volumes—this is less than the collection of the British Library alone. Supposedly, a quarter of them were looted; this leaves us 8 million (in reality, it is probably more). About 90 percent of them are from the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century—and they can be described as provided within the parameters of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation. About 800–900 of the remaining volumes require a scientific description. Of course, in terms of quantity this is only a small share of European old printed books, but it becomes a whole, not an isolated fragment, especially when combined with the fact that among the displaced books there are a great number of books not described in the bibliography. At that they can be described in accordance with a uniform methodology, and the depth of the description will be no less profound than the set standard of describing old printed books. In short, while these books are still in Russia, there is an opportunity to cover a large lacuna in the international bibliography and in some areas to naturally start one.

Is this goal achievable? Unfortunately, there is no definite answer to this question. Yes, such a project would be tens if not hundreds of times more compact than an all-European register of old printed books, but it also will require a considerable expense. Here, at least, every step should be considered and weighed. To look into one of the sides of the objective: it is out of the question to have a go at such a task with available resources—bibliographers working in our libraries and the funds that the Russian government can currently allocate. To launch such a project, we would have to recruit—from all over Russia—a new generation of trained bibliographers who, at the beginning of their career, will do work requiring a high qualification and who will receive an adequate reward. But training a sufficient number of such specialists will in itself be akin to a revolution in Russian bibliography. After all, the course of work will be linked to certain legal questions and the destinies of people who will probably have to demonstrate their good will and postpone the encounter with their books. That is why such a project should not be abandoned halfway or extend for an indefinite span of time, which is often the issue with purely scientific projects. Thus, it is better not to give promises that might be broken; there is a strong probability that reality will offer a chance to be contented with a series of small steps, part of which will gradually merge into one whole, and some will be impossible to make. Nevertheless, the technical difficulties are not the main thing. It is essential to move forward in the right direction and remember that neither legal nor political nor even morally faultless solutions to the problem will be complete if they do not enrich the common human culture.
The ARL Special Collections Initiative

JOE A. HEWITT AND JUDITH M. PANITCH

ABSTRACT
In November 2001, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) announced the formation of a Task Force on Special Collections charged with developing an action plan to address a set of issues deemed significant by the ARL Board and membership. The establishment of the task force followed several years of ARL interest and activity in the area of special collections. This paper will review the stages through which ARL's engagement with special collections evolved, describe the motivation and rationale for initiating this engagement, discuss the perspectives that ARL brings to special collections, and provide a status report on the work of the task force.

INTRODUCTION
In November 2001, the ARL announced the formation of a Task Force on Special Collections charged with developing an action plan to address a set of issues related to special collections deemed significant by the ARL Board and membership. The decision to establish the task force and the identification of issues listed in the charge emerged from a series of discussions in a variety of ARL groups and meetings dating back to the fall of 1997.

The discussion of special collections began in the Research Collections Committee (RCC) meeting on 15 October 1997 in response to a proposal by committee chair, Joe Hewitt. Over the course of several meetings, the committee had considered the possibility of adding new projects to its portfolio of activities. The predominant project then, as now, was the AAU–ARL Global Resources Program, a multifaceted, long-term initiative which was

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moving ahead under the leadership of Deborah Jakubs, the committee’s staff liaison. In addition to monitoring the Global Resources Program, the RCC heard reports from and provided informal advice to the Center for Research Libraries and the Library of Congress. Archiving of electronic resources was discussed as a possible issue for RCC engagement but was referred to other groups. Several members of the committee were at work on a widely distributed discussion paper (Branin, Groen, & Thorin, 2002). The future of area studies librarianship was a frequent topic of discussion. Although these topics were sufficient to fill the committee’s semiannual meeting agendas, there was a sense that the RCC needed to develop a new focus with long-term programmatic implications, similar in scale to the Global Resources Program. Committee members felt that some major issues related to research collections were not receiving the attention they deserved.

Special collections struck an immediate chord with members of the committee. The early discussions in the RCC were wide-ranging brainstorming sessions in which committee members expressed a variety of views on special collections. All of the issues that eventually emerged as part of the task force’s agenda were raised in the initial discussions, along with others that were dropped as the agenda was refined and focused. Briefly described below are the points that surfaced in the early discussions that led to the decision to add special collections to the RCC’s agenda.

**RCC’s Basic Perspectives on Special Collections**

The RCC agreed that collecting, preserving, and providing access to the primary resources commonly referred to as “special collections” are part of the core mission of the research library. Members recognized at the beginning that the definition of the term “special collections” was open to discussion and that materials included in special collections varied from library to library. The committee avoided being sidetracked by detailed discussions of definition and tended to use the term in an inclusive sense with an understanding that special collections included rare books, manuscripts and archival collections, and many other types of materials that libraries might separate from general collections for special curatorial treatment. There was an apparent consensus, however, that at some point the committee would need to discuss the definition of special collections in the light of new formats and user demands. In general there was a tendency to associate special collections with “primary resources,” however they might be defined, with an understanding that the collecting of primary resources is a distinguishing characteristic of a research library qualified to be a member of ARL. The committee assumed that all ARL libraries were involved in special collections to some degree.

Secondly, the RCC recognized that the special collections holdings of ARL libraries are a resource of great richness and variety representing an important component of the nation’s intellectual capital. In addition to
supporting the teaching and research missions of the parent institutions, the special collections provide an indispensable resource for national and international scholarship. Preserving and providing access to the primary resources in special collections involves an obligation on the part of individual libraries to the world of scholarship at large, and these collections are frequently the principal elements of a library's reputation and stature as a scholarly institution. The committee acknowledged that the value of special collections is not always recognized by budget-conscious academic administrators in some institutions, and it is necessary that librarians actively promote an understanding of their value to the institution.

In light of the acknowledged value of special collections and their centrality to the research library's mission, it was obvious to the committee that special collections had been neglected as a focus of attention in the RCC and in ARL generally. ARL programs on special collections had been infrequent. The last ARL survey on special collections had been conducted in 1979. Since then neither ARL nor any other organization had undertaken a comprehensive, quantitative look at the status of special collections in research libraries. During that time a variety of factors had led to reexamination of traditional library priorities. These factors included budget pressures from inflation in STM journals, an emphasis on new approaches to accountability and performance measures in many universities (especially in public institutions), and new programs emerging as competing priorities in the digital environment. Committee members discussed the fact that special collections had historically been treated as somewhat separate and of self-evident value, but must now, like other library programs and services, be reconsidered in the light of changing demands and expectations from users, new information technologies and, of course, changing fiscal realities. In short, the RCC sensed a need to reexamine special collections in the light of the evolving conditions of research libraries in the same way as other research library programs and services. Committee members wanted to achieve a clearer sense of what they, as research library directors, needed to do to better support special collections during a period of rapid change in which the roles of traditional library services are being redirected and reshaped.

A fourth theme of the early discussions was that a major issue of special collections in many individual libraries is their very separateness, often leading to organizational and operational isolation. Anecdotal evidence from RCC members attested to problems with integrating special collections into the overall program of library services, a failure to adequately address special collections in long-range planning and budgeting processes, failure to include special collections in general collection development policies, and a lack of understanding and shared values between special collections and other library staff. Some reported inconsistencies in special collections service policies and the prevailing culture of the library and the institution.
As a corollary to these points, it was also agreed that ARL had not, for the most part, addressed special collections issues strategically and collectively in the same way that it had developed approaches to global resources, scholarly communications, copyright, and preservation. In short, there was a strong sense that special collections needed to be “mainstreamed” at the institutional level in a number of dimensions as well as become part of a collaborative research library agenda.

These, then, are the underlying perspectives that came to the fore in the early discussions of special collections in the RCC. Consensus on these points was the basis for moving ahead with the RCC special collections initiative. Taken together, these perspectives represented a positive concern for special collections with the goal of promoting them within their parent institutions and maximizing their value to scholarship at large.

Specific RCC Special Collections Issues

In addition to the basic shared perspectives evident in the early RCC discussions, a number of specific issues were raised as possible items for an eventual ARL agenda. Some of these survived to be included in the agenda as adopted—others did not. For the most part, these points did serve to set the focus for discussions among the full membership and in ARL-sponsored conferences. Some of the observations and concerns expressed in the early committee meetings are noted briefly below:

- RCC members expressed concern for special collections both from local perspectives as directors of research libraries and from the viewpoint of collaborative approaches to general issues of special collections. Some members expressed frustration that statistics and benchmarks available in other areas of research library operations did not exist for special collections. The comparative context for resource allocation, planning, and other administrative decisions related to special collections seemed weak. The possibility was raised of ARL developing examples of best practices and organizational models as it had for other library services. Locally oriented issues discussed included organizational questions such as the placement of processing functions, the role of special collections in the library’s development program, the lack of understanding of the role of special collections among other library staff, the value of exhibits, and the need to promote the use of special collections among undergraduates and other constituencies. As discussions proceeded, however, the focus tended to shift away from these local concerns to the broader agenda as more appropriate for an ARL initiative, although the interest in local management remained a factor in planning for a special collections statistical program.

- Some RCC members expressed the fear that special collections were especially vulnerable to budget pressures in research universities and
sensed that they were not being adequately supported in a number of ARL libraries. Articles in the literature by curators were cited and anecdotal evidence was presented on space problems restricting the acquisitions of archival collections, lack of funding to purchase materials, and the inability to maintain staffing levels. However, the 1998 survey, described in more detail below, revealed that these fears were unfounded. The survey showed that special collections were enjoying relative prosperity in ARL libraries, although clearly undersupported in some institutions. More accurately, perhaps, the committee also expressed great concern about the overall capability of the special collections enterprise to collect and provide access to the enormous cultural, historical, and social record of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an issue that did emerge as part of the final action agenda.

- RCC members early on discussed access to special collections as a critical issue, especially processing backlogs and the need for more electronic finding aids. Access evolved into an even more prominent concern as discussions expanded to include special collections librarians and archivists and is now a major focus of the ARL agenda.
- Digitization programs based in special collections were discussed as an area in which difficult decisions were required, involving complex questions of priority, standards, funding, and coordination.
- The committee discussed at length the perceived problems of recruiting qualified staff for special collections, paralleling the long-standing concern in the RCC for the education of area studies librarians.

The RCC's initial discussions of issues such as these were time constrained and superficial but served at least to surface a sufficient number of questions to convince the committee to develop a set of programs and activities with a special collections focus.

ARL Activity

ARL's formal activity relating to special collections has unfolded in a series of projects and events designed to gather information, raise awareness, and, ultimately, develop an ongoing special collections agenda. After the discussions in the RCC described above, special collections was raised as an issue with the ARL membership generally. Participation in the discussions was high and expressions of support were frequent. This section will present chronologically the major ARL actions and activities to date.

Survey of Special Collections in ARL Libraries

As a result of being poorly informed about the status of special collections in ARL libraries, the RCC in 1997 recommended a wide-ranging survey of special collections to be used as the starting point for further reflection and decision-making. Survey forms were sent to ARL libraries in July
1998, and the results were compiled and described in a subsequent ARL publication (Panitch, 2001). The high level of survey completion (90 percent of the 110 ARL academic members at the time of the survey) reflected the intense interest of most members in the results. The instrument itself consisted of forty-five principally quantitative questions focusing on special collections materials and on a wide array of associated management issues, specifically: collections (size and scope); organization and administration; facilities; use and users; preservation and conservation; and electronic access.

In general, the survey found that special collections were doing better than might have been expected based on anecdotal evidence and a reading of the literature. Most institutions reported that their special collections were growing both in size and in scope, incorporating both emerging subject areas and new formats. Most institutions reported that staffing levels for special collections were stable or growing and that use of the collections was increasing. Most special collections received a stable or growing percentage of institutional resources, and nearly two-thirds of institutions reported that special collections facilities had been recently built or renovated.

Among the striking findings of the survey were the significant differences distinguishing large libraries from smaller ones and Canadian libraries from both public and private institutions in the United States. The largest libraries, it was found, tended to have appreciably larger special collections—approximately two to ten times as large as others in terms of volumes and manuscripts held—and they reported staff and expenditure levels for special collections that were commensurately higher than at smaller institutions. Larger special collections also reported much greater reliance on endowment funds while smaller collections depend heavily on appropriations from the parent institution or from state budgets. Although not as prominent as differences based on library size, library type (private, public, Canadian) seemed also to determine responses. For measures of special collections size, staffing levels, and total expenditures, private institutions exceeded overall means substantially, while Canadian institutions were far below the means.

Along with providing previously unavailable data about special collections, the survey raised or reinforced a number of concerns. Chief among these issues is the very definition of special collections, which, as survey responses indicate, can comprise any variety of materials and organizational structures. While deriving a single, simple definition of special collections may be neither possible nor desirable, it was clear that future initiatives in this area will have to be extremely specific in their parameters or else will have to allow for the wide degree of variation which exists in ARL institutions.

Other areas of concern were less theoretical, but no less difficult to address. Large portions of collections, for example, were found to be without adequate intellectual access or had records or finding aids requiring on-site consultation. The dependence of many institutions on appropriat-
ed funds raises questions about the vulnerability of special collections to budget cuts and the ability of such collections to acquire needed materials, particularly the voluminous record of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It was clear that special collections librarians are being asked to take on an ever-greater variety of responsibilities, such as digitization and development, and it appeared as well that many institutions had plans to hire new special collections librarians in the near future. Less clear is whether existing staff levels and available skills were appropriate to support those new roles and growing collections or where training for new special collections librarians would come from. Also of note were questions about the investment being made in the preservation of special collections materials, with some institutions reporting little staff devoted to conservation and little preservation activity focused on special collections materials.

Special Collections in the Digital Age

As results of the special collections survey were being compiled and analyzed, ARL held its first broader discussion of special collections issues. Convened by then-ARL President Betty Bengtson, the association’s 134th membership meeting, held May 1999 in Kansas City, was devoted to *Special Collections in the Digital Age.*

The meeting provided a forum for ARL directors to hear from and exchange ideas with invited special collections administrators and scholars.

Keynote speaker Werner Gundersheimer, then director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, reiterated the importance of special collections to the research library and decried their marginalization—often inadvertent—as mere symbols or emblems of institutional distinctiveness. A meaningful commitment to collecting, preserving, and making available carefully developed special collections, he argued, signals a university’s intention to honor intellectual inquiry that is based on “the discrete, the unique object of study.” The value of these collections, particularly in awakening the wonder and curiosity of students, should not be dismissed.

The remainder of the meeting was notable for its fostering of dialogue among those with a stake in the future of special collections. One panel featured two directors and two special collections librarians outlining a number of major issues and explicating the different viewpoints informing decisions about special collections. At a later panel, scholars from the University of Kansas and the University of Nebraska described their own use of special collections. A lively general discussion was followed the next day by small breakout sessions to consider some of the issues which had been identified as particularly pressing: “Digital Projects and Finding Aids”; “Integrating Special Collections into the Curriculum”; “Rights Management”; and “Staffing and Organization.”

Although not giving rise to immediate action, the Kansas City meeting was critical in affirming the interest of the ARL membership in continuing
the discussion about special collections. It was also clear that any meaning-
ful ARL movement in this direction would need to include the voices not
only of directors but of all parties involved with developing, managing, and
using special collections.

Building on Strength: Developing an ARL Agenda for Special Collections

The lively exchange of the 1999 ARL membership meeting confirmed
interest in the development of an ARL agenda related to special collections.
It also demonstrated the importance of close interaction between ARL di-
rectors and special collections librarians in shaping and implementing ac-
tion in this area. A small volunteer planning group consisting of represen-
tatives from both communities began meeting in January 2000 to coordinate
a symposium, eventually entitled Building on Strength: Developing an ARL
Agenda for Special Collections.

Members of the planning committee early agreed on the necessity of
moving beyond general discussion to more concrete action. The symposium
was therefore conceived of and promoted as an intensive working forum
having as a goal the formulation of recommendations to ARL’s Research
Collections Committee concerning what the association could do to reaf-
firm the importance of special collections, develop benchmarking and oth-
er comparative data, and encourage a collaborative approach to longstand-
ing issues. Directors and heads of special collections were encouraged,
although not required, to attend as pairs. Conference costs were largely
underwritten by generous grants from the Gladys Krieble Delmas and An-
drew W. Mellon foundations. In all, more than 125 registrants attended the
symposium, held 27–29 June 2001, at Brown University in Providence,
Rhode Island.2

A keynote address by David Stam, University Librarian Emeritus, Syra-
cuse University, sought to be “provocative and irritating on the subject of
special collections.” Stam encouraged greater access to and use of special
collections but noted many of the potential impediments—historical, op-
erational, philosophical—to this vision. He was followed in turn by a library
director (Sarah Thomas, Carl A. Kroch University Librarian, Cornell Uni-
versity), a special collections librarian (Robert Byrd, director, Rare Book,
Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University), and a former
director turned special collections administrator (William Crowe, Spencer
Librarian, University of Kansas). All promoted a vision in which special
collections transcend their (real or imagined) separateness, although the
speakers emphasized different measures required to overcome marginal-
ization. A lively general discussion was followed by afternoon breakout ses-
sions in which participants were asked to articulate “urgent issues,” “non-
urgent issues,” and “nonissues” for ARL consideration.

The final day of the symposium was devoted to formulating a specific
outline as the basis upon which ARL could initiate activity. Joe Hewitt and
Merrily Taylor (university librarian, Brown University) presented a “Proposed ARL Action Agenda for Special Collections” that they had composed. The eleven-point draft agenda, circulated beforehand to participants, was as follows:

1. ARL should promote special collections as a fundamental and indispensable part of the research library mission in the modern university through a statement of principles describing the obligation of research libraries to collect, preserve, and make available the primary historical and cultural record. Concurrently, a demonstrated institutional commitment to special collections and related services should be a criterion for membership in ARL.

2. ARL should initiate appropriate collective action related to special collections as it has in areas such as scholarly communications, copyright, global resources, and diversity. In doing so, ARL should seek to work as a facilitating organization that mobilizes member libraries and other organizations to address the general issues of special collections in research university libraries.

3. At a time when the traditional role and priority of special collections in the university library are being questioned, ARL should provide programs to members that assist them in developing, managing, and supporting special collections in the contexts of modern scholarship and pedagogy, and trends in higher education.

4. ARL should ensure that its other projects and programs address special collections whenever appropriate. A special collections liaison, similar to the preservation liaison, should be considered for ARL as an ongoing advocate for special collections interests in ARL.

5. ARL should work with others to develop a coordinated approach to the collecting and preservation of the voluminous records of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and to the challenges of new formats and sources of archival data in the modern age. ARL and its member libraries should work with each other and with other agencies to inventory, map, and, where appropriate, define responsibility for collecting and preserving primary materials of all types.

6. Ongoing statistical efforts relating to special collections should be established under ARL auspices. This effort should focus on the gathering of core longitudinal data on an annual or biennial basis, as well as on occasional special efforts as needed through the SPEC process or a similar mechanism.

7. ARL should encourage individual institutions to provide shared intellectual access to their frequently substantial backlogs of special collections materials without such access. ARL can assist in this effort by advocating for and administering funding to support access projects, and by developing or endorsing model guidelines for adequate access. ARL...
should also acknowledge the importance of access in any statement of principles. (This item was cited by the participants in the conference at Brown as of primary importance.)

8. ARL should assume a coordinating role or should support external efforts to ensure that information regarding digitization projects is appropriately shared among institutions in order to foster collaboration and prevent duplication. ARL should also advocate for the continued importance of original materials in the digital age and should participate in or endorse the articulation of reasonable expectations for the ongoing stewardship of these materials following reformatting.

9. ARL should encourage further investigation into the status of preservation efforts for special collections materials and should develop model guidelines for preservation programs which will be effective in addressing these materials. The ARL preservation liaison should be invited to participate in these efforts or to propose appropriate representation from the special collections community. ARL should also advocate for and, when appropriate, endorse guidelines and standards for the preservation of information in electronic form.

10. ARL should support the education of the next generation of special collections librarians and determine core competencies. ARL should sponsor further systematic research into the changing nature of the profession and assist member libraries in creating opportunities to develop special collections professionals. Models similar to those developed for the training of area studies librarians should be considered.

11. ARL should incorporate into its portfolio of legal concerns the problems created by the Tax Reform Act of 1969, which does not allow a charitable deduction for self-created works, and work actively for the repeal of this provision of the Federal Tax Code.

Although general approval for ARL’s engagement with special collections was evident, this portion of the discussion also brought to light remaining differences. In particular, attendees representing the special collections community were concerned that many directors still harbored outmoded perceptions regarding special collections. They pointed out that large areas of activity discussed over the course of the symposium—e.g., improving intellectual and physical access, providing training and development, attracting new users—were in fact being addressed within the special collections community, but that a seeming lack of interest on the part of institutional administrators, consortia, and funding agencies limited progress. The necessity of a collaborative approach to special collections issues and increased coordination with the many groups and interests already involved with special collections were again evident.
ARL Task Force on Special Collections

In order to advance the agenda discussed at the Brown symposium, the ARL Board formally established a Task Force on Special Collections. Its charge, drawn from the points of the draft agenda which elicited the strongest interest, is as follows:

The Task Force is asked to develop an action plan to:

1. Enhance access to collections and backlogs, surface “hidden collections.” Advocate for and administer funding for projects, and collaborate with RBMS to develop and endorse guidelines for what constitutes adequate access.
2. Coordinate planning for collecting nineteenth- and twentieth-century materials and those in new formats.
3. Coordinate information sharing regarding digitization efforts.
4. Define core competencies among special collection librarians and create training opportunities.
5. Promote special collections as fundamental to the mission of the research library.
6. Gather data on special collections operations.
7. Incorporate some of these issues into agendas of RBMS, SAA, and other ARL standing committees (especially the Access Committee but also possibly Preservation, Scholarly Communication, Statistics & Measurement, Copyright, and Diversity).

In keeping with the collaborative spirit that both characterized and was endorsed by the Brown meeting, task force members were selected from among both ARL directors and ARL special collections librarians, many of whom had been instrumental in planning the activities described above. Joe Hewitt was asked to chair the group. As of this writing, the ARL Task Force on Special Collections has formally met on four occasions—in Chapel Hill (April 2002), at the ALA Annual meeting in Atlanta (June 2002), at Yale University (October 2002), and in Lexington, Kentucky (May 2003). As might be expected in the face of such a wide-ranging charge, certain areas appeared better suited to collaborative action or else, by their urgency, tended to attract the greatest attention. It was readily agreed that point seven of the charge (to incorporate major issues into the agendas of related groups and organizations) was, in effect, implicit in the successful development and implementation of projects related to each of the other points. Task force members were also quick to recognize the work already accomplished or being undertaken elsewhere, noting that it was equally important to incorporate existing initiatives into ARL’s agenda and, where appropriate, to advocate for ARL’s support and endorsement of these activities. Otherwise, the most fully developed activities of the task force currently stand as follows:
Principles Statement on Special Collections. In order to “promote special collections as fundamental to the mission of the research library,” the task force recognized the importance of starting within the ARL membership. Not all ARL libraries, as the 1998 survey demonstrated, support special collections with the same intensity; certain libraries may also face university administrators, boards, faculty, and others who fail to understand or support special collections. Consequently, the task force drafted a statement of principles that reaffirms the implicit commitment of research libraries to special collections and outlines the basic responsibilities of those libraries to develop, preserve, support, disseminate, and otherwise steward primary resource materials. The statement is intended not to be prescriptive but to articulate the centrality of special collections to the research library mission and to recall the obligations thereby assumed. The principles statement was endorsed by the ARL Board of Directors at its February 2003 meeting and is posted on the ARL website. It is hoped that the statement can serve as a powerful tool for leveraging change within member institutions and for promoting special collections among key individuals and organizations. To that end, the statement will be sent with a cover letter to members of the ARL academic community to draw their attention to special collections and to urge their support for adherence to the principles in their institutions. Also, the task force is discussing the possibility of a publication that would illustrate the principles through best practices and innovative programs related to special collections.

White Paper on Access. From the earliest discussions within ARL’s Research Collections Committee, concern over providing timely yet sufficient access to special collections materials has been strongly voiced and widely shared. The 1998 survey provided additional evidence of the magnitude of the problem, confirming large backlogs in the processing of certain types of materials and substantial collections with local access only. Point one of the charge (enhancing access to special collections) has therefore drawn substantial interest. A working group within the task force, aided by volunteers from the special collections community, has written a white paper on access issues. The audience for this document is library administrators and others who need to understand the commonly shared problems and recommended solutions from those who have expertise and professional responsibility in the area of access and cataloging of manuscripts, archives, and rare books. Among questions the paper addresses are: 1. Why “hidden collections” are, in fact, a problem, and how great the scope of the problem seems to be; 2. What access to special collections means in the twenty-first century; 3. How access can be provided in a way that is both timely and meaningful; and 4. How improving access ought to be carried out. The white paper will be used not simply to raise awareness, but also as the basis for discussion at a September 2003 conference entitled Exposing Hidden Collections. This working confer-
ence, to be held at the Library of Congress, is intended as a first step in developing a scaled, collaborative action plan to address unprocessed archival, manuscript, and rare book materials.

**Statement of Need: Training and Recruitment.** Concern about developing the next generation of special collections librarians has surfaced in every forum described above. As with academic librarianship generally, a wave of retirements among highly experienced professionals is expected in the field of special collections. Recent searches suggest a shortage of new professionals equipped to assume stewardship and leadership positions; at the same time, the limited number of entry-level positions make it difficult for newcomers to enter the field. Finally, the nature of special collections librarianship is itself changing even as formal training opportunities are becoming fewer and fewer. In response to these conditions, the task force is developing a statement of need that describes the current environment, looks to relevant training models, and proposes directions for ARL action. Of greatest interest is the development of internships or residency programs in special collections for persons with the Ph.D. or other appropriate advanced degree in a relevant academic discipline. The internships would be offered in conjunction with an “immersion short course” that would introduce students to the fundamentals, culture, and issues of academic librarianship. Such a program would represent a lateral or alternative avenue to a professional career in special librarianship. A working group consisting of interested task force members, ARL directors, deans and faculty from schools of information and library science, rare books curators, and representatives from the archival community will meet in Chapel Hill in November 2003 to develop the concept in greater detail.

**Special Collections Statistics.** Based on the success of the 1998 survey on special collections and the numerous requests for ongoing follow-up, preparing a proposal for data collection within ARL has been a task force priority. Task force members believe that regular tracking of special collections operations through a quantitative survey will allow assessment of progress on the crucial issues already raised within ARL. It is clear, however, that any survey instrument would have to be considerably streamlined from the original version and subject to rigorous review and testing by ARL member libraries. In order to ascertain member interest in a pilot project, ARL directors were polled on the willingness of their libraries to participate in a statistics initiative and were asked for suggestions about desired frequency and reporting methods. A report on the results of the poll is being prepared. The task force is also soliciting suggestions regarding qualitative data that would help libraries assess the success of their special collections, although it is expected that the most urgent projects would emerge directly from the other actions proposed by the task force. Preliminary interest in ongoing statistical tracking appears high; if support continues, the task force will prepare a more detailed proposal.
CONCLUSION

While much of the activity of the task force has taken place at its infrequent meetings or via e-mail, greater outreach and visibility is planned as the group’s priorities coalesce. A presentation made by members of the task force to the 2002 Preconference of ALA’s Rare Book and Manuscript Section elicited substantial interest and offers to volunteer. Additional outreach activities are planned as the work of the task force proceeds. The task force’s progress has been characterized by the steady expansion of the circle of engagement in the initiative. In taking on the collective challenges and issues of special collections, the task force has kept in mind the demonstrated strengths and limitations of ARL in similar issues of major scale.

First, ARL has a strong track record of advocacy—engaging issues and bringing them to the attention of other organizations and communities that can help in the effort to resolve them. ARL advocacy signals the importance of issues for other organizations, and ARL has the influence to elicit a response to the concerns it raises.

Second is coordination. The association has been successful in bringing the right people together to connect and develop projects in areas similar in scale and complexity to special collections. Nowhere is this clearer than in the Global Resources Program, where viable projects have been developed in Latin American resources, German resources, Japanese journal access, African newspapers, South Asian resources, and Southeast Asian resources. The global resources program has helped to establish sustainable projects in each of these areas by facilitating and coordinating the work of people in each area of interest. It is reasonable to anticipate a similar level of success with special collections.

Third, ARL can play a role by incubating projects. The association is not interested in taking on the management and operation of new projects or programs on a permanent basis, but it may be in the position to provide space and seed funding to create projects that will result in programs that other organizations, such as individual member libraries or a consortia of libraries, will continue into the future.

Overall, ARL’s willingness to bring these strengths to bear on special collections must be counted as an extremely positive development. ARL looks forward to working with others to improve the collective institutional capacity to collect, preserve, and provide access to primary resources for scholarship and learning.

NOTES
REFERENCES
Authenticity and Affect: When Is a Watch Not a Watch?

ABBY SMITH

ABSTRACT

Authenticity — the verifiable claim that an object is what it purports to be—is crucial for the value of an artifact as evidence, cultural object, research source, and object worthy of collecting, curating, and preserving. This essay explores another aspect of authenticity in artifacts, one rooted in subjective experience and less amenable to verification but often equally important for meaningful use of retrospective resources—the ability of an artifact, through its physical presence, to create an experiential and affective response in the researcher. The essay further explores the implications for collectors and special collections librarians of the fact that digital objects can be likened to physical artifacts because they also claim experiential and affective authenticity.

In the most elementary sense, to be authentic is to be what one purports to be: to be what one seems.

In the world of special collections, authenticity is essential. It underlies all the values of the physical artifact both as a cultural object and as a commodity acquired by collectors. The values that depend upon an artifact’s authenticity, well articulated by the preservation, special collections, and antiquarian trade communities, include aesthetic value, importance in the history of the medium, age, scarcity, association, monetary value, features of interest, and exhibit value (Elkington, 1992). If an item such as a rare book, a vintage photograph, a manuscript map of Vinland, or any item that claims artifactual value is proven to be inauthentic—to be passing for something that it is not—then it loses much of its value as a research source, an exhibition item, or an object worthy of collecting. Given the importance

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of authenticity in its objective dimension for the intellectual, cultural, and monetary value of an object, these values are generally accessible to various technical and historical forensic examinations that support one or more claims to authenticity, from documentary evidence of provenance to analyses of chemical composition.

But in the realm of special collections, objects can be many things to many people. What a single artifact seems to be can be understood not only with traditional forensic tools for objective measurements but also by close examination of more subjective aspects of that item—its context, its implicit history as evinced by its explicit appearance, and its uncanny ability to carry, through its very materiality, intangible affects. That is because a physical object often has more meaning or significance than its creator intended it to. A book carries not only the text printed on the pages but also the explicit evidence of its use, such as marginalia and stains, and the cultural information implicit in its size, font, layout, and innumerable other physical traces that may or may not lend themselves to interpretation. This is equally true of more ephemeral artifacts, such as, for example, road maps printed in the 1920s. A single map can allow one to see not only parts of the transportation infrastructure of the time but also, through examining the advertising and design elements, the products that were marketed to map readers; the tastes of the era for certain shapes, widths of line, color palettes; and other features that may not be well represented by a surrogate of the map. That is in addition to any folds, tears, stains, or annotations that may indicate any given journey's planning and execution.

And it is that capacity of an artifact to carry evidence that is accidental, unintentional, implicit, or simply of secondary or tertiary importance from the point of view of the creator that is often most valued by users and is also often referred to as its “authenticity.” This approximates what Walter Benjamin called an art object’s “aura.” To be in the presence of the original and authentic, one has access to “all that is transmissible from [the object’s] beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced” (Benjamin, 1968, p. 221). In the context of library and archival sources, that “aura” might be more accurately defined as experiential or affective authenticity. In the presence of the physical object, the researcher has an immanent experience of the artifact and, given the nature of human cognition, that experience has an affective dimension (Dolan, 2002).

It is this aspect of authenticity that appears to be most problematic in the emerging digital landscape—the quality of an artifact that produces a characteristic but perhaps unquantifiable affect in the user through its physical presence. Depending on the expertise and skill of the researcher, this affect can be an important and valuable part of research because that affect triggers a set of meaningful associations. These aspects of the artifact go to how the physical evidence in the object is or is not affected by its
specific context and relationship with other objects, its precise presentation, and other factors that alter or influence one's perceptions of the artifact. Many comment that surrogates are notable for their inability to convey those crucial artifactual aspects and can deliver to the user only that which is fungible, that is, portable in any format. Anything that is intrinsic to the physical presence is lost. Digital representations are nowadays much preferred for research purposes, in part because they tend to lose less information than other forms of surrogacy. Indeed, there are many features important to research and enjoyment that are added through digitization. But there is something irreducible about an encounter with the real thing, and that is what constitutes the experiential and affective authenticity of the artifact.

Before exploring how experiential authenticity may play out in the digital landscape, however, it may be helpful to unpack our intuitive and too often unexamined understandings of how objects actually work in the physical world. For insight into this, we turn to Sherlock Holmes.

**WHEN IS A WATCH NOT A WATCH?**

In the character of Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle created an intelligence that foreshadowed the spectacular scientific capacities developed in the twentieth century to squeeze evidence from the smallest fragments of mute matter. Sherlock Holmes was able to establish the probabilities of past events and present culpabilities through such means as the complexion of mud, the texture of cigar ash, and canines that do not bark. For Holmes's purposes, objects lack intentionality: that is, physical objects are acted upon and do not themselves act. Through their lack of intentionality, they can yield reliable, unbiased evidence.

Holmes was very alive to the values of context and relationships when he interpreted physical evidence, and he always made a crucial epistemological distinction between observations and the deductions made on the basis of such observations. He relied on probabilistic reasoning to reach a deductive conclusion, but only on the basis of rigorous examination of physical evidence. He was, in other words, a good scientist. But he was seemingly dead to those aspects of objects that make them more than empty vessels for evidence.

Dr. Watson, on the other hand, was exemplary of those who, like curators and collectors, are very much alive to other aspects of the object. In a misjudged challenge to Holmes's claim to be able to postulate facts about the past based on seemingly scant physical evidence, Watson allows us to see precisely how an object—in this case, a pocket watch—has many lives and many meanings.

In *The Sign of Four*, Watson peevishly tests the boasts of his friend to be able to deduce whole narratives of action from the smallest traces of physical evidence. He hands Holmes a pocket watch about which he said nothing other than that it had recently come into his possession. "Would you
have the kindness to let me have an opinion upon the character or habits of the late owner?" he challenges him.

The "slight feeling of amusement" Watson felt in his heart as he handed over the watch to the scientist was soon transformed into an exercise in anguish. For, from the physical markings he observed on the watch, Holmes deduced that the previous owner was Watson's elder brother and he had inherited the watch, along with considerable means, from their father. Further, Holmes carries on with the relentlessness of the disinterested investigator, Watson's brother had subsequently squandered his money, lived through hard times, took to drink, and died as a consequence. To the shocked and mortified Watson, such harsh revelations about a member of his family about whom he felt deep shame was "unworthy" of his friend. The truth of Holmes's words were so cutting because the truth could only have come from a human source. Watson was convinced that some individual had related this shameful tale to Holmes in person, probably at Holmes's urging, because only people speak thus, and of such things.

But Holmes had spoken to no one. He had merely observed closely and from those observations made deductions based on probabilities. It was Holmes's belief that physical objects can speak without prejudice—indeed, they alone can speak without prejudice—and it is in the interest of society at large that we develop the skills to interpret their code. In this case, the "message" was scratched on the surfaces of the watch: marks left on the casing by pawnbrokers and scratches made carelessly by keys, coins, and hard objects that the owner negligently, probably drunkenly, let damage his expensive watch.

To Holmes, a man of science, all physical objects were potential tools in his hunt for the truth. It was the irreducible objectivity of physical evidence that so enchanted him. For Watson, though, the watch was a memento, a mnemonic device whose chief significance was to serve as a physical link with his unfortunate brother and his beloved father. The watch as a physical object was a repository of feeling.

The human conflation of evidence—something that bears traces of past events—and of mnemonic device—something that triggers a flow not of information but of remembrances and impressions from the past—is not uncommon in the daily life of objects. Yet it is remarkable nonetheless, for this easy conflation exemplifies the paradoxical ways in which memory in human beings has developed over the course of our natural history: from natural memory to artificial, one might say, from information embedded in neuronal pathways to information externalized in objects and symbols. As recent neuroscientific explorations reveal, "emotion exerts a powerful influence on reason and, in ways neither understood nor systematically researched, contribute to the fixation of belief" and, by extension, of learning and memory formation and recall (Dolan, 2002).

If to Holmes the watch is evidential in value, and to Watson emotion-
al, then to the watchmaker its value is functional. Watson’s pocket watch was manufactured to convey information about time. It is the magic of some physical objects to signify many things simultaneously—evidence, memory, and tool—and thus to speak volumes to those who listen hard. This has been a truth well known to collectors and special collections librarians for generations.

So it is with objects and material culture in general—they convey information, they help us manipulate the world to our ends, and they hold our memories in storage. But this multiplicity of meaning and function seems to be uniquely significant in those objects explicitly created to carry recorded information—not the mute testaments left through personal objects like watches, but “message objects” that intentionally carry information in the form of words, numbers, images, and sounds, that we collect and share among ourselves, and that we preserve to share with those distant in time or place.

For those who use retrospective sources to retrieve information about the past, from detectives to historians, all physical objects can present themselves as potential tools in the discovery of a truth. For Holmes, such a researcher would be successful to the extent that he was scrupulous in observation, withheld judgment before the facts were all in, and was objective. Historians and other scholars who rely on retrospective resources cannot afford to suspend judgment until all the facts are in, because that time will never arrive. They are wise to rely on objective, observed, verifiable facts, but there are little of those to be found in the usual sources of history. Instead, they must rely on the records created by men and women from their own observations and perceptions at a given time. Whatever is to be found in those records that can help those in the present to gain access to the experiential and affective realities of the past will, if handled cautiously and appropriately, be of material aid. In this sense, researchers must have the sensibilities of Watson as well as of Holmes, while never losing sight of the watchmaker.

Benjamin argues that what is authentic in an object is that which is transmissible over time and thus can speak to present and future generations. Therefore, authenticity is that which is intrinsic to an object, as opposed to that which is fungible (Task Force on the Role of the Artifact, 2001). In the library context, a firsthand encounter with those ineffable, intrinsic qualities of the artifact is what researchers seek, alone or in addition to the information that an artifact can reveal. Benjamin goes on to make the seemingly bizarre claim that an object can, in fact, become more authentic over time, by which he means that its “aura” grows. Taken from the archival or evidentiary point of view, it is illogical to assert that an object grows in authenticity. Authenticity is like virginity: it can be lost, but it can never be regained.

But from the subjective sense, that of the experiential or affective connotation of authenticity that goes to the mnemonic powers of an object,
Benjamin’s assertion, while perhaps overstated, can be true. An object’s claim to authenticity, reified through its evocation of an experiential or affective response, can indeed wax as well as wane over time.

Finally, another feature of affective authenticity significant in the realm of the artifact is the ability of a cultural object to carry within it memories that, taken together, constitute an identity. In the case of Watson’s pocket watch, this item linked him to his family and became vital to his familial identity. For Holmes to have read a shameful history into the watch was to have shamed Watson himself. This same ability to carry symbolically the identity of an individual, group, or nation is most powerfully illustrated by the fate of books, maps, manuscripts, and other special collections during wars of depredation and genocide. In contrast to art works that are culturally understood to be born of one time and place but belong to all ages and all peoples—from Leonards to the Buddhas of Bamiyan—books and other special collections materials—the sorts of texts and images once found in the national library of Bosnia and Hercegovina in Sarajevo—are usually perceived to be more closely bound in identity with a specific language, culture, and time. Thus, confiscation, desecration, or destruction during war is understood as a sharper and more targeted assault on a specific people than the theft of paintings or destruction of ancient monuments.

AUTHENTICITY AND DIGITAL REPRESENTATIONS OF PHYSICAL ARTIFACTS

The central question for special collections librarians at the turn of the century has been: What happens when cultural objects are created in non-material forms? What happens to their authenticity as information carriers, as mnemonic devices, and as evidence?

We know that context is a crucial element in establishing or evaluating the authenticity of special collections. It is a central tenet of collectors, be they individuals or institutions, that objects are best used and appreciated when in the company of like or associated items. This makes comparisons between similar objects easier, thus facilitating the apprehension of their distinguishing qualities. In addition, if an item is seen in the context of associated items, the user can better understand or imagine the historical context in which an item was created and for what purpose. The context in which one views or uses an artifact can have significant bearing on how the item is experienced or perceived. In archives, maintaining the original order or arrangement of items is considered an important step in securing the authenticity of records because of the high value placed on provenance—context—for evaluating the authenticity of archival records.

The context in which special collections are presented and the associations that exist between like items can be significantly enhanced in the digital environment, as numerous digitization projects have shown. Aggregating like items improves their research potential (the William Blake Ar-
chive, for example), and the reuniting of collections once integrated physically but now dispersed is a powerful tool for interpretation (such as the art and manuscripts from the Dunhuang cave in China). On the other hand, it is too often the case that, given the resources of time and money that high-quality digitization demands, large collections are often represented only by examples, or are even presented in entirely new contexts that actually make the representation of special collections online more like an exhibition or interpretation than an opportunity for in-depth research.

It is a truism that an item taken out of context can lose much of its authenticity. Dorothea Lange’s famous photograph of the migrant mother, for example, became an iconic image of the Dust Bowl years, yet by becoming an icon, appearing again and again out of its original context of a suite of photographs documenting an entire family at one specific point in time (“Migrant farmer family. Seven hungry children. Mother aged thirty-two. Father a native Californian. Nipomo, California.”), it has lost much of its integrity as a research object (Library of Congress, 2003). Special collections librarians are frequently called upon these days to make selections from large and diverse holdings for representation online. This is seldom an easy task, important as it is to make special collections more readily accessible to anyone interested in consulting them. One way to ensure against erosion of context and association or the creation of a false sense of authenticity is to make the curatorial criteria for choice transparent to anyone using the digital surrogates.

Authenticity of Digital Artifacts?

The issue of authenticity of digital objects and records has been addressed by several professional groups, from archivists and librarians to technologists and legal experts, though there remain a number of unresolved issues about how to verify through objective means whether or not a digital file is what it purports to be (Bearman and Trant, 1998; CLIR, 2000; InterPARES). But few have systematically engaged the issue of what the experiential or affective authenticity of digital objects is and how that can be identified and assessed, if not measured.

In the digital realm there are no objects-as-artifacts: that is, there are no objects that derive their importance from their sheer physicality in the sense that librarians, archivists, and collectors commonly use the term. Peter Graham has written that special collections cannot exist in the digital realm, because “there are no [physical] artifacts to provide added value to the substantive information” (Graham, 1998, p. 234). This is redundantly true if one defines special collections as aggregations of physical objects. Graham’s assertion has challenging implications for libraries and collectors that bear further consideration.

While digital data are by their essence “immaterial” and digital files contain no “physical evidentiary information to assist in the study of the texts
themselves or to provide a history of their transmission," it is not true that digital objects constituted from those data are entirely immaterial and can bear no evidence of their transmission. Indeed, they can be perceived and experienced by researchers only through material perceptions, and they do leave traces of their creation, use, and transmission.

This is not a mere philosophical or semantic quibble. Graham is fundamentally correct in his comparison between artifactual collections and digital collections. But to the extent that a digital object must be instantiated for someone to have access to it, then the digital object has materiality, though of a decidedly transitory sort. Indeed, not only does a digital object have an experiential dimension just as books and analog audio recordings do: that materiality has a specificity that changes with each instantiation due to varying processing speeds, screen size and resolution, and other hardware specifications. The specifics of any given instantiation or materialization are crucial, if impermanent, aspects of the object's authenticity. These features are referred to rather loosely in the digital library and computer science communities as "the look and feel" of the digital object—those noninformational features considered intrinsic to its presence or "aura," as Benjamin might have it.

According to Graham's construction of special collections, in which digital objects by definition cannot have artifactual value, there would be no compelling reason for special collections librarians and other collectors expert in artifactual value to enter into the important and troubling attempt to define digital object authenticity. However, there are compelling reasons to argue for the serious and immediate engagement of experts in special collections, not limited to rare book and manuscript specialists, but all those expert in nonbook and nonprint formats, to enter the fray. Who is better positioned to assess the relative values of various aspects of the materialization of digital objects than those curators and collectors most attuned to the artifactual value of information objects, especially to the experiential and affective nature of an encounter with a primary source?

The beginning of a new millennium may be an auspicious time to recast the concept of "special collections." The fundamental focus of special collections repositories has been to select, curate, and preserve primary source materials, regardless of their format. That the term "special collections" connotes rare printed or manuscript materials rather than primary sources as such, including but not limited to cartographic materials, films, radio broadcasts, and so forth, is a regrettable artifact of history, but one that should not hold back collectors and curators from joining together to engage issues of digital authenticity in all genres and formats.

There are already urgent pleas from faculty, scholars, and other users of digital collections for expert curators and collectors to define the artifactual value of a digital object as a primary source that warrants the same attention to selection, curation, and preservation as analog special collections
Such a definition would have incomparable significance for decisions about many things, such as preservation strategies (for example, migration versus emulation) based on the value of the "look and feel" of a digital object as opposed to its purely informational value (CLIR, 2000). Discussions on this topic sound like transpositions into the digital key of similar debates about the artifactual versus informational value of a book, photograph, or map.

As early as 1995, the Task Force on Archiving of Digital Information called for a definition of those features of an information object that "distinguish it as a whole and singular work," such as content, fixity, reference, provenance, and context, in order to preserve the integrity of the digital object (Task Force on Archiving of Digital Information, 1996). That work has just begun, and it would be a great loss to research and collecting communities present and future if that work were left entirely to commercial producers of digital content and the technical communities that design, build, and operate computer systems and write software codes. It is time for libraries and archives to encourage actively the development of digitally literate curators, those with expertise in computer hardware and software as well as content, much as map librarians have expertise in cartography and its history, in printing and engraving and publishing, and in the history of various cartographic trades and enterprises.

There are not many in libraries to date who have staked out this new medium of communication and cultural expression as an area of curatorial expertise, and the research community is the poorer for it. But specialists there will be, just as there were specialists in rare books or in film long before people became rare book librarians or film curators. By and large those experts emerged from within the collecting community—academics and amateurs alike—and chances are that pattern will hold in the digital realm. We already see an enthusiastic community of gamesters who are actively collecting and emulating computer games, expert in the hardware of the 1980s, their monitors and processing speeds and special acoustical peculiarities, each feature intrinsic to the "authentic" game experience. We also see digital artists declaring their intentions when creating a digital work so that it can be recreated or reexperienced in the future in what they declare to be an authentic manner.

It is true that a number of hallmarks of special collections as we currently understand the term will disappear in the digital realm. Such things as rarity, uniqueness, or content fixity will have little meaning in the collecting landscape. But other aspects of special collections that are familiar from the analog world will be encountered in the digital as well, such things as the quirkiness and heterogeneity of source materials, the sheer abundance of unpublished, unedited, and unmediated expression available on the Web, and the (often bewildering) proliferation of versions that must somehow be assessed for relative merit before acquisition. There will be
genres that disappear and others that replace them. What will become of road maps in the 2020s when every automobile is manufactured with a Global Positioning System?

Authenticity will continue to be a concept that has special significance in libraries and in special collections libraries in particular. Libraries are and will continue to be relied upon to provide information that is authentic and to represent to its users in a transparent way the provenance of that information so the patron can simply relax and trust the source. Often, in the mind of the researcher, the library makes a warrant (implicit) of the authenticity of an information source simply by acquiring it. The role that libraries will play in the digital realm will build on this most crucial identity of libraries as trusted sources of expertise on the quality and value of information, not on their convenience or market niche. Libraries risk losing that identity if they fail to develop curatorial expertise for the variety of digital genres that are emerging.

As noted above, there are many in the technical and curatorial communities who are addressing the issues of digital authenticity that arise from the question of whether or not a digital object is what it purports to be. There will be in due course experts that will make the world safe for reasonable assumptions about the evidentiary value of digital objects. There will be ways for a future Sherlock Holmes to investigate the details of files and bit streams and codes that reveal a good deal about the history of a particular file since its creation.

The subjective nature of an authentic item may well turn out to be the hardest challenge to grapple with in the digital realm. There are psychologists studying human-computer interactions and neuroscientists discovering the physics, chemistry, and biology of human memory, learning, and emotion. They will play important roles in shaping how our information technologies are developed and used. But who will collect, curate, and preserve the artifacts of our uses of information technologies? Who will be responsible for shaping and developing the historical record of human creativity and activity in digital formats? Who will keep alive the values of the special collections community in the digital realm if not the collectors and curators who presently make up that community?

Librarians and curators can begin this important work by forming partnerships with those who are presently creating, curating, and collecting digital objects. Such partnerships may begin on campuses where humanists, social scientists, and researchers in the physical and life sciences are building large-scale digital resources, ranging from thematic research collections, such as the Blake Archive at the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities (Eaves et al., 2001), to collections of medical images of historical and clinical, as well as research, significance. Special collections librarians should also reach out to the various technical, scientific, and commercial communities who develop hardware and software or produce
and market digital content. There are numerous research universities and institutions that host advanced computing centers, often well funded by the federal government and hard at work on fundamental computer science issues that directly affect the creation, management, and persistence of digital objects over time. There are in addition many campus administrations that seek out and encourage mutually productive relationships with technology firms in the forefront of research and development. Those relationships should and must extend beyond science and mathematical departments to the humanities and the libraries that support humanistic inquiry. Given how rapidly digital information technologies are changing, there is little time to waste. The precious incunabula of the digital age that will be cherished and studied tomorrow will not endure long unless they are collected and curated today.

REFERENCES


Afterword

Terry Belanger

On 16 December 1991, I gave the seventh Sol M. Malkin Lecture in Bibliography on “The Future of Rare Book Libraries” at the School of Library Service (SLS), Columbia University.” (In assessing this honor, bear in mind that I am the person principally responsible for selecting Malkin Lecturees.) The Book Arts Press published the first six Malkin Lectures as separate pamphlets, most of them elegantly designed and printed by the Stinehour Press—but not mine: The Trustees of Columbia University closed their SLS at the end of the 1991–92 academic year; on the day I gave the Malkin Lecture, I contented myself by putting its text onto ExLibris, the (then new) electronic bulletin board, and I moved on to deal with other matters.

There has been some continuing interest in the lecture in the dozen years since it was first given. In 2002, I reprised it at UCLA and at Rare Book School in Charlottesville, with commentary—with the result that I am now receiving requests for both lecture and commentary. It seems sensible to put both into print now: accordingly, here follows the original 1991 lecture (as delivered except for the removal of a few topical comments), followed by a commentary, and—experience teaches me nothing—accompanied by some current prognostications on the future of rare book libraries, much enriched by my reading of the articles in this issue of Library Trends.

1991 Lecture

According to the Chinese lunar calendar, we are just now coming to the end of the Year of the Goat (hold that thought, please). For me, however, 1991 has been the year of the Crystal Ball.

In February of this year, I gave a lecture entitled “Reflections by the Captain of the Iceberg” to the Colophon Club of San Francisco in which I
made various prognostications regarding events in the rare book world during the next ten years. This lecture will be published in a few months by the Bibliographical Society of London as the coda to a volume of essays celebrating the centenary of the Society.

Then in March of this year, at a conference in Iowa organized by Timothy Barrett to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the introduction of papermaking into the United States, I gave a talk which I was asked to repeat in September at the Madison, Wisconsin, "Whither the Book?" conference organized by Barbara Tetenbaum: my title there was "The Future of the Book (If Any)." This talk will appear in print either in the proceedings of the Wisconsin conference or (if those proceedings are not published separately) then most likely in W. Thomas Taylor’s new journal, *Bookways*.

Last month, I gave a Hanes Lecture at the University of North Carolina on "Education for Books as Physical Objects," and I read a revised version of this paper, in which I had a fair amount to say about the future of rare book librarianship, a week later at the Houghton Library at Harvard; this lecture will eventually be published by North Carolina. [2003: None of these lectures was ever published.] I was honored to have been invited to deliver the 1991 Hanes Lecture; I have fewer reasons for pride on being invited to deliver this, the 1991 Malkin Lecture, given the composition of the selection committee. If I have no reason for self-congratulation on being invited to speak to you tonight, nevertheless I am pleased to have the opportunity to round off my collection of 1991 FutureSpeaks with a meditation on "The Future of Rare Book Libraries."

There are few better ways of making a fool of yourself than by trying to predict the future. In 1965, the political scientist Karl Deutsch was asked to speculate about life in the year 2000, then thirty-five years away. His assignment, he said, was like being asked to talk about the year 1800 from the vantage point of the year 1765 (predict the coming of steam power and the effects of industrialization, the revolutions in France and America, and the rise of mass armies), or to talk about the year 1900 from the vantage point of the year 1865 (predict the use of electricity as a source of energy and the development of the internal combustion engine, the rise of labor unions, and the high-water mark of imperialism and colonialism) (Deutsch, 1967, p. 659).

But if predicting the future is a foolhardy undertaking, it is not always an impossible one; and the exercise is a potentially useful and possibly essential mechanism for dealing with areas of concern in which rapid change is occurring.

I am convinced that rare book libraries both in the United States and worldwide are in fact at the beginning of a succession of cataclysmic transformations. The most important of these changes will be caused by the increasing disinclination of most general research libraries over the next several decades to continue to maintain large, permanent collections of paper-based books of any sort, rare or non-rare.
This is not to predict that research libraries are going to go entirely out of the codex book business, but rather to say that they will increasingly look upon their current book stock as a convenience collection, to be used and eventually disposed of without remorse. Much of the paper-based information we use at present is already generated from electronic originals owned by publishers and by them constantly updated, corrected, expanded, improved, and regularly republished in paper-based form for the use of purchasers in a handy codex format. In the future, readers are increasingly going to have direct online access to electronic text and data files containing the materials they require; and increasingly, they will perceive that they do not ever need and do not ever want access in printed form to the bulk of this material—a circumstance already routinely the case with users of large online databases. The big change is yet to come, because most journals and monographs are not yet available to their end-users in machine-readable form. But soon enough they will be; and then, there go the stacks.

I do not mean to suggest that our descendants are going to be doing all of their reading from CRT screens; it is already very easy to make a convenient printed hard copy version from texts accessible in machine-readable form, and it is becoming easier and cheaper to do so all the time. But the more likely the master text is machine-based rather than paper-based, the more likely that paper copies are going to be used and viewed as the temporary physical manifestations of a permanent electronic ideal. We’re already used to this idea: when we buy a paperback copy of (say) a Hawthorne novel in an airport bookshop to read on a long plane ride in case we don’t like the movie, it’s unlikely that we’re ever going to form much of an emotional relationship with the particular copy of the paperback we’ve just bought. We may well have another and better printed or better edited copy at home or in the institutional library we generally use. The paperback we just bought at the airport serves an immediate purpose and (if it is brought home at all) is consigned to a back bedroom, or a weekend house, or donated to the public library’s annual sale, or eventually just tossed out: an object which had a purpose which it has now fully fulfilled. In no sense is the text of the Hawthorne novel endangered by our carelessness with the particular airport bookshop copy at hand. Expand this example to include more and more of the books published today, not only reference books but standard texts of all sorts and all ages. The scholarly press is full of news of massive projects to put into machine-readable form vast quantities of material ranging from the collected works of every poet mentioned in the *New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* to the entire corpus of the literature of Latin and Greek antiquity.

Paper-based printed texts, especially as regards the current monographic literature, continue at present to be indispensable; but every year from now on a little more of that literature will be available online, and every year more and more of us will be using it in that form. It seems inevitable that
soon enough the texts of practically everything that anybody is interested in, new or old, poetry or prose, popular or arcane, boring or interesting, English or Sanskrit, is going to be available online, the more so because of the simplicity of the technology involved. The equipment necessary to convert a printed paper-based text into machine-readable form is already relatively inexpensive, and the requisite technology is becoming constantly cheaper and ever more ubiquitous. Author, subject, genre, period, and other special-interest groups are forming everywhere (online, of course!), and it seems entirely likely that (for example) every major edition of every work of every author of every age in whom there is any general or academic interest will be available in machine-readable form before very long—and if you grant this assumption, then I think that you must then also agree that the university library, already changing quickly at the moment, is going to change much more quickly still in the near future. Indeed, university libraries are already under every kind of pressure to convert their paper-based holdings into machine-readable form; over the long or possibly even the medium haul, they cannot afford the cost of maintaining ever-growing collections of objects which require separate cataloging and physical preparation, separate housing, separate housecleaning and preservation procedures, and separate access conventions.

These changes in general research libraries will have an enormous impact on the future of rare book libraries. Until not so long ago, a library's rare books have differed from the library's other books simply in degree: rare books are more valuable, or more fragile, or more scarce, or more brittle, or more something than regular books, but still measured along the same scale. General libraries have always been interested in the contents of books whereas rare book libraries are more especially concerned with the container in which those contents are to be found; but they're all books, the same elements at both ends of the spectrum.

What is going to happen to rare book libraries when the general research libraries to which they are connected begin to lose interest in storing large numbers of paper-based books, new or not so new, in their stacks? General libraries have in fact been preparing themselves for moving out of the codex book storage business for many decades, as one substitute mechanism after another has emerged and become cheap enough for widespread use. The increasingly pervasive availability of texts reformatted in electronic form will tip the balance. As the use of information derived from machine-readable sources accelerates in general research libraries, a gulf will widen between them and their rare book departments, since almost by definition the contents of rare book libraries do not consist of substitutes but of the real McCoy—books valuable as objects because of their age, the circumstances of their manufacture, their beauty, their associations with former owners, their annotations or other interesting signs of use, the nonrepro-
ducible quality of their design or their illustrations or their bindings—valuable as objects, as something you can pick up and hold in your hands.

General libraries are beginning to see rare book libraries as something increasingly different from themselves, to think of rare book libraries rather as museums whose patrons tend more to look at books than actually read them; and, while the place of museums in our culture in general is a well-established one, their place on academic campuses and within general research libraries is not so well established: many educational institutions are going to become increasingly dubious about the appropriateness of maintaining museums of the book on their campuses. Indeed, I think that many thoughtful general research library administrators are already uneasy about the resources required for the adequate care and feeding of their rare book departments and that they wonder whether the activities of such departments still fit under the umbrella of the services appropriately provided by the libraries for which they are responsible. In any event, and whether or not library administrators are now interested in this matter, it is certain that, soon enough, senior university administrators are going to be fascinated by it, and for a simple, compelling reason.

You will have heard: universities are short of money these days, seemingly worse than ever. The reasons for the shortage are many and various; they are as close as the pages of this morning’s newspaper. State and local governments, themselves strapped for money, have less to give the universities they support; in the private sector, expenses are continuing to rise faster than income, despite relentlessly steady tuition hikes. In university libraries both public and private, the situation is grim at the moment, and getting steadily worse. Research libraries continue to need to furnish services over a constantly widening range while being provided, at least relatively speaking, with constantly decreasing resources with which to do so. Over the past two decades, for instance, libraries have had to open up enormous wedges in their budget pies to pay for automation; very few institutions enlarged their library’s share of the total budget in order to pay for these increased costs. Similarly, libraries are providing various sorts of online services unheard of twenty years ago; they have been relatively unsuccessful in finding new sources of money with which to pay for these services, and the result is poverty all around.

This problem is not a new one; academic and research libraries have been grimly aware for a long time of their inability to keep up with the increase of human knowledge. They have aggressively engaged in networking and resource-sharing activities designed to help them cope with increased responsibilities coupled with decreased funding; but the resources available to them have by now shrunk to a point where rare book departments within larger, general research libraries are having to shoulder a much greater share of the burden than has up to now been generally true.
This has not until very recently been generally so; throughout the 1970s and most of the 1980s, rare book units have more often than not tended to be protected from overall library budget and staff cuts; library directors have given their rare book operations most-favored-nation status, perhaps in part because rare books are attractive for enhancing the library’s public relations base on campus. Moreover, directors tend to like the parties, the festivities, and the other excitement that rare book departments can generate: an exhibition opening is easier to celebrate than the acquisition of a new circulation system or the implementation of changes in an online catalog. Budget cuts in university libraries have now been so severe for so long, however, that rare book departments, too, are feeling the pain.

I want to quote to you from a letter I received a couple of weeks ago from a former student of mine who is Curator of Rare Books on the flagship campus of an institution generally thought to be one of the better American western state universities (I have changed certain information to disguise the identity of the student and the institution, but I have not altered any of the student’s substantive comments):

You may [he writes] have heard some of the fiscal horrors that are being visited upon us by the governor and the state legislators. The library is particularly hard hit, and this has encouraged our director to wield his battle axe, particularly because the position of Head of Special Collections is vacant, and thus there is no one around to object to what he is doing. What he is doing is dismantling Special Collections; he has already uprooted the Russian studies collection; the curator will probably be turned into a regular services librarian. My job is to go; he has told me not to count on my job to continue after next year. Rare books will be dumped on our state historical collection, the literary manuscripts on the University Archives. These are both departments for which there is a mandate to maintain them, otherwise he might be tempted to close Archives as well. The position of Head of Special Collections will be eliminated.

None of this is to save money; that is only the ostensible reason. This is all politics, the director working desperately to save himself and his position, since he has had a great deal of public criticism for some bad decisions. In the short term it may possibly do him some good; in the long run it will ruin the University’s claim to be a research institution. The VIP’s at this institution who make the decisions are all hard core scientists; they care very little about the humanities and are perfectly ready to sell all the rare books to the first dealer who shows up on the doorstep.

Note that my former student attributes the decline of his rare book department not so much to lack of money as to changing priorities within his institution. A shrewd characterization: it’s not simply that university libraries cannot afford to run rare book operations any more; rather, it’s that increasingly they don’t want to. In this attitude, they are joined by an ever-increasing number of metropolitan public libraries: this month’s American
Libraries reports that portions of the rare book collection at the Kansas City, Missouri, Public Library will go up for auction early next year ("Rare Books up for Grabs in Kansas City," 1991, p. 1018).

The library's director comments, "This approach will result in the materials being placed in collections where they will be appropriately preserved and any research value fully realized, while yielding a potentially significant exchange on these assets for the library's endowment fund."

We must remember that for most readers, the change from paper-based information sources to electronically based information sources will be a great improvement over the present situation; information will be cheaper and more widely and easily available to them in more places; once acquired, it will be easier to manipulate: to copy, excerpt, index, translate, store, and retrieve. We must not let whatever personal affection we have for books as physical objects blind us to the fact that most persons are, when push comes to shove, quite free of emotional relationships with the physical containers by which their information needs are met.

The end of the book as physical object in libraries academic and public is not quite yet in sight. At least in the foreseeable future, it is unlikely that all machine-readable texts will invariably work better than any paper-based ones. Printed books are going to continue to be produced for a good long time to come, especially those with complicated formats; top-of-the-line firms (like the Stinehour Press) which specialize in illustrated books will prosper. Still, slowly but surely we are beginning to view codex books in two, quite different ways: on the one hand as convenient and disposable printouts, and on the other hand as art or museum objects. Libraries are susceptible to fashion; what one library does, another library will imitate—in general, research libraries are a lot more like each other than they are different from each other. Just as soon as the technology allows—or perhaps a bit sooner—trend-setting research libraries are going to go out of the permanent paper storage business, and the great majority of other libraries will follow them, lickety split. Most research libraries will not want to maintain much more than convenience collections of paper-based materials, and they will begin the substantial deaccession of their present book holdings in successive decimations which will include at least many of their rare books. We are about to enter a period in which we shall see the wholesale destruction of institutionally based rare book collections.

Not everything will go: an institution is likely to retain in their original physical formats materials which are part of its own history. Books notable for their physical beauty or their sentimental appeal will have a good chance of retention. Books which are particularly good examples of their physical genres or formats will routinely be retained: books in original bindings and in fresh condition, for example. A local connection or relevance will become more and more important as a measure by which to determine the retention or discarding of paper-based books; the focus of special collections will
more and more follow regional lines. Professionally trained rare book librarians are themselves going to have a major role to play in the downsizing of their collections, for they are the persons best trained to make the decisions on what books should be retained in their original formats and what books should be deaccessioned. In the more or less immediate future (that is to say, during the next decade) rare book librarians will be asked to contract their on-campus book stack space. They will thus need to establish classes of books which can be sent to remote storage. Over the longer haul, they will have to set up criteria for separating their rare book sheep from their rare book goats, permanently deaccessioning a great many sheep, retaining a modest number of locally relevant goats. (Remember? 1991 is the Year of the Goat.) Many of these deaccession decisions cannot intelligently be made by a single institution in ignorance of what other institutions are doing along the same lines; if we don’t work together, then we’ll all tend to save the same classes of materials, and we’ll all tend to throw out the same classes of materials. Few copies of the Shakespeare First Folio are going to be sent off to a sanitary landfill; but practically all copies of practically every nonillustrated periodical are at risk, as is the great ruck of just plain, nonsplendid printed books from virtually all places and periods, especially if they are in poor physical condition.

Physical bibliographers are well aware that the story a book has to tell does not end with its text. At this podium on a similar occasion exactly a year ago, Tom Tanselle eloquently set forth the ways in which a book and a work, the container and its contents, are different. In his 1990 Malkin Lecture (published as Libraries, Museums, and Reading, 1991), he described the current national enthusiasm for what is called preservation microfilming, and he argued that the originals should be retained even after they have been filmed. Microfilming as a preservation mechanism has great limitations. We can with absolute confidence expect that our ability to reformat library materials will continue to improve. The list of reformatting devices employed by libraries during the past century is a long one: photography, the photostat, microfilm, cheap offset lithography, xerography, video disc technology, the electronic digitization of texts and now of images: Microfilming, after all, is simply one of the chronological steps along the long preservation way. Later generations of students will always need access to the originals in order to derive new levels of information from them as the feasibly available technology improves. It is the responsibility of rare book librarians to see that suitable copies do survive. Rare book librarians must take the responsibility for devising regional, national, and international plans for ensuring the survival of representative examples of the widest possible range of materials retained in their original physical format. They will not be able to save much of anything in its original format; but they must find ways to save something of everything.

Rare book librarians can, and must, do more than this. They must
embrace a new role as curators of museum objects and expand that role. There isn’t room for many museums of the book as such either in this country or worldwide; there is, however, far more room for museums of the history of communication. We need to work toward the creation of institutions concerned with the history of the communication of ideas whether through books, printed and manuscript, or through graphic images, or through film and video, or through digitized images and sounds—in short, we need to take as our province and responsibility the history of words and—and especially—the history of the physical entities which now serve or which have served to transmit those words.

This mission overlaps that of art museums but only to a limited extent: by and large, art museums are not generally concerned with the history of words as such. There is an overlap between book museums and art museums in the area of visual images, but the redundancy is one that we’re already used to and know how to deal with; you are as likely to find a copy of an old engraving or other print in a large research library as in a large art museum, and the chances indeed are that the library will have cataloged the print better (and thus make it more accessible) than the museum has, especially if the print originally came out of a book.

By no means all universities are going to get out of the rare book business, even if (if I am correct) most institutions now possessing rare book collections are going to downsize them, and many more are, indeed, going to leave the field altogether. Rare book librarians are going to have to cope with the fact that their institutional bases and funding sources are quite likely to shift, and they are going to have to be increasingly adroit at finding new homes for their collections and new justifications for their retention in their original physical formats.

Institutions change and adapt, or they fail: I remind you that the idea of college and university collapse is not a new one in this country; G. Edward Evans has suggested that at least as many colleges and universities in this country have failed as have survived during the last three centuries. Remember please that our society has historically tended to be quite unsentimental in its insistence that one generation make way for another—perhaps this is nowhere more clear than in New York City, where the life expectancy of physical structures tends to be very limited indeed. Vast numbers of old books have thus far been acquired by and housed in our nation’s libraries, first, because the best way to get access to the contents of those books was by owning actual copies, and, second, because the cost of maintaining those books in their original formats was thought to be bearable. But now there is another way, and we must deal with the changes the new way will create.

You may be thinking that these changes are too drastic to occur quickly. But remember what happened to wood engravers between about 1870 and about 1890, a twenty-year period during which the photographically
generated photo-engraving virtually wiped them out as a profession. Remember that, in 1900, almost nobody had access to an automobile in this country; less than a generation later, almost everybody did. Change can happen quickly; we have to guard against the belief that things will change, but not too much, and not too fast.

My colleague on the School of Library Service faculty, Jessica Gordon, likes to point out that one of the chief difficulties in predicting the future lies not so much in getting the facts right as in predicting an accurate timeline; in the 1960s, for example, it was predicted that computers would put people out of work, something that did not happen to any particular extent either in the 1960s or even in the 1970s, though we were getting used to the notion. In the 1980s, when computers did begin to put people out of work, the idea was by then a commonplace one, and it was accepted without much social unrest as a fact of life.

Tonight I have predicted a future in which a new world of electronically generated information will supersede our present world of print-based information, but I may very well have my timelines wrong; these changes may not happen as soon or as much over the next thirty years or so as I think they are going to. O Lord, you too may be thinking to yourself, make me wholly machine-readable—but not yet. But as you pray, please bear in mind the possibility that though my timelines may be wrong, my conclusions are probably not: sooner or later, the book is going to go the way of the horse.

2003 COMMENTARY

In 1991, what we now call the World Wide Web was only just coming into being, and I unaware of even its existence until 1994, when Mosaic (the predecessor of Netscape) made its first public appearance. In my Malkin Lecture, I show at best a modest understanding of the extent which electronic communications would invade academic (and indeed all) life, and I greatly underestimate the extent to which the digitization of original texts and images (rare and otherwise) would become a practical imperative. This being said, I think that the substance of my 1991 predictions are still relevant. The codex book is going the way of the horse: a noble beast, but one increasingly used for recreational purposes, decreasingly used elsewhere.

In 1991, my concern was with the continuing role of special collections within research libraries. In their articles, both Prochaska and Traister worry about this relationship, both of them fearing the progressive marginalization of special collections. My own current fears are centered on the long-range role of research libraries as a whole and not simply with the special collections within them. Special collections units have almost always had to argue for an adequate share of their parent library's resources. At some academic institutions, the news is good, as Kelsey demonstrates in his article on the new Elmer L. Andersen Library at the University of Minnesota. In general, however, most of even the largest and most prominent Ameri-
can research university libraries are trying to cope (*pace* Hewitt/Panitch) with special collections materials that increase at a much swifter pace than either the staff or the physical space necessary to handle them. And if institutional priorities de-emphasize all traditional libraries in the future, special collections will, even more than usual, be just one more mouth in an increasingly hungry nest.

Keep an eye on the nation’s independent research libraries: collectively, they know what they are about, with administrative and governance structures capable of reacting swiftly and effectively to change. Chaison argues the case convincingly in her account of the research collections at the American Antiquarian Society; her article may be taken as a case study, representative of the environment in many of the IRLA (and similar) libraries. Allen’s article points out that the holdings of these libraries are already of central importance. Independent research libraries are likely to be an increasingly important part of the rare book landscape, as they absorb materials given to them or otherwise acquired both from municipal public libraries and (as Saenger’s article suggests) from academic institutions no longer willing or able to retain various classes of special collections material.

All institutionally housed special collections of printed objects will be under increasing pressure in the coming decades to rationalize their holdings and to get rid of materials not directly in scope. The trading of rare materials between institutions should and will become much more common than at present, with participating parties simultaneously strengthening the collections they care most about and deaccessioning materials to which there is insufficient local commitment. Such rationalizations will not be able to absorb all of the nation’s unwanted rare books, however. Regional and national centers are going to be needed for special collections materials that have lost local support—and, finally, international centers. The care and feeding of rare books as physical objects will continue to be very expensive; these centers are most likely to avoid the Spartans’ fate at Thermopylae if, like today’s independent research libraries, they can convincingly define their collecting goals and objectives to the broadest possible publics.

Since 1991, the job market in rare books has deteriorated. My professional career has centered on education for rare books and special collections, both master’s level training (about 400 persons took one or more of my descriptive bibliography courses at Columbia University between 1971 and 1992; contributors to this issue De Stefano, Jones, Streit, and Traister are all survivors) and continuing education (since 1983, about 3,200 persons have attended one or more five-day courses at Rare Book School). I have attended RBMS preconferences without fail since my first one in 1974 (in Charlottesville: who knew?), and throughout this period have shown up at most of the major ABAA antiquarian book fairs. I have tried to stay in touch with former Columbia rare book program students (an endeavor made easier by the circumstance that Rare Book School functions as a sum-
winter camp for many of them). I have fairly frequent contact, one way or another, with a considerable number of rare book, manuscript, and special collections librarians currently at work in United States institutions.

In my thirty-plus years in the field, I have never encountered a job market like the present one. As I pointed out in 1991, entry-level professional positions in rare books and special collections libraries were beginning to dry up; since then, the pickings have continued to remain slim.

The imperative for rare book and special collections personnel to learn new skills has in general not diminished the necessity to retain the old ones. As Traister points out in his article, rare book librarians—more than ever—need to possess the basic reference skills needed to work (especially, but not only) with older materials. The article in this issue of Library Trends I find most interesting and important is Abby Smith’s excellent “Authenticity and Affect: When Is a Watch Not a Watch?” Smith addresses a central issue head-on: what should be preserved in special collections departments, whether artifactual or digital, and she speaks eloquently to the need for digitally literate curators, pointing out that the “precious incunabula of the digital age . . . will not endure long unless they are collected and curated today.”

But as I read the skills she convincingly lists as necessary for the special collections librarian of the future, I worry about finding paragons not only able but willing to take on digital duties while at the same time possessing the linguistic and historical cultural background to function effectively in a rare book environment; I have similar worries when I read the Streit/Browar article about fund-raising imperatives and De Stefano’s fascinating account of the skills needed by those concerned with moving-image collections. A desire to digitize is not a motive that currently attracts many persons to rare books; most people do not go into special collections work because of a passion for fund-raising. Many rare book librarians are tempted to respond to such imperatives by saying (or at least thinking): of course I can do that. The question is, do I want to—especially at the salary offered? Rare book and special collections librarians are well aware of their collective responsibility not to deprive the future of the past. Unfortunately, their level of institutional authority is almost invariably insufficient for them to fulfill this responsibility.

It nevertheless remains the case that the future of rare books as physical objects in this country depends to a vital extent on the quality of personnel attracted to the field of rare book and special collections librarianship. One of the most important tasks in front of the profession is to develop strategies by which competent persons are not only attracted to the field but are also given a reasonable opportunity to find work in it; the ARL initiatives Hewitt and Panitch describe at the end of their article are very welcome indeed.
REFERENCES


About the Contributors

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