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The Reading Room

a journal of special collections



an open-access scholarly publication focusing on special collections in a variety of settings including libraries, museums, historical societies and corporate environments.

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Volume 1, Issue 1

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The Reading Room: A Journal of Special Collections is a scholarly journal committed to providing current research and relevant discussion of practices in a special collections library setting. The Reading Room seeks submissions from practitioners and students involved with working in special collections in museums, historical societies, corporate environments, public libraries and academic libraries. Topics may include exhibits, outreach, mentorship, donor relations, teaching, reference, technical and metadata skills, social media, "Lone Arrangers", management and digital humanities. The journal features single-blind, peer-reviewed research articles and case studies related to all aspects of current special collections work.

Journal credits

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Cover photo: Lockwood Memorial Library main reading room at the University of Buffalo, circa 1935. Designed by noted Buffalo architect E.B. Green, this was the first true library for the University of Buffalo. It was renamed Charles D. Abbott Hall in 1977 and currently houses the University's Health Sciences Library, History of Medicine Collection, and Architecture & Planning Library.

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Editors Note

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *The Reading Room: A Journal of Special Collections*! We hope you share our enjoyment in our endeavor: to provide an open access and scholarly forum for all those working in, or with, special collections.

In this first issue, we're thrilled to bring you six articles that capture the diverse world of special collections:

- » Elizabeth N. Call and Matthew Baker assess the impact of American Protestant missionaries during the Armenian Genocide as documented in The Burke Library at Columbia and other repositories.
- » Elizabeth Knazook illuminates why 19th century books with original photographs are under-represented in special collections.
- » In celebration of our first issue, we include a roundtable discussion of five poets and their interpretation of the art and function of curation: Michael Basinski, Marie Elia, Nancy Kuhl, James Maynard, and Edric Mesmer.
- » Anne S.K. Turkos, Jason G. Speck, and Amanda K. Hawk share their successes and challenges in initiating the digitization of hundreds of football films at the University of Maryland.
- » The influence of political and historical events in Uruguay on the creation of the Simón Lucuix Río de la Plata Library and the circumstances of its accession by the University of Texas at Austin is investigated by María E. González.
- » Rose Sliger Krause's case study describes efforts at the Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture/Eastern Washington State Historical Society to offer researchers unified intellectual and physical access to archives and museum materials.

The creation and launch of a journal is no small task. Quite simply, this issue, and indeed the journal, would not exist without the efforts and support of a team of professionals. The editors are privileged to work with and thank the almost 100 peer

reviewers who contributed their expertise and time to this inaugural issue. To UB Libraries and the team at Scholastica: thank you for providing a sound basis for our fledgling venture. Without the technical skillfulness of Kristopher Miller and Don Gramlich, this online journal would still be sketched out on a legal pad. For their advice and unwavering encouragement throughout this entire process, we extend our utmost appreciation to Chris Hollister, Mike Basinski, and James Maynard. And to all of the authors who submitted articles and to you, our readers, our sincere thanks.

We are actively seeking partners and contributors at The Reading Room, and we invite you to consider submitting an article or serving as a peer reviewer. Additionally, we are soliciting images, particularly of reading rooms, for our next cover. Images should be a minimum 300 dpi and 8.5" x 11" in size. Questions and comments are always welcome. Please send all inquiries to thereadingroomjournal@gmail.com.

Whether as an author, reviewer, or reader, we hope you enjoy this issue of *The Reading Room*.

In appreciation,



Molly Poremski
Editor-in-chief



Amy Vilz
Editor-in-chief

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Philanthropy, Faith, and Influence: Documenting Protestant Missionary Activism during the Armenian Genocide

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Abstract

American Protestant missionaries played important political and cultural roles in the late Ottoman Empire in the period before, during, and after the Armenian genocide. They reported on events as they unfolded and were instrumental coordinating and executing relief efforts by Western governments and charities. The Burke Library's Missionary Research Library, along with several other important collections at Columbia and other nearby research repositories, holds a uniquely rich and comprehensive body of primary and secondary source materials for understanding the genocide through the lens of the missionaries' attempts to document and respond to the massacres.

Keywords: Armenian genocide, Turkey, missionaries, Near East, WWI, Middle East Christianity

Philanthropy, Faith, and Influence: Documenting Protestant Missionary Activism during the Armenian Genocide

Elizabeth N. Call and Matthew Baker, Columbia University

April 2015 marks the centenary of the beginning of the Armenian genocide, in which an estimated 1 to 1.5 million members of the indigenous and ancient Christian minority in what is now eastern Turkey, along with many co-religionists from the Assyrian and Greek Orthodox communities, perished through forced deportation or execution (Kevorkian, 2011). American Protestant missionaries had been present in the Ottoman Empire since the early nineteenth century and were instrumental in shaping Western awareness and response to both the Hamidian massacres of the mid-1890s, in which an estimated 200,000 were killed, as well as the genocide of 1915-1923 (Kevorkian, 2011, p.11). Inspired by the evangelistic and millenarian zeal of the Second Great Awakening, the role and legacy of these missionaries is complex and contested, and a number of recent works have explored and tried to holistically understand their presence and significance (Makdisi, 2008; Nielssen et al., 2011; Stanley, 2003). In addition to their proselytizing labors, they reported, lobbied, authored books and pamphlets, and were key agents in an extraordinarily successful wartime fundraising effort in the aftermath of the genocide. Indeed, historian Suzanne E. Moranian has argued the Protestant missionaries were “the most critical figures in the relationship between the United States and the Armenians during the genocide era. They were unmatched in exerting influence and expertise in the Turkish field and on the American home front, as well as in the American policy, intellectual, and cultural circles” (Moranian, 2004, p. 185).



["Starving Armenia" poster], ca. 1915, Mission Research Library Pamphlet Collection, Armenian and Syrian Relief, folder 1894. Image courtesy of The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, one of Columbia University's Libraries, is home to the Missionary Research Library (MRL), an extensive and rich group of collections of primary and secondary source materials integral to understanding and interpreting the history, goals, significance, and legacy of missionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including their role in documenting and responding to the Armenian genocide.

Written from India by an American who was for
many years in Turkey, and who left there in ~~for Turkey,~~
July, 1915.

July 6, 1915.

~~My dear Dr. Barton:~~

As I was coming out from under the hands of the censor, I was asked to write to you, telling you something of the real situation in our part of the world. May I ask you, however, not to publish my name or that of any ~~Marash~~ missionary--not even the name of ~~Marash~~ or any of the places which I shall mention, as the censorship is so strict and terrible now that the mention of names brings us under suspicion at once. May I instance? ~~Dr. Merrill~~ and ~~Dr. Shepard~~ have been under such suspicion or ill-will that they have not been able to get a simple family letter through to their family members in America in months and the whole station of ~~Aintab~~ is under sufficient suspicion to prevent most of the letters they write you and Mr. ~~Peet~~ from reaching their destination. The reason, we feel quite certain, is a report on Moslem work which was sent to your rooms,--never dreaming that it would be published as it was,-- in which were mentioned the names Merrill, Shepard, and Aintab. ~~Marash~~ and Aintab both begged me to ask you to publish nothing except in the most general way, such as "interior of Turkey." We would much prefer that even in speaking you should not use names.

Another thing, we expect some of our personal friends may be sending us money through you. I have asked them to send it simply to the account of the missionary whom they wish to use it, for any such items as would indicate even that the state of poverty was known in the outside world or any letters indicating such, would be dangerous. I think this is not fancy, for we are quite sure that an especially long monthly statement from Mr. ~~Peet~~ was delayed by the censor for especial work on it, and so was not delivered to us for

[Letter to WW. Rockwell from Kate E. Ainslie], July, 1915, MRL 2: The Near East Relief Committee Records, series 1, box 3, folder 3. Image courtesy of The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Missionaries and the MRL

A word on the history of the MRL is necessary, both to describe a fascinating and often misunderstood collection and to provide important context for its Armenian and related materials. Today, the word "missionary" typically denotes a range of beliefs, activities, and attitudes, sometimes unfavorable: from imperialism and colonialism to religious exclusivism and cultural chauvinism. Many of these missionaries, however, also started schools, colleges,¹ hospitals, orphanages, managed philanthropic ventures, learned and described languages, customs, and places, and penned travelogues and proto-anthropological studies (Grabill, 1971; Moranian, 2004). Whatever

1. These include Constantinople Woman's College and what would later become the American University in Beirut.



"Mothering the Orphans of the Near East," n.d., MRL 2: The Near East Relief Committee Records, series 2, box 18, folder 18. Image courtesy of The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

one's view of the missionaries and their projects, they created, gathered, and maintained a unique and far-reaching record of people and places that in many cases would not otherwise exist, one which is of undeniable scholarly value in understanding the histories of the places they lived and worked, often for several generations.

The MRL was established by future Nobel Peace Laureate John R. Mott and opened in June 1914 with seed funding from John D. Rockefeller, Jr., following the 1910 World Missionary Conference (WMC) held in Edinburgh, Scotland. "World" was far more descriptive of the conference delegates' interests and aspirations than it was of its membership, which was almost entirely Western and Protestant in composition (Stanley, 2009, p. 12). It marked an important moment in the evolution of the Protestant missionary project, bridging a preceding century focused on "Christianizing" and the increasingly ecumenically-minded and pluralistic century that lay ahead.

Originally, the MRL was located at 25 Madison Avenue in New York City. The materials collected were made available for missionaries on furlough and in the field, those in missionary organizations or on mission boards, professors and scholars of missions, anthropologists, government officials, other libraries, and the general public. Materials collected by the library ranged from published pamphlets to archives of individual missionaries and institutional records. Comprising an ever-growing collection of materials from around the globe, the MRL recorded the context – historical, political, social, cultural, anthropological, medical, and educational – of mission "fields" in the early nineteenth through twentieth centuries.

In 1929, because of a lack of funding, the MRL was moved to the newly constructed Brown Tower at Union Theological Seminary at

120th Street and Broadway. Thanks to the stewardship of librarians such as Charles H. Fahs and Hollis W. Herring, the MRL continued to grow despite financial constraints. The library's minimal funding did eventually run out in 1976, at which time its collections were transferred to the Burke Library (Frame, 1998). What is referred to today as the MRL collections include 564 linear feet of archives of missionaries' papers and institutional records, hundreds of printed books, and more than 21,000 pamphlets. All of this material has been processed, and is available through CLIO, Columbia's online catalog, and through the library's archival finding aids. Taken as a whole, the MRL collections form a remarkably comprehensive record of missionary work in education, politics, philanthropy, health, and related fields, and of the places in which that work was conducted over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.



[Postcard], n.d., MRL 2: The Near East Relief Committee Records, series 2, box 18, folder 18. Image courtesy of The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

MRL and the Armenian Genocide

Several sets of resources from the MRL provide crucial information and insight concerning the events of 1915 and their aftermath, in particular, the American Constantinople Relief Committee Records, Mary Lewis Shedd Papers, Near East Relief (NER) Records, and the Missionary Research Pamphlet Collection.

The American Constantinople Relief Committee Records consist of the papers and records of the organization that was formed in 1912 to raise money for refugees in Turkey and surrounding areas. The Committee fell apart in 1914 due to questions concerning the secretary's fundraising practices. While this collection is fairly small,

it is of interest in researching the Armenian genocide in that it helps highlight how information about events in and around the region came to the United States in the years immediately preceding 1915. For example, there are many drafts of advertisements that were to be put into American newspapers soliciting donations, as well as letters describing the conditions in the region, how many Armenians and others were subject to disease due to overcrowding in the hospitals, the numbers of refugees, and accounts of buildings and property destroyed.

The Mary Lewis [Mrs. W.A.] Shedd Papers provide a valuable perspective as to how other communities in the region were affected during this period. Shedd and her husband William were Presbyterian missionaries in Persia, where William would later become United States Consul. The collection includes a typed copy of a journal kept by Mary Shedd while in Urumia from February 24, 1918 to October 3, 1918. On July 31, 1918, the Shedds were forced by the Ottoman Army to leave Urumia, along with thousands of Assyrian Christians. According to Shedd, the reason for this evacuation was a reaction to what has become known as the “March Days” or “March Events,” during which an estimated 12,000 Azerbaijanis and other Muslims were murdered in Baku, then part of the Russian Empire, between March 30 and April 2, 1918. While evacuating, William died of cholera, but the group was able to escape. On August 24, 1918, Mary reached Hamadan in Persia and estimates in her journal that around seven or eight thousand

WESTERN UNION
WEEK-END LETTER
THEO. N. VAIL, PRESIDENT

Form 2936

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 CONSTANTINOPLE
 WLT DWIGHT BIBLEHOUSE NEWYORK
 (DWIGHT CARE AMN BIBLE SOCY
 BIBLE HOUSE ASTOR PLACE)

FOR REPETITION OF WORDS OR OTHER INFORMATION CONCERNING THIS CABLE TELEPHONE 6455 STUYVESANT
 DEC 22, 1913

INVESTIGATIONS BY OUR COMMITTEE ALREADY WORKING SHOW GREAT DESTRUCTION OF VILLAGES IN THRACE ESPECIALLY THOSE BETWEEN RAILWAY AND SEA WHERE ARMIES HAVE MARCHED DESTRUCTION COMPLETE ALL MEANS LIVELIHOOD NOW GONE PEOPLE IN DESPERATE NEED OF FOOD AND FUEL TO CARRY THEM THROUGH WINTER TURKISH GOVERNMENT HELPING TURKISH POPULATION LIMITED EXTENT LITTLE AID GIVEN CHRISTIANS ENDEAVORING SUPPORT MODERATE RELIEF WORK THROUGH WINTER AND NEED AT LEAST TWO THOUSAND POUNDS FURTHER DOING ALL POSSIBLE FOR BULGARIA BUT THIS OPENS ANOTHER DISTRESSFULLY NEEDY FIELD .

PEET. 145 AM

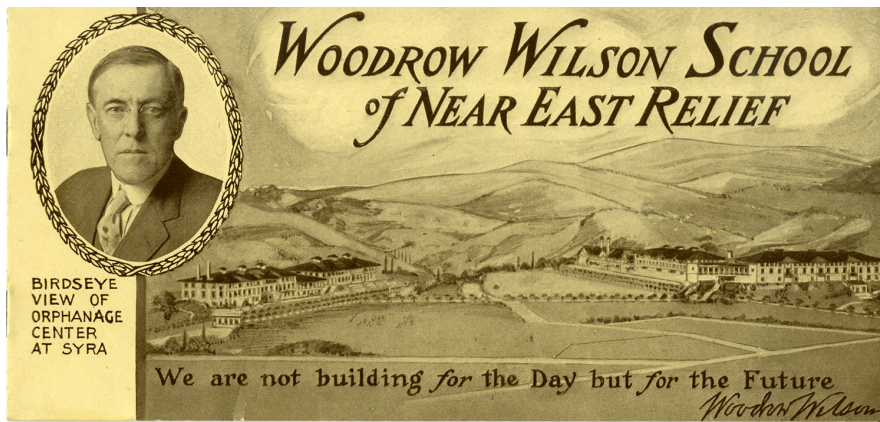
[Telegram from W.W. Peet to Dwight Care], December 22, 1913, MRL 2: American Constantinople Relief Committee Records, box 1, folder 1. Image courtesy of The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

had died, been killed, or were taken prisoner on the journey she and her group had completed. Mary continued on as a missionary and in 1922 published a book about her husband's life, *The Measure of a Man: The Life of William Ambrose Shedd, Missionary to Persia*. Her own journal has also been published as *The Urumia Exodus: More Leaves from the War Journal of a Missionary in Persia*, but the original provides a number of additional details and entries not included in the published version.

The largest and most significant of the MRL Armenian Genocide collections are the Near East Relief Committee Records, 1904-1950. This organization was established as the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR) in 1915 in response to the Armenian genocide, and in 1919 became the Near East Relief (NER) Committee. Led by James L. Barton and Cleveland H. Dodge, NER raised an estimated \$117,000,000 and provided relief in the form of food, clothing, and shelter for refugees, as well as building schools, hospitals, and orphanages (Barton, 1930). That Dodge was a close friend and confidant of Woodrow Wilson, and the organization would be directed by the likes of William H. Taft and Franklin D. Roosevelt, gives some indication of its influence. Protestant missionaries were integral to the distribution of aid, a testimony to their political reach during the genocide period and to the cultural significance of mainline Protestantism during the first half of the twentieth century. Moranian, developing the point made above, notes that “it was the problem of relief [of the Armenians in 1915] that brought piety into overt partnership with the political, and elevated the missionaries to a position of influence in Washington. In only a few years, through sophisticated fund-raising techniques, the American Protestants eventually created a multimillion-dollar business of Near-East aid” (Moranian, 2004, p. 192). Near East Relief was in many ways the forerunner of later initiatives such as the Peace Corps and USAID.

The NER holdings consist of more than 10 linear feet, subdivided into 2 series based on the source of the material. The first series are items collected by William Walker Rockwell, professor and librarian at Union Theological Seminary. It contains correspondence, notes, reports, cablegrams, clippings, pamphlets, and a range of administrative documents pertaining to the experience of Armenian communities and refugees and to the work of ACASR/NER. Many of these vividly convey the urgency of the situation and the works undertaken to alleviate the suffering of the Armenians, Assyrians, and others. The second series is that of Talcott Williams, son of missionaries to the Ottoman Empire and first Director of Columbia's Pulitzer School of Journalism.² These contain bulletins, reports, minutes, pamphlets, maps, posters and other

2. Some of Williams' papers are included in the Columbia School of Journalism records, and others are at the University of Delaware.



“Woodrow Wilson School of Near East Relief,” n.d., MRL 2: The Near East Relief Committee Records, series 2, box 18, folder 18. Image courtesy of The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

important records of NER’s work and outreach. In 1930, Near East Relief became the Near East Foundation, a Syracuse-based organization whose relief and development work continues to the present day. The Near East Relief records are essential in understanding how the genocide was documented and addressed by Western organizations and governments, as well an important record of the terrible events as they unfolded.

The MRL also includes numerous books and pamphlets relevant to the documentation of the massacres, and in particular to the raising of funds and support for those affected. A brief selection of titles provides a sense of their emphasis: *The Deportation of the Armenians Described from Day to Day by a Kind Woman Somewhere in Turkey* (by Rockwell); *Armenia, the Word Spells Tragedy*; *The Most Terrible Winter the World has Ever Known: More than a Million now Starving in Bible Lands*. These printed materials provide a clear sense of the public relations and outreach efforts that were underway and offer a fuller picture of the shorter and longer format methods used to communicate the realities of the massacres and the plight of survivors.

Since 2012, materials from the MRL have been the most requested collections by researchers in the Burke Library’s Special Collections Reading Room. In a recent survey conducted by one of the library’s archivists, among researchers who have used materials from MRL collections between 2011 and 2014, several reported using the Near East Relief Committee Records in their work, including Ph.D. dissertations, course research papers, a biography, and a full length documentary (Kamsler, 2015). Other sections of the MRL are consulted with similar frequency, in particular from China and Africa. Recent series such as Brill’s *Studies in Christian Mission* and Eerdmans’ *Studies in the History of Christian Mission* further underscore the ongoing scholarly interest in missions-related resources.

Other Resources at Columbia and Beyond

In addition to the Burke Library's holdings, Columbia University Libraries are home to a number of materials of use in understanding the Armenian genocide, including the Columbia Armenian Oral History Archive, which contains 142 detailed interviews with genocide survivors, and the Irene Kliszus papers, a small collection relating to the Kliszus family and to the experiences of Assyrian Christians. Columbia also houses the records of Robert College and the American College for Girls, two of the many institutions started by Protestant missionaries that played important roles in the political and cultural life in Turkey before, during, and after the genocide.

Nearby institutions also hold very significant collections relevant to the genocide and to the study of missionaries' role in the Near and Middle East. Yale holds both the well-known Day Missions Collection and the bulk of John Mott's papers. Harvard's Houghton Library hold the very extensive records of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, arguably the most important missions group in the nineteenth century, in the Near East and elsewhere. New York City's Rockefeller Archive Center charts the work of Near East Relief's successor organization into the 1960s.

Conclusion: Translating the MRL

The activism of Protestant missionaries in the early twentieth century created a body of evidence pertaining to the Armenian genocide that is of considerable importance in understanding that difficult and important period in the history of the Near/Middle East. The same holds true for other areas of the world, including East and South Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Though proselytization may have often been a goal, just as often the intentions were also philanthropic or what we might now call "humanitarian" and can't be mapped neatly onto any single ideological grid. Whatever one's final view of missionaries' work and legacy, and of the biases they brought to their various enterprises, they amassed key – in many cases unique – documentation of events that continue to be of keen interest to scholars and researchers from many disciplinary perspectives. The holdings of the Burke Library's MRL collections clearly confirm a fact that librarians and archivists know well, and which shapes the curation and stewardship of our collections: that whatever the origins and past purposes of documents, taking care of the sources that survive is integral to responsible remembering and to skillfully interpreting and integrating the past into the work of the present.

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Collecting Nineteenth-Century Books with Photographs

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Abstract

In the years before photographs could be reproduced in ink alongside letterpress text, some publishers experimented with photographic illustration by pasting original photographs into books. Most of these books went unnoticed in library collections and used bookseller shops until a sudden interest in photography and photographic history in the 1970s turned the attentions of librarians, scholars, curators, and collectors to the treasure trove of historical photography that could be found between the pages of a book. Since that time, only a few institutions with an interest in photography have attempted to identify and promote these materials, despite the fact that these books may reside in the stacks of any institution with holdings dating back to the nineteenth century. This article considers the reasons why this may have happened, primarily by examining the attitudes toward collecting nineteenth-century photographically illustrated books that emerged in the late twentieth century.

Keywords: photographically illustrated books, nineteenth-century photography, collections management

Collecting Nineteenth-Century Books with Photographs

Elizabeth Knazook, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario

In 1974, Lucian Goldschmidt and Weston Naef curated an exhibition at the Grolier Club in New York of nineteenth-century books illustrated with real photographs. These were not one-off examples of personal album-making or extra-illustration, but published works in which original photographs and early photomechanical prints had been pasted or bound into the text, imaginatively bridging the gap between the invention of photography and the later introduction of the halftone process that made it possible to print a photograph directly onto a page of a book. The exhibition revealed a rich store of historical photographs hiding between the covers of nineteenth-century books, just when the collector market for photography was expanding rapidly. Christie's and Sotheby's had begun offering photography at auction, museums were actively building and exhibiting photographic collections, and among academic institutions, a critical discourse around photographs as aesthetic objects emerged. It is into this environment that the Grolier Club exhibition, *The Truthful Lens* appeared, and it was quickly followed by a stream of exhibitions and bibliographic publications devoted to 'the new incunabula.'¹ Julia van Haften (1977), Van Deren Coke (1977), Goldschmidt and Naef (1980), Helmut Gernsheim (1984), and Robert Holden (1988) all published lists that proved some significant historical photographs could be found in nineteenth-century books.²

Despite this initial wave of excitement over the treasures found in public and private libraries, comparatively little has been done to collect and describe these works in recent years. This is peculiar, not simply because photography has continued to grow in importance both on

1. Many scholars from this period equate the introduction of photography into publishing with Gutenberg's invention of moveable type. Helmut Gernsheim (1984) and Stuart Bennett (1979) even borrow the term *incunabula*, usually applied to the earliest books printed on a press, to refer to photographically illustrated books and early photographic literature. Bennett specifically uses *incunabula* to refer to photographically illustrated books published prior to 1860 (p. 164).

2. This is not a complete list of authors who published lists of photographically illustrated books, but rather a significant group of authors active in the 1970s and 80s. Additional lists are available in the bibliography (for example, Guillemain, 1950-53; Schultze, 1961; Krauss, 1975; Heidmann, 1984; Joseph, 1992-1993).

the art market and in academia, but because many of these books were acquired long before they became valuable. Their identification has the potential to enhance the research value of existing collections with little to no cost to the institution. Why then, are these hidden gems not more apparent in the catalogs of most libraries?

The simple explanation may be that photography is a specific subject area, and therefore a photographically illustrated book collection would seem to be the province of those institutions that actively collect in that area. Discussions of these books tend to be restricted to the literature on photography, and so it is not widely known that books with original photographs can be found in all genres and formats. For example, photographs appear among travel books and tourist literature, (*Kingsbridge Estuary, with rambles in the neighbourhood*, 1864) (FIG 1); scientific textbooks (*Instructions to Observers Connected with the Meteorological Service of the Dominion of Canada*, 1878) (FIG 2); art books and catalogs (*The Life and Genius of Rembrandt*, 1867) (FIG 3); poems and stories (*Hyperion: A Romance*, 1865) (FIG 4); numerous biographical works (*Portraits of British Americans*, 1865-8) (FIG 5); documentary records (*Paris Incendié*, 1871) (FIG 6), and even sports manuals (*Lacrosse: The National Game of Canada*, 1869) (FIG 7). This list could go on as government reports, auction sales catalogs, memorial pamphlets, and periodicals have been found to include original

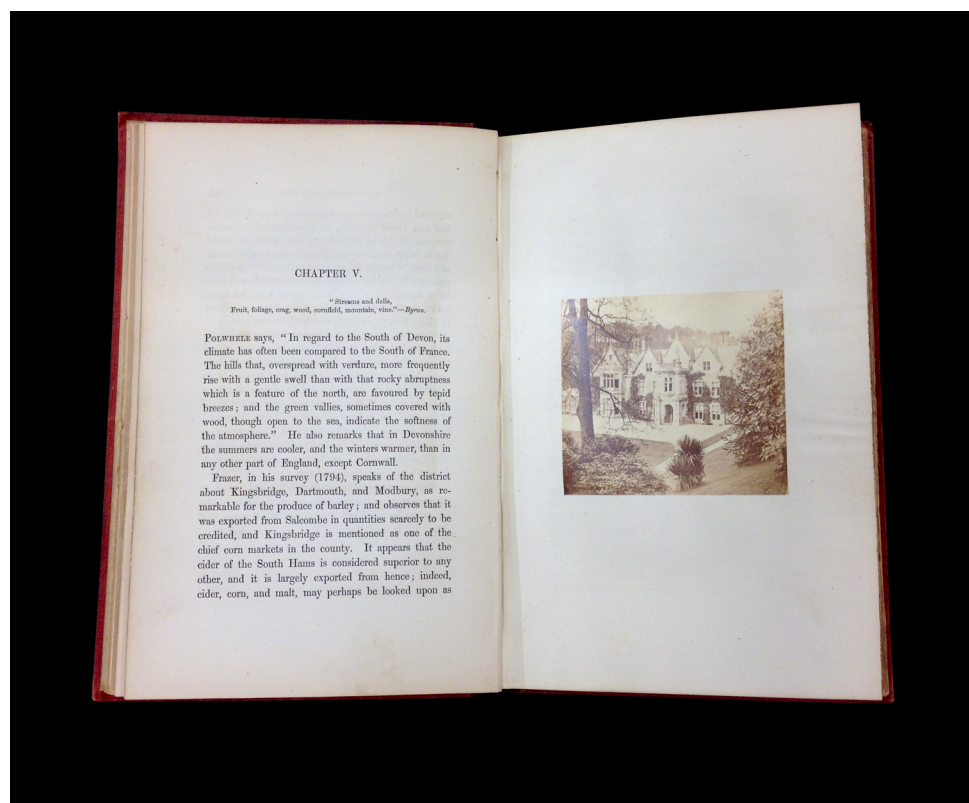


Figure 1. An example of travel books and tourist literature. *Kingsbridge Estuary, with Rambles in the Neighbourhood*, 1864. Image courtesy of W.D. Jordan Special Collections & Music Library, Queen's University.

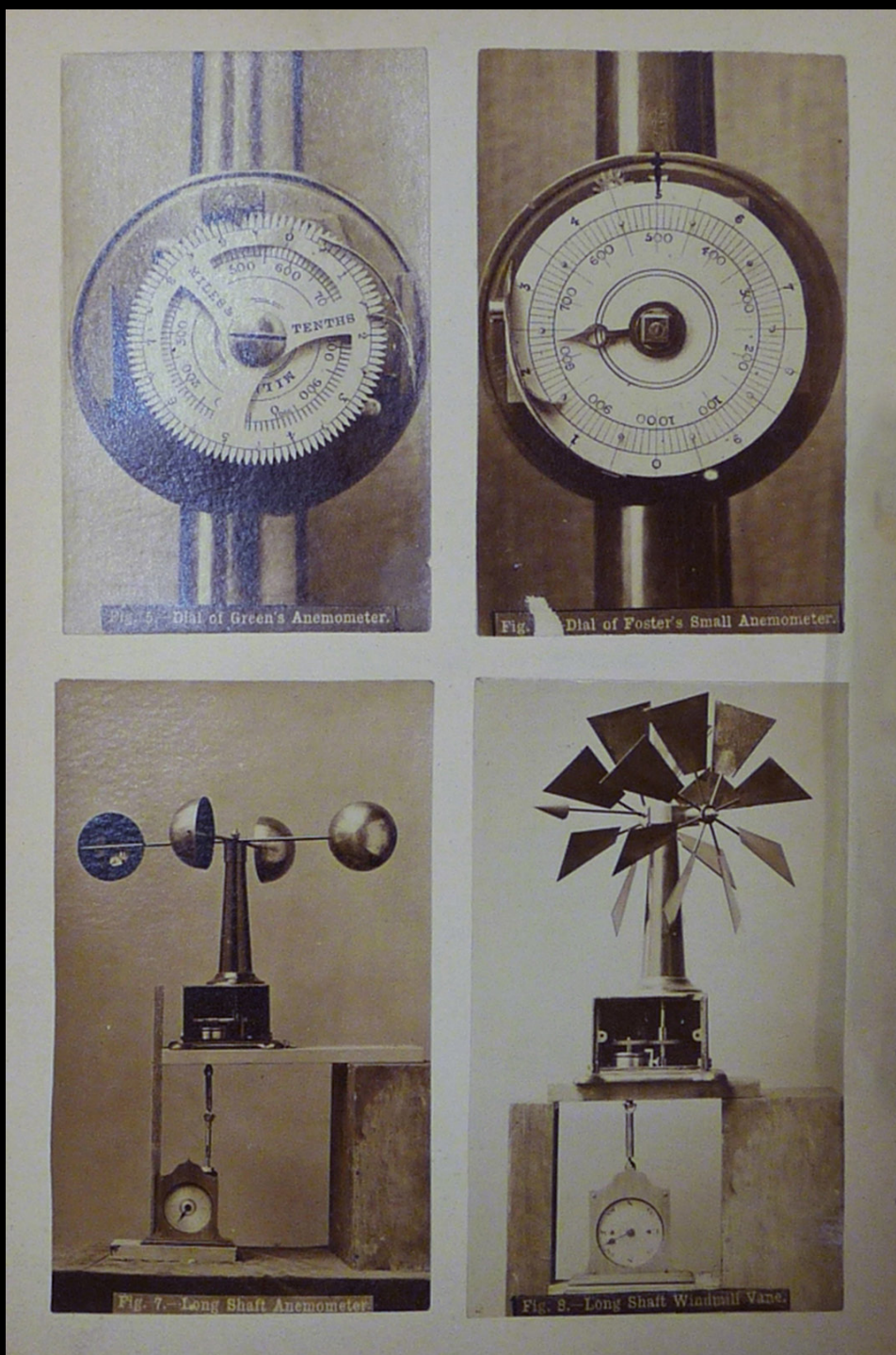


Figure 2. Scientific textbook. *Instructions to Observers Connected with the Meteorological Service of the Dominion of Canada*, 1878. Image courtesy of W.D. Jordan Special Collections & Music Library, Queen's University.



Figure 3. An example of art books and catalogs. *The Life and Genius of Rembrandt*, 1867.
Image courtesy of W.D. Jordan Special Collections & Music Library, Queen's University.

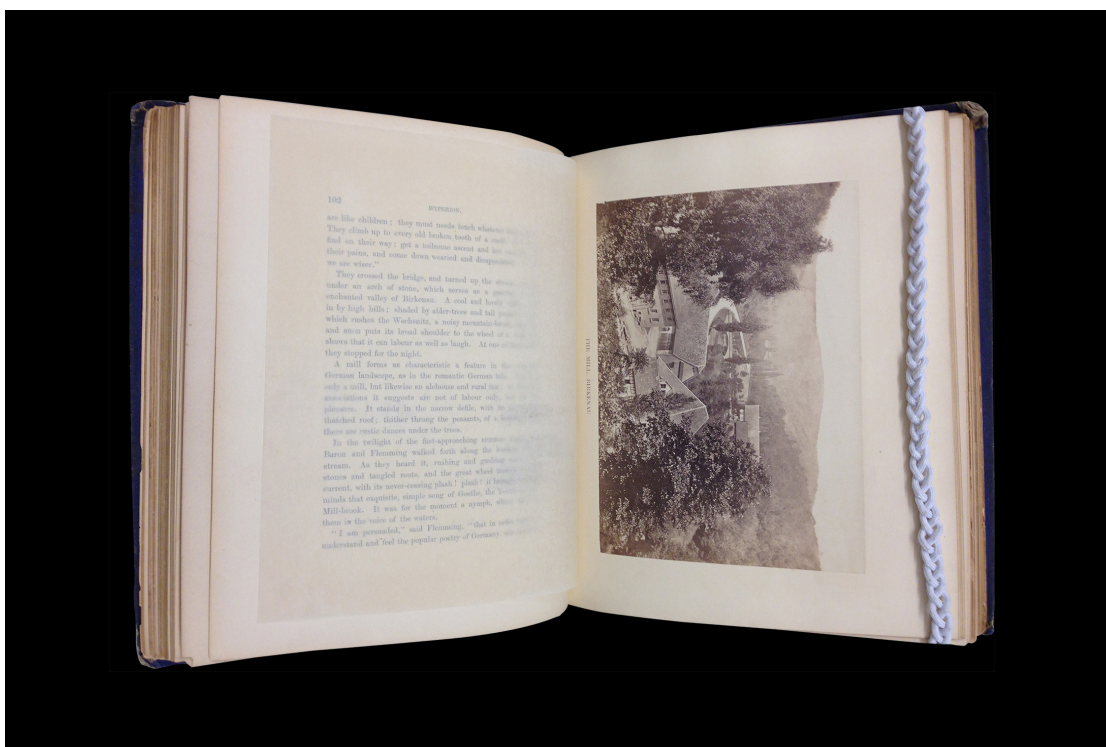


Figure 4. An example of poems and stories. *Hyperion: A Romance*, 1865.
Image courtesy of W.D. Jordan Special Collections & Music Library, Queen's University.



Figure 5. Biographical work. *Portraits of British Americans*, 1865-8.
Image courtesy of W.D. Jordan Special Collections & Music Library, Queen's University.

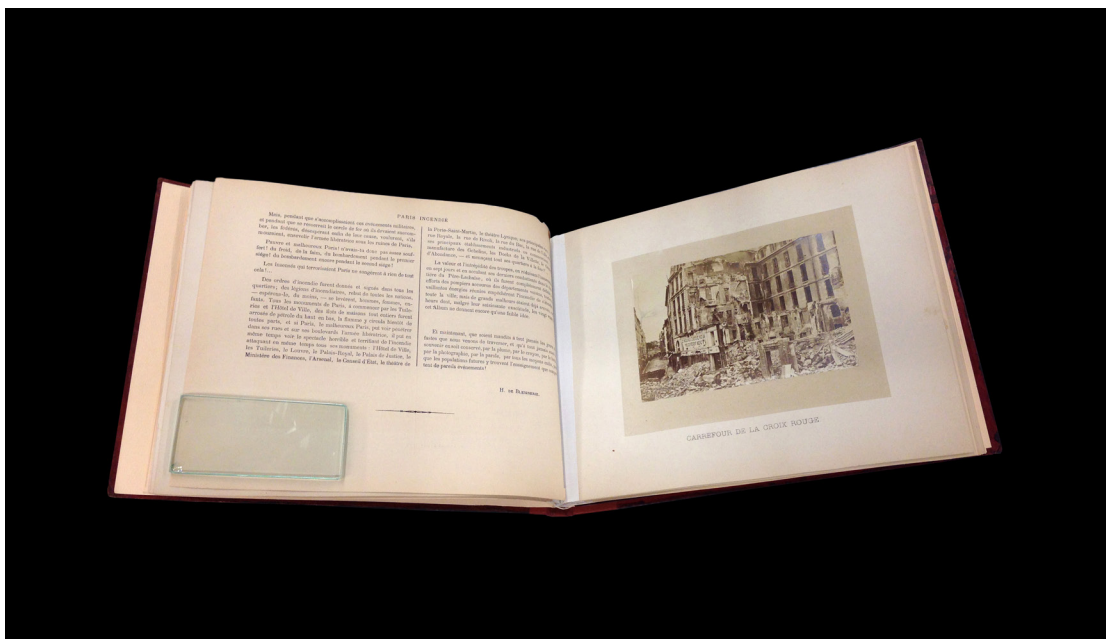


Figure 6. Documentary record. *Paris Incendié*, 1871.
Image courtesy of W.D. Jordan Special Collections & Music Library, Queen's University.



Figure 7. Sports manual. Lacrosse: *The National Game of Canada*, 1869.
Image courtesy of W.D. Jordan Special Collections & Music Library, Queen's University.

photographs as well. Across the whole book trade, photographs fulfilled a number of practical and imaginative illustrative roles.

If photographs can be found in any subject, then the situation is clearly more complex than a simple misunderstanding of the material's disciplinary relevance. Perhaps the real reason why these books have not been widely acknowledged in library collections is simply that they were never identified. Second-hand booksellers in the late nineteenth century did not differentiate between photomechanical illustration and original photographs (Wilson, 1995), glossing over an important material distinction, with the practice continuing through the twentieth century. Fifty years ago, R. S. Schultze (1963), Honorary Librarian for the Royal Photographic Society, complained "catalogs of libraries and of booksellers either do not state whether the illustrations are original photographs, or are utterly misleading: '13 photographs' or '13 photographic plates' may mean '13 photomechanical prints after original photographs'" (p. 5). The problem persists today, as the standard vocabularies and thesauri used in libraries do not offer a distinct word or phrase with which a cataloger might distinguish books with original photographs from books with photographic reproductions.³ Further, the Association of College and Research Libraries Rare Books and Manuscripts Section advises in *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Graphics)* (2013) that all photographic and photomechanical media be described with the simple word 'photograph':

5B6.1. Photographs printed photomechanically. If a photographic image has been printed photomechanically (halftone, photogravure, Woodburytype, dye transfer print, ink jet print, etc.), describe it as a photograph. Record the medium or process of production in the other physical details element (p. 99).

Photographs produced by light-sensitive substances are thereby indistinguishable from photomechanical prints produced with ink, as both an original albumen print and a modern halftone print would be described with the same word – photograph. Although information about specific processes can be added to a bibliographic record in order to clarify this information, there are too many instances where this clarification has not been provided.⁴

Over the years, there have been a few efforts at producing collection lists in order to bring these works to light. The work involved examining library shelves, searching the sparse bibliographic literature, and importantly, exchanging ideas and information with collectors, auction houses, and booksellers participating in the burgeoning photographic

3. The term 'photobooks' appears in both the Library of Congress Subject Headings and the Getty Art and Architecture Thesaurus, but the term refers to books that are aesthetically or thematically photographic. Martin Parr and Gerry Badger (2004-6) defined the term as "a book – with or without text – where the work's primary message is carried by photographs" (p. 6). In other words, it is the expressive use of photography that differentiates these books from the widespread use of photographic reproduction and not the use of an original or historical photographic process.

4. It should be pointed out that since these books might not have been considered rare – either because the content is mundane, the author unremarkable, or the photographer unknown – it is highly likely that many of them will not have received the attention of a cataloguer trained to identify special image media.

art market.⁵ Van Haaften described her approach to collection-building at the New York Public Library in the 1970s as “hunt[ing] through the book-stacks for likely candidates. Using publication date, subject, and, frequently, outward appearance as an indication of potential photographic content, I found numerous additional titles” (p. 360). Anne Gilbert and Ilse Sternberg (1996) reported that some discoveries were made at the British Library by happening upon photographs in adjacent volumes when they went to retrieve a documented one (p. 193). Collections work in this area continues to be aided by chance as well as careful research,⁶ but the continued publication of reference lists over the years has greatly increased the likelihood of finding photographically illustrated books based on title searches in catalogs (see Wilson, 2000; Parr and Badger, 2004-6; or the online *Catalogue of Photographically Illustrated Books* provided by the British Library).

Unfortunately, the fact that many library catalog records do not distinguish between original photographs and photomechanical reproductions is not solely the result of bibliographic omission. In looking at the lists that have been produced on photographic illustration, it becomes clear that scholars and collectors have provided conflicting information on how to evaluate rarity and importance when conducting these searches. In other words, the authors responsible for creating the bibliographies of photographic illustration have made it difficult to determine exactly what needs to be described, and why that description is important. This last issue requires an explanation.

What is a Photographically Illustrated Book?

The catalogs published in the late twentieth century, which were responsible for introducing the photographically illustrated book to collectors and researchers, outlined two very simple criteria for distinguishing these books as rare: chronology and process. The authors all seemed to agree that the books belonged to the nineteenth century, and that the technologies described should be unique in some way, either because the processes involved light-sensitive chemicals, or because they represented an intermediary stage between the use of photographic originals and the emergence of halftone screen reproductions. On closer inspection of the parameters each author used, however, it becomes apparent that they did not agree on whether the whole nineteenth century should be considered, or what processes can be considered original.

First of all, while it is clear that photographically illustrated books did not exist before the introduction of photography in 1839, there is no

5. Van Haaften (1977) thanked Naef for sharing his notes for the Grolier Club exhibition in a footnote to page 360, and Naef indicated that his findings were aided by the community of researchers working parallel to the exhibition (W. Naef, personal communication, September 23, 2014).

6. My own experience at Queen's University was greatly aided by the information generously shared by Dr. Joan M. Schwartz, Professor of Art History and Geography at Queen's University, and by David Harris, Professor in the School of Image Arts, Ryerson University. Several discoveries of photographically illustrated books were also made in the daily course of library business by Alvan Bregman, Curator of Special Collections, Barbara Teatero (former Curator of Special Collections), Lucinda Walls, Public Service Librarian for Music and Art, and Pamela Manders, Reference Assistant for Special Collections and Music.

single point on the timeline that marks the period after which scholars can agree that photographically illustrated books ceased to be produced. Gernsheim used 1875 as an end date for his list; Schultze, 1885; Van Haaften and Holden, 1900; Goldschmidt and Naef, 1914. Recent scholars have also chosen different dates: Foster, Heiting, and Stuhlman (2007) took Goldschmidt and Naef's 1914 end date for their work, while Hamber (2011) selected 1880. It does seem safe to say that the photographically illustrated book belongs to the nineteenth century (or rather, the long nineteenth century),⁷ but this is clearly up for debate.

The moving end date for photographic illustration is partly tied to the popularity and use of certain technologies. Original photographs were used for book illustration as early as the 1840s, but photographic imagery greatly increased in the 1870s as a number of continuous-tone photomechanical processes were developed which could reproduce images in ink on a press. (Hannavy et al., 2013). Woodburytypes, collotypes, and photogravures transformed the printing process from a purely chemical one into a mechanically predictable and repeatable activity, and these processes gradually replaced the use of original photographs. However, they were still specialized technologies that had to be printed on a separate press from the text, so they are generally found mounted or inserted as extra pages in books. Van Haaften, Coke, and Goldschmidt and Naef included these early photomechanical processes in their surveys, while Gernsheim and Holden restricted themselves to silver-based, chemically produced photographs. Each of these authors based their decisions on what they felt were the most important technologies to document and collect, and either adjusted their timeframes to avoid dealing with the exponentially larger amounts of photographic illustration around the turn of the twentieth century, or adjusted their choice of processes to eliminate the more common ones.⁸ It would seem then that chronology is not an important criterion after all, and is only used to avoid addressing the enormous volume of photographic illustration that appeared in the twentieth century. Likewise, the processes considered important change from author to author, suggesting that anything remotely photographic from the nineteenth (or long nineteenth) century may be considered important to research on photographically illustrated books.

The choice to include some processes and not others is not completely based on the volume of material, but also stems from the fact that several important photographers in the history of photography created what are considered to be 'original' or 'vintage' prints with photomechanical processes, and not (chemically-speaking) original photographs. If the goal of identifying photographically illustrated books is partly motivated by a desire to capture all the valuable, artistic, or iconic photographs that have

7. The long nineteenth century was defined by Eric Hobsbawm as ending in 1914, or the beginning of the first World War (Stearns, 2012). Other end dates have been proposed and used by later scholars, so even this is a flexible and fuzzy end date.

8. Almost all of the lists completely ignore halftone letterpress prints despite their invention in the 1860s (see McIntosh, 1996), probably because the halftone came to dominate all forms of printed illustration in the twentieth century and so it would seem highly arbitrary to include some, but not all, books with halftone prints.

been distributed in book form, then eliminating some photomechanical processes would also exclude some prized artworks. Beaumont Newhall (1983), the first scholar to put forward a critical and aesthetic history of photography, argued that P.H. Emerson's *Marsh Leaves* (1895) should be considered "one of the rarest books in the collection" at Harvard University (p. 36), even though the book contained images made with the photomechanical photogravure process. Aesthetic value and authorship clearly influenced some authors to cast a wider net.

Returning to Goldschmidt and Naef, and their landmark Grolier Club exhibition, we find that neither was afraid to argue that some photographically illustrated books were better than others, opening up a parallel discussion of these books as artistic products with value beyond the application of a process.⁹ They saw photographically illustrated books as both a mechanism for delivery and display, and as a new medium capable of expressive meaning, and they reasoned that those two categories were not equal. Naef stated that while the first book illustrated with photographs appeared in 1844, the first truly *successful* book did not appear until 1852 (p. 10).¹⁰ Although he argues this illustrates the slow start photography had in publishing, it is not only technical achievement that forms the basis for his judgment, but also the later work's success in attaining "the goal of marrying printed words with pictures" (p. 18). These comments can be directly related to the contemporary scholarship on twentieth-century photographic books (Newhall, 1983; Sweetman, 1986; Hunter, 1987), which explored how books transform the photographs from objects merely presented on a page to a medium of visual communication that derives meaning from sequencing, layout, and interplay with the printed word—what Robert Frank referred to as "a new method of photographic description" (as cited in Sweetman, 1986, p. 23). This may be the source of Naef's desire to divide photographically illustrated books "between creative art and commercial application of photography... between those [books] in which photographs are presented for their own sake and those that are made for the express purpose of illustrating texts" (p. 20).

This elevation of the photographically illustrated book to the realm of *art* is part of the reason why Douglas Crimp (1995) took aim at Van Haaften and the New York Public Library in his influential essay, "The Museum's Old, the Library's New Subject." He argued that the removal of materials from the stacks and "reclassifi[cation] according to their newly acquired value" (p. 74) would erase the original context for these books. While this may have been a bit of an exaggeration on Crimp's part,¹¹ it is true that Van Haaften was unabashedly *curating* (to use Crimp's emphasis) examples of "the first art form to emerge from the technological age" (p.

9. Goldschmidt and Naef were not the first to put forward the idea that a photographically illustrated book could belong to, and thereby be judged according to, the discourse on art and photography. But, the positioning of their book as a reference text on the photographically illustrated book has resulted in a more profound impact of these ideas on collections practice.

10. It is unclear which books Naef is actually referring to with this statement as he does not discuss the probable books until a few pages later in the text. The first book is likely the *Record of the Death-bed of C.M.W.* (1844), which he discusses on page 13, although it could also be *The Pencil of Nature* (1844-46), the first issue of which was produced in the same year and arguably was more book-like than the privately printed *Record*. The 'successful' book is meant to be Maxime Du Camp's *Egypte, Nubie, Palestine, et Syrie* (1852), which is lauded on page 20 as "successful...in amplifying an important subject through the conjoining of complex texts with photographs."

11. Crimp's contention that the library should have left the original classification alone is problematic primarily because it presumes that classification should preserve nineteenth-century organizational principles at the expense of the needs of the contemporary user. In my opinion, libraries hold living collections that do occasionally need to be adapted for new audiences, and in fact, the NYPL has adjusted the unique system developed by former director John Shaw Billings in 1896 over the years to do just that. ("With a New Classification System, the New York Public Library Makes a Change for the Clearer," *The New York Times*, August 17, 2006, retrieved from 17read.html).

355). She physically removed the books from their original locations to the newly created Photography Collection, and many of the images have since received item level catalog records that do not make it immediately apparent which prints can be found in books, and which are individual items.¹²

Although these bibliographic publications¹³ were aimed at identifying original examples of nineteenth-century photography in books, they were clearly responsive to the stylistic and technological accounts being written for the history of photography at that time. This has led to a fragmented understanding of the photographically illustrated book today as a unique historical remnant and/or an object significant for its authorship. The label used to distinguish these books as rare and valuable, “photographically illustrated,” can be interpreted to include or exclude any number of processes and time periods. The implication for collections work is that photographically illustrated books may be defined by any number of parameters responsive to the aims of the institution. The publications meant to expose these books have instead created an aura of exclusivity around them, leading back to the first problem discussed in this essay, that photographically illustrated books are often sought out by those libraries that specifically collect photography.

Future Work

While there are good reasons to collect and curate examples of photographically illustrated books that represent the unique, artistic, or expressive vision of an author/creator, or which demonstrate the adoption of certain materials and processes, this highly selective and subjective collection building clearly needs to be accompanied by more pragmatic description of all photographic media in order to be useful to future scholarship – particularly for those scholars who may approach a library with specific, but divergent, criteria for photographic illustration in mind. Acknowledging these books exist within collections does not commit an institution to a special collection of photography, nor does it require any more detailed cataloging than is already employed to provide enhanced description of other forms of illustration. At Princeton University Library, photographically illustrated books are identified in the OPAC with a local genre/form heading: “Photographs, Original – Illustrations in books” (Mellby, 2007). Similarly, the Rijksmuseum Research Library uses the descriptor “fotografisch geïllustreerde boeken (vorm)” to isolate all of their photographically illustrated books in the online catalog (M. Stijkel, personal communication, September 26, 2014 and G. Koot, personal communication, December 5, 2014). At Queen’s University Libraries, the books have been given the unique subject heading “Illustrated books, Photographic.”

12. For instance, the bibliographic record for Maxime Du Camp’s *Égypte, Nubie, Syrie* (1852) can be found in the NYPL’s main catalog, while records for the individual plates are found in the Prints & Photographs Online Catalog. The call number, title, and relevant bibliographic information for the book is not repeated in the Prints & Photographs catalog, nor is the individual record linked to the main catalog.

13. These catalogs were based on extant collections and as such they represented only what the collectors could lay hands on. However, that did not preclude them from being positioned as reference tools. Goldschmidt specifically saw its value primarily as a reference tool, since “libraries do not yet index photography as a mode of illustration” (1980, p. ix). Together with Van Haften and Gernsheim’s publications, *The Truthful Lens* is still the most cited resource in contemporary auction catalogs and bookseller’s sales lists.

The simplicity of the idea to append a single subject heading or genre/form term in order to distinguish these works in the online catalog should not disguise its importance. There is still a significant amount of work to be done to identify all the titles that contain photographs, and it is not until scholars have this data, gathered from countless individual catalogs, that they can truly begin to interpret the scope and influence of photography as book illustration (see Hamber, 2011). Improving access to this material through enhanced metadata may prompt any number of projects similar to the *Fox Talbot 1846 Art Union Journal Project* (<http://www.1846artunion.org>) established to identify and index surviving copies of the original 6,000 photographs that were pasted into the June 1846 issue of the *Art Union*. As many as twenty-four variant photographs have been found according to the published list, highlighting the importance of amassing data which describes individual impressions and states. It is not uncommon to find photographically illustrated books with variant photographs from different negatives, or even a different number of prints. The British Library lists *Family Recollections of Lieut. General Elias Walker Durnford* (1863) as containing a frontispiece albumen print of a crayon drawing by Durnford's daughter Elizabeth Sewell, but in viewing the copy at Queen's University, issued by the same publisher and in the same year, a lithograph of the drawing is found instead. Differences between texts can often be explained by pointing to either grangerizing or removals,¹⁴ but the Durnford book appears to have been created with different image media. Since publishing and binding remained separate activities for much of the nineteenth century, it is possible that the person who bound the British Library copy had difficulty obtaining a lithograph and so copied the image via photography instead, but it is equally possible that one buyer simply preferred the look and feel of a photograph and requested that medium for their copy. It is precisely these issues that are interesting to a study of nineteenth-century photography, and highlight the importance of cataloging.

Preservation

Documenting books with original prints, variant prints, and even missing prints, will also help libraries to make informed decisions about security, storage, and conservation. While a detailed discussion of the preservation concerns associated with the photographically illustrated book is beyond the scope of this article, it remains important to observe that books with light-sensitive materials do require a specific preservation storage environment, and will benefit from handling instructions tailored to their particular needs. Photographs in books are naturally protected

14. Carol Armstrong (1998) refers to the history of photography as being 'rife with removals from the photograph's printed context' (p. 2).

from light damage by virtue of the fact that the books are stored closed, but the effects of repeated or long-term exposure of a silver-based photograph to a light source during reading or display are cumulative and irreversible (Wagner et al., 2001). Collections managers may wish to advise researchers not to photocopy these materials or use a camera flash, and should be careful about choosing books for exhibition. Albumen prints are extremely sensitive to changes in relative humidity, which causes surface cracking and curling of the paper support (Baas et al., 1999), so keeping these prints in a controlled storage environment will help to prevent further deterioration. If these materials reside among books that have been selected for mass deacidification, they should be set aside and left untreated. Finally, the way these images were attached to the text may allow them to be easily removed, whether deliberately through theft, or accidentally, simply falling out of the book as glue weakens or sewing supports break. Inspecting books for torn pages and loose sewing each time they are used may be advised. Action taken now to prevent damaging activities from taking place, and to remedy inadequate storage and remove deterioration catalysts, will greatly prolong the life of the photographic object. It is therefore advisable that in addition to providing descriptive metadata in the catalog records, the more sensitive materials are removed to a special collections department or archives for safekeeping.

Conclusion

Photographically illustrated books are artifacts of a changing relationship between image and text, and should be preserved for the insight they offer into the history of visual communication. Books that employed photographs often drew attention to their presence in the text, imploring the reader to appreciate the value of this particular type of image. More often than not, the author remarked upon the truthfulness of the representation, lauding photography for removing the need to rely on a fallible human copyist. With the flood of new scholarship in the fields of book history and print culture, the history of photography, and the new arena of illustration studies, it is time that more institutions became involved in identifying, preserving, and promoting the photographically illustrated book. Collections work in this area has been based on trial and error, careful research, chance encounters, and, importantly, the exchange of ideas and information among librarians, booksellers, scholars, and collectors. The continued participation of the library in this dialogue is desperately needed to bring more of these works to light. The books are in the stacks, simply waiting to be found.

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Acts of Curation: The Curating of Poetry & The Poetics of Curating

A roundtable discussion

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Editor's note

This event was held on Friday, September 19, 2014, in the Poetry Collection of the University Libraries, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York as part of the UB Poetics Program's Fall 2014 Poetics Plus program. The participants were asked to prepare brief remarks, in some cases excerpted for the presentations, which were then slightly revised for this publication. There is also an audio recording of the event that includes the full roundtable conversation and question/answer period with members of the audience that followed after the last presentation. As identified in the introduction, Marta Werner also was an invited participant. Although her remarks are not included here, her presentation can be

—James Maynard

Introduction

James Maynard, Associate Curator
The Poetry Collection of the University Libraries,
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York

Good afternoon and welcome. When Myung Mi Kim first invited me last spring to organize a Poetics Plus event for this fall on the theme of “curation,” I knew I wanted to organize a discussion around different forms of curating, but really, my first thought went to the group of people I wanted to bring together today to have that conversation. My notion was to assemble a group of curators, all of whom work closely with various poetry materials, who could address the activity of curating widely. But more importantly, it is these five individuals in particular that I wanted to put in conversation with each other, because I greatly respect their work as archivists, curators, catalogers, and editors. Thus, it is my great pleasure to introduce Michael Basinski, Marie Elia, Nancy Kuhl, Edric Mesmer, and Marta Werner. Some I have known for many years, and some I have only met in person for the first time today.

Michael Basinski is Curator of the University at Buffalo Libraries’ Poetry Collection and Interim Director of Special Collections. The author of numerous books of poetry and a renowned performer, he also edited the 2010 collection *Gerald Locklin: A Critical Introduction* published by BlazeVox Books. For more than thirty years now he has been here diligently serving what he’s very fond of calling the “realm of the poem,” all the while standing as an important mentor to graduate students, undergrads, researchers, and young poets, not to mention those of us who are fortunate enough to work with him. If today the Poetry Collection, as Mike himself once wrote, “stands far above what is template contained and the malice and ignorance of the quotidian mind,” it does so thanks to him.

Marie Elia is the Poetry Collection’s processing archivist and has been working with its literary manuscript collections now for almost a year. Marie received her MLIS from the University of Pittsburgh, an MFA in Creative Writing (Poetry) from Columbia University, and a BA from Allegheny College. Before coming to Buffalo she spent five years working at the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh as the senior cataloger of Warhol’s *Time Capsules*. She also has prior experience cataloging rare books, monographs, serials, and other materials, and just last month was

featured by *Fine Books & Collections* magazine as part of their "Bright Young Librarian" series.

Nancy Kuhl is the Curator of Poetry for the Yale Collection of American Literature at Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Nancy received an MA in English literature from Ohio University and an MFA in poetry from Ohio University. I am very pleased to welcome her back to Buffalo, where she received her MLS from the Department of Library and Information Studies, and in particular back to the Poetry Collection, where she worked as a graduate student. In addition to several books and chapbooks of poetry, Nancy is the author of the exhibition catalogs *Intimate Circles: American Women in the Arts and Extravagant Crowd: Carl Van Vechten's Portraits of Women*, both from Yale University Press, and coeditor of Phylum Press, which has published poetry chapbooks since 2000.

Edric Mesmer is the University Libraries' Poetry Cataloger, which means he has the task of cataloging the great majority of the Poetry Collection's incoming books and other acquisitions. Edric earned a BA from the College of Geneseo; an MA in Gender, Sexuality & Culture from the University of Manchester; and an MLS from UB. He is the editor—or, as he prefers to be known, the "collator"—of the magazine *Yellow Field*, and of the chapette series Buffalo Ochre Papers, among others, as well as a poet, and this past June he won the 2014 Outriders Poetry Competition for his book manuscript *of monodies and homophony*, which will be published next year.

Marta Werner is professor of English at Buffalo's D'Youville College. While working on her PhD in the UB English department, Marta also worked for a period of time in the Poetry Collection. An award winning textual and Emily Dickinson scholar, she is the author, editor, or co-editor of *Emily Dickinson's Open Folios: Scenes of Reading, Surfaces of Writing* (1995), *Radical Scatters: An Electronic Archive of Emily Dickinson's Late Fragments and Related Texts, 1870-1886* (1999), *Ordinary Mysteries: The Common Journal of Nathaniel and Sophia Hawthorne, 1842-1843* (2005), *Hannah Weiner: The Book of Revelations* (2011), and, most recently, *The Gorgeous Nothings: Emily Dickinson's Envelope-Poems* (2012), which was released in both limited and trade editions by Granary Books. Marta has also held executive positions with the MLA's Committee on Scholarly Editions and the Society for Textual Scholarship.

As I said, this is an accomplished group of curators.

Our topic today is what we are calling the poetics of curation, and I'm using the word "poetics" in several senses: first, in that most general way to refer to the creative and critical principles inherent in our work, but also more specifically to the particular conceptions of and assumptions about poetry that underlie and inform—sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously—our respective activities of collecting, cataloging, archiving, editing, and exhibiting. The word "curation" comes from the Latin verb *curare*, meaning to care for, and refers to a curatorship or guardianship, with an earlier, now obsolete meaning of curing or healing. Most generally, to curate something is to select, organize, and take care of it. One could argue that certain curatorial issues and attitudes are widespread in discussions of modern and contemporary poetry and poetics, as seen, for instance, in accounts of canon formation, in the recovery of historically marginalized writers, or even in theories of objectivist sincerity, to name just a few. However, less attention has been paid conversely to the poetics of curating. With this in mind, the group here was asked to reflect, in whatever form made most sense to them, on the topic in general and particularly on the poetics of their own curatorial activities.

The following questions were proposed merely to begin the conversation and see where we might end up:

- » In what ways do you "curate" poetry? For whom?
- » How would you define your own curatorial poetics? In other words, what critical and/or creative principles underlie or inform your work as a curator? Do you see your poetics in contrast or distinction to others?
- » How are different acts of curation a product of their historical moment? Are there "modern" and "postmodern" styles of curating?
- » How might different kinds of poetics (schools of poetic thought and their associated critical methodologies) translate into or influence different approaches to curating?
- » From what sources—canonical or otherwise—do you derive your thinking about curating?

- » Keeping in mind the Latin root of the word, what does it mean “to care for” a book, a text, a manuscript, or an archive? How does such care translate into professional obligations?

As a panel we prepared written remarks for today, from which we’ll each be reading some brief excerpts or summaries, but then, in the hopes of making this more of a true conversation, we’ll shift to a roundtable discussion before inviting the audience to join in. So if you have any questions at all for us, I hope you’ll please ask them shortly.

Before we begin, I want to thank the Poetics Program and especially Myung Mi Kim for allowing us the opportunity to have this event, and also my co-panelists for all of their time in what is always a very busy month of September. Also, I’m happy to announce that tonight we will be having an 8:00 pm poetry reading with Mike, Marie, Nancy, and Edric at the Western New York Book Arts Center, 468 Washington Street, which I hope you’ll all be able to attend.

Sustained Performance or Meditation Over Time

Edric Mesmer, Poetry Cataloger
University Libraries, University at Buffalo,
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Of *Yellow Field* I call myself collator, collator of an international forum of field, where field is merely material page and what it can bespeak. Akin to curation, I consider what I do a bringing together, rather than an editing—I do not alter the content of the work contributed. In this regard, my “day job” as poetry cataloger resembles my “nighttime kitchen table” job of producing a little magazine. And contrary even to a stringency of collecting, within the parameter of a contextual mission statement, I may not even alter so much as *foster context* in providing venue. This is also to some degree what a collection does—in the case of the Poetry Collection of the University at Buffalo, it does so exhaustively.

I see my collating as in defiance of coterie. Coterie is educing, and perhaps it is coterie I most envy...but ultimately do not comparatively find of (*as much*) merit. This is not the same as saying I’m disinterested in the local, especially as it relates to and forms the root system for an international commonality—coterie itself a most knotty system! Appositely speaking, I’m most interested—not in solitude or reclusiveness, sociability being wondrous—in sustained performance or meditation over time, as exhibited in some form of productivity (else perhaps

unknowable). (Think also of “sustained performance or meditation over time” as the forging of archives...)

Of the many kinds of cultural space (presumably as many as there are little magazines, journals, archives, and collections), some become overly similar in that they replicate as though temples to a singular deity. I am more interested in a nonexclusive space for metaphorically pantheistic worship. This has not only to do with coterie but with genre, as it has also to do with gender. If schools be like disciplines, let venue be a school of schools or no school at all.

What I feel ardently for is the finding of a small magazine in a secondhand bookshop; say from Vancouver, issued in the early aughts, full of long sequential poems by an author of whom I’ve never heard...only: come to find this is not at all this author’s first, even second, publication of some length. Given that the work is good and reveals itself to be of sustenance to the literary ecosystem of this author’s locale, why does this author publish less than others? This is an author with whom I will try to make contact; ask what’s new; offer pages within *Yellow Field* to.

It might come across as grandstanding to say I would not be *as* inclined to offer as many pages to, say...John Ashbery. This is not to say I don’t admire the work of Ashbery, which I do. But in the natural vying for cultural space, I know that Ashbery will find his naturally enough. *Yellow Field* is a small space, and one I can offer to those whose work I find longstanding in its engagement and perhaps (what I’ve elsewhere called) undersung; equally, for work by emerging writers, beginning to look for venues space; as well as for continued conversation from established writers with the emergent and the undersung.

Let it also be a place wherein intersections of disciplinarity might exhibit, as these too are part of what Curator Michael Basinski would call “the realm of the poem.” The little magazine is an extension of—and thereby extends—that realm. In the case of *Yellow Field*, I want a field that expands beyond the textual to include poetry marked visually and compositionally, as these are a part of the way we read and converse these days, and I want a little magazine to be how we converse—To be that conversation—To be conversant.

Yellow Field has become a space for the poetics of the local, of the international, of the visually-sonically-textual, of the inter-phemic, of the mutli-disciplinary, and, of late, of the intertextual. A little magazine is most certainly influenced by predecessors but not necessarily arrived at by repeat performance. *Yellow Field* has roots in many other littles, including some of these (in the interest of space, some from outside the U.S.): Australia’s *P76* and *Taboo Jadoo*, Canada’s *Raddle Moon* and *The Gig*, the UK’s Etruscan Books’ Etruscan Readers series. All of these little magazines

exhibit various aspects of the poetics stated above; they cull long segments of poetry in aesthetic lines that cross borders internationally; they cut by genre; they represent diversely. Eventually, if not inherently, they become conversant as a poetics. With them *Yellow Field* is conversant.

When talking with my students of the little magazine and its history, I would often refer to that icon of the little magazine Margaret Anderson, who said that in founding *The Little Review* she wanted only to find “the best conversation the world has to offer.” This regard for the poetics of a little magazine (—and I don’t mind the term “little magazine” despite its impoverished description) is not unlike the collecting that goes on within a repository like the University at Buffalo’s. It is an attempt to record “the best conversation the world has to offer” in and around poetry, without qualifying whose “best” is at question. The archive becomes, by analogy, the logging of all conversations possible to record.

And these conversations must somehow be made discoverable.... Which brings me away from the kitchen table to my “day job” as cataloger.

To catalog is to care for discovery, as separate from but related to caring for the acquisition or preservation of the physical/virtual entity itself. *I care for* the representation of the poetry object (be it book, magazine, broadside...bottle, tumbler, sextant), rather than for the poetry object itself. In the pooling of resources from catalogers around the world into the international Online Computer Library Catalog, there is a need for allotting equal attention to works by John Ashbery as to those by that locally-known poet at work in Vancouver. In fact, the Ashbery poetry objects will be so more widely circulated, so many other catalogers having polished its representative record, as to warrant less attention from this cataloger.

Here, emphasis falls upon the reader in search....Upon a public. What is a public? What, a readership?

Within the ethics of librarianship (in which I presently include curation) there exists the potential for a readership of one—For many readerships of one—present and future. And [this readership of one] and [this readership of one] are equal to one another, and to the readerships of the many. It is what makes cataloging and network-tracing (—I’ll say it—) fun, and inexhaustible.

For it seems we are leaving the iconic shelf of the few for a hypercanon of the ubiquitous. And here there will be need for more little magazines, more curating, and more catalogic points-of-access for that increasingly possible readership we call One.

“The Maker’s Rage to Order:” Poets as Curators of Poetry

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In her essay “Disruption, Hesitation, Silence,” Louise Glück (1995) writes, “I am attracted to ellipsis, to the unsaid, to suggestion, to eloquent, deliberate silence.... It is analogous to the unseen; for example, to the power of ruins, to works of art either damaged or incomplete. Such works inevitably allude to larger contexts; they haunt because they are not whole, though wholeness is implied: another time, a world in which they were whole, or were to have been whole, is implied. There is no moment in which their first home is felt to be the museum” (p.73).

This resonates deeply with me as an archivist, particularly in caring for literary manuscript collections. As a professional archivist, I am bound by a code of ethics, particularly in relation to history and memory. The code states that “archival materials ... serve as evidence against which individual and social memory can be tested. Archivists preserve such primary sources to enable us to better comprehend the past, understand the present, and prepare for the future.” As a steward of the materials trusted to my care, the choices I make can help or hinder a user’s ability to understand the story of a collection. And yet, in the same way that an art conservator will make sure that her work is visible, distinguishable from the original, my choices to order and document a collection must be visible. My work is a gesture toward the whole, a guide to suggest further conclusions and inspire further examination.

Each archival collection is unique, and each has a story to tell. My job as an archivist is not to make assumptions or extrapolate wildly, but neither am I expected to work in a vacuum. The archivist listens to the materials—and by extension to their creator—to learn what is trying to be told. The basis of archival arrangement and description is *respect des fonds*, a concept consisting of two sub-principles: provenance and original order. To preserve provenance, materials that were created or assembled by a person (or organization) must be kept together, not mixed with materials from another entity; to preserve original order, the archivist maintains the physical or intellectual organization (where possible) of materials as imposed by the creator. That is to say, I may look at a seemingly haphazard grouping of a poet’s papers and see no discernible order, and I might think it makes sense to organize the materials chronologically, but as soon as I disrupt the original order, I may destroy delicate threads that would have told a story I did not anticipate. Yet maintaining original

order is balanced against the ultimate mandate to provide broad access to materials. Sometimes a collection arrives stuffed into shopping bags or boxes with no evident organizational scheme. To describe such a collection in its original state would impede access, as most collections are not described down to a single item; instead, archivists arrange materials by identifying the logical groupings within the whole, constructing a new organization when the original ordering has been lost, or establishing an order when one never existed.

Archivists also practice selection, particularly those charged with the care of corporate, government, or institutional archives; they choose which materials to preserve or discard, understanding that not everything can be maintained in perpetuity. My role in a literary manuscript collection rarely calls for discarding materials, but I do make choices by what I choose to highlight when I describe the collection. I try to listen to the materials and represent them as they are. Although my description usually comes straight from the source—the name and date from a batch of letters, the titles and dates on manuscript drafts—so much of my work to assemble an archival finding aid, a document that represents the collection, is interpretive.

As a writer, specifically as a poet, I use language to conjure, to compel readers to see what I want them to see. Deception, “deliberate silence,” manipulation—all of these methods are fair game. When I worked as a bibliographic cataloger—comparable to but different from a processing archivist—I often felt that my library catalog records were like poems: Highly symbolic language that represented a large concept. The codes for certain sets of data, the choosing of subject headings from an approved list that most appropriately described the book, this felt like writing a poem in form: The beauty was finding the elegance within a prescribed framework. Archival description allows more freedom—or more leeway, at least. The archivist, within recommended guidelines, is at liberty to create the documentation that she feels is most effective to aid in discovery of the materials. I often find myself staring at a collection and wondering where to begin, not unlike staring at a line on the page and wondering how to make a poem out of it.

As an archivist, my role is different from a curator of art or manuscripts. I do not select the collections that come under my care, but “care” is where my role does take a turn toward curation. I take care of the materials: Physically, I try to protect them from damage and deterioration; intellectually, I promote their use to keep them “alive.” But I do make choices along the way that are similar to a curator assembling an exhibition or deciding to acquire a new item. Ultimately, I decide which breadcrumbs will be left out for readers and researchers to follow to the

collection. I decide how to summarize and contextualize a collection when I create a Scope and Content note for the finding aid. I create an avatar, the collection's face to the world, doing my best to amplify its voice.

In another essay, "Invitation and Exclusion," Louise Glück (1995) writes "The human voice [in "The Idea of Order at Key West"] is the artist's instrument, as instance of 'the maker's rage,' the rage to order, to give or discern form... And the poem is a poem of independence—the independent figure of the singer, the song itself, which becomes an environment, a made thing independent of its origins, subsuming, mastering those origins. Origins... are here secondary. The song is sung, and it is impossible not to stand in awe of a process so majestic, so exhilarating, so conspicuously private" (p. 118). The curator, like the poet or the singer, creates something new. However faithful to the materials, our choosing, arranging, describing, emphasis or de-emphasis of items creates a new context out of the original. As an archivist who is charged with—gifted with—the role of caring for poetry and sharing it with the world, I like to think that my choices broaden the reach of poetry and individual poets. My "rage to order words" preserves the work and sustains it in memory.

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Who Cares? Notes for "Acts of Curation"

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I imagine that, like me, every literary curator works with his heart on his sleeve—what we do is, after all, rooted deeply in the enchantments of language and voice. Here is literature and its making; here, in the writer's hand, is a record of her mind. Manuscripts and notebooks are obvious examples of this, but sometimes the address is more direct. Among the poem drafts and typescripts, letter files, snapshots, and printed matter Langston Hughes included in his archive at the Yale Library was Ralph Ellison's 1945 article "Richard Wright's Blues," a reprint from the *Antioch Review*. Above the title, Hughes has written: "This young man is our best critic. Langston." This should not be misunderstood to be an unsent note to an unidentified friend—here, Hughes was addressing distant future readers. He was addressing me—and you, too. Such messages appear

throughout the poet's archive; he speaks to us, directly, and to others yet to come. Curating a literary collection is suffused with such points of contact, with the lasting and deep impression of the humanity of those whose creative work and life-records for which we care (and we interact with the records and traces of the body as much as those of the mind—take Walt Whitman's eyeglasses, for example, or T. S. Eliot's waistcoat, or a key to the Yale lock Gertrude Stein mentions in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*).

In his prompting remarks for “Acts of Curation,” Jim Maynard highlights the etymology of the word *curate*, calling our attention to the role of care that underlies what we now call curating. Truly, in all its present possibilities, the word *curate* suggests mindful attention and thoughtful selection. In the context of library collections—where “care” must be understood to suggest in part the durational acts of *taking care* or *caring for*—perhaps etymology also reveals something about the ways time and the progression of cultural imagination inform the work of curators of poetry collections in institutional contexts.

For a dozen years I have been a curator of the Yale Collection of American Literature, a remarkable collection of books, literary archives, individual manuscripts, correspondence collections, photographs, artworks, personal effects, and other texts and objects. Archives and library collections like the Yale Collection of American Literature raise compelling questions about history and possibility. Such a collection is at once fossil record and crystal ball. It is a kind of time machine. As collections, texts and remnants accumulate and become the timeless and active mind of our culture. Caring for such a collection includes ordering and fixing what might otherwise be a chaos of image and impulse, those dreadful, hopeful, difficult, gorgeous matters that are finally the poet's domain. The curator's responsibilities must include cultivating—among our allies and our enemies—a sense of archival and poetic time that is at once historic, real, and wildly speculative.

Building a collection of books, manuscripts, and archives is, after all, a wildly speculative business. A curator is in the practice of anticipating future aesthetic and cultural trends, future scholarly interests; of any possible acquisition, one may ask: will this be interesting in 100 years? Any acquisition may feel like a gamble with limited resources (limited funds to make purchases, to be sure, but also limited staff and other resources, limited space to store collections—and these concerns multiplied over decades, perhaps centuries). The idea of not acquiring an archive or collection may be a still bigger risk—in some cases, without a permanent institutional home an archive or collection might vanish from the record, be delivered to the dump or otherwise lost for the ages.

Small and large pieces of the literary record may be lost to fire or flood or foreclosure, but most library collections are shot through with much less dramatic gaps. Like tree rings, a collection's empty spaces may show periods of scarce resources. Or they may reveal a curator's disinterest alongside her enthusiasms. If rich holdings in one area reveal something of a curator's genius, the scarcity of books and manuscripts in another area may suggest the limits of his literary imagination. Our days always become history and time itself may limit the imagination. Though I lose sleep trying to identify and address my own blind spots, I can't hope to know what the gaps I leave for future curators will reveal about my American poetry.

My past colleagues are present to me in many ways, but mostly they are guides and mentors. And yet I have my own work to do. I keep what has been handed down, preserve it, or modify it. I move among existing avenues adding my curiosities, my time-bound knowledge, the specific and often unaccountable opportunities of this moment. The Collection persists and like the proverbial river, somehow it is never the same Collection twice. It moves and changes in time, reflecting its inevitably evolving aesthetic, intellectual, and social contexts. My role as curator includes the attempt to gather the evidence of that evolution, allowing the collection to absorb it, to change alongside, or within, the worlds it documents.

Library collections have much in common with poetry: they tell our stories and house our secrets; they simultaneously inform and record the ways we know and understand ourselves. Like the art and life it documents, the archive may be starkly, luxuriously, openly, plainly, obscurely, and profoundly beautiful; it may be inexact, partial, frustrating, and opaque. Like poetry, indeed, like language, the archive offers moments of troubling ambiguity and moments of brilliant clarity. This complex richness can bring us back to the matter of *caring*, the curator's necessary preoccupation with the safety, visibility, availability, and long-term stability of his collection. The curator casts the idea of care in a most expansive way, aiming to answer at every turn the questions "who cares?" or "why care?" I mean, of course, that the curator is and must be an advocate for his collection and for that which allows it to remain vital: for funding and the development, description, and preservation it may enable; for imaginative engagement with collection users near and far—students, researchers, and interested readers of all kinds; and for long-term institutional commitments not only to our existing collections but also to the living arts they represent and the scholarly and curricular possibilities they afford.

Towards a Poetics of the Poetry Collection

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As archivists, editors, catalogers, and curators, we actively build collections, finding aids, cataloging records, editions of books, magazines, and exhibitions. These are all made things, and thus subject to the many kinds of analysis that the poet Robert Duncan (2014) implied when he once defined poetics as “the contemplation of the meaning of form” (p. 30). Thinking specifically about archival collections, one could imagine different kinds of archives informed by different notions of poetics. What I would like to do in these short and loosely connected remarks is to consider the specific form of the Poetry Collection writ large, and to argue that when Charles David Abbott began assembling the collection in the mid-1930s, he began building one that to this day has been defined by a poetics of impossibility, flux, multiplicity, relationality, use, and love.

From what we know of the collection’s earliest beginning, Abbott’s dream was founded from the start by the grandiose and impossible idea of representing all of modern poetry. Indeed, all of his writings about the Poetry Collection are obsessed with the necessity and haunted by the difficulty of “completion” in regards to acquiring all Anglophone poetry publications and, wherever possible, the manuscripts and letters of Anglophone poets. In a February 1940 essay in *Poetry* magazine, he articulates his desire to furnish manuscript “materials for the whole of modern poetic activity” (p. 266) by representing “every poet who, by the standards of any existing school of criticism, was of interest or importance—sociologically, historically, or aesthetically” (p. 259) in order to provide scholars with the “complete materials” (p. 258) they might desire. Eight years later, writing in the introduction to the collection *Poets at Work* (1948), he outlines in greater detail his “endeavor to build, piece by piece, a collection of books which would include every text by a twentieth-century poet writing in English” (p. 7) and defines the overall “goal” of his project to be nothing less than “the total representation of an era’s important poetry” (p. 33). Although for some curators the qualification of importance might lead to a “great books” collection, Abbott was catholic in his professional approach to representing the total state of Anglophone poetry, and in hindsight his collection parameters appear more pragmatic than partisan. And significantly, though he speaks of poetry as a totality, in practice he never assumes it to be fully totalizable. Instead, the idea of poetry’s “completion,” the whole art as

manifested in its great variety of materials forms, stands as something unrepresentable, a sublime idea at the center of the Poetry Collection's philosophy of collecting that always exceeds the actual physical collection. "There is no end to what remains still to do, since the ideal of completeness will always beckon," Abbott writes (p. 5). "And we would keep constantly in front of us the goal of completeness, that desert mirage, forever vanishing to reappear in the distance" (p. 7). Now almost eighty years after Abbott first opened the doors of the Poetry Collection, this impossible horizon beckons and recedes as strongly as ever in the twenty-first century. Collecting poetry to the extent that we do was and is an infinite task, and in a perverse sense it's very impossibility is in part what makes it so appealing; the "poetry project," as Abbott originally called it, remains forever unfinished.

In his attempt to represent Anglophone poetry in the largest scale possible, Abbott was making a conscience decision to collect for researchers of the future. While the hand of the curator is never completely absent, invisible as it sometimes may appear, Abbott's collecting parameters were an attempt to subvert or transcend—as much as one can—the individual tastes of the contemporary moment. At first, such a position might seem to be an escape from or evasion of the politics of poetry and the endless partisan debates which surround it, but in fact the belief that all poetry is worthy of being collected is itself an ideological position of inclusion, and one that places the burden of valorization on the future. Abbott was explicit in stating that he was curating a collection for the needs of scholars to come and the canons of tomorrow and since both are presently unknowable, the best bet for creating a collection of continuing use would be to cast as wide a net as possible and to collect without prejudice—as much as one can.

If the Poetry Collection was designed to provide telescopically a glimpse of poetry's totality, its microscopic level is predicated entirely on the basis of flux. From the beginning, Abbott (1948) sought to provide for researchers every published iteration of every poem written by twentieth-century poets, a textual evolution that he described as "the whole sequential body of a poet's printed work" (pp. 7-8), with the assumption that every different version would contain textual changes of large or small significance. Consequently, every publication after a poem's first appearance is selected for the collection on account of it being some kind of variation on what has come before. Difference thus becomes the preeminent criteria for selection, providing access to "the whole life history of a poem's...development" (Abbott, 1940, p. 259) originating in what the French call "avant-textes" and their potentially multiple revisions continuing through, in some cases, appearances and often first

publications in little magazines followed by first and all subsequent book publications (e.g. first and subsequent editions, selected works, collected works) up to and including all posthumous editions. From serials to books to broadsides to anthologies and onward, textual changes are likely to appear, and, since publishing is a social activity, these may not always be the intent of the writer. And even when textual variants don't appear, every different presentation of a poem presents or stages that work in a different context—from typography to page design to illustrations to accompanying texts etc.—which can lead to a host of interpretive differences. Much archival work begins in learning how to read to read these various contexts, be they visual, historical, cultural, or social.

Textually speaking, the Poetry Collection holds a multiplicity of versions and variants that both pluralizes and embodies our understanding of poems. In other words, what textual variation teaches is that there is no abstract text apart from each material manifestation, and the longer time one spends with manuscripts that harder it becomes to privilege one over another. Thus, as with the four folios of Shakespeare or the different editions of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* or Joyce's *Ulysses* or Moore's poem "Poetry," each edition stands discretely with its own provisional authority in some kind of evolutionary relationship with all the rest.

Central to Abbott's curatorial poetics is the belief that poems are always in motion, and that certain kinds of research are made possible through analysis of these changes. If we extrapolate outwards from the work of individual poems back to the state of poetry, is it too far a stretch to propose poetry itself as a liminal condition always in a state of transition into something else? In my imagination, at least, the state of the art is an endlessly open question, unsettled diachronically by its constant change and synchronically by its multiple and often contradictory forms and theories. Thus, to speak of *the* Poetry Collection implies something falsely monolithic, as poetry is always necessarily plural.

For Abbott, the particular value of literary manuscripts, or what he called "worksheets" in distinction to fair copies (1948, p. 4), lay in the evidence they provided—the most direct and intimate evidence available, in fact—of a writer's idiosyncratic creativity. As early as the late 1930s he was already soliciting American and British poets for complete "dossiers" containing all extant drafts of individual poems (1940, p. 259). He believed he was creating a "laboratory" for the study of creativity (1948, p. 5), a research collection that, by documenting one's revisionary practices, could provide an archeological "footprint" (1948, p. 14) or "a kind of biography of the author's mind" (1940, p. 259). One gets the sense in reading his various remarks that he thought he was lifting the veil on genius and allowing critics to move "closer towards the heart of

the poem's mystery" (1948, p. 12). To our ears today this can sound uncomfortably close to the concept of intentionality and the belief that one can ever know the mind of a writer. And yet, having heard last year a truly remarkable talk by Dirk Van Hulle in which, borrowing concepts from cognitive science, he interpreted passages from Beckett and Joyce's notebooks as a form of their "extensible mind"—i.e., the mind externalized on to paper—I've since been reconsidering what a "biography of the author's mind" might mean.

Like the materials they collect, archival collections are equally a product of their historical moment. In *Collecting as Modernist Practice*, Jeremy Braddock (2012) argues that the act of collecting is "a paradigmatic form of modernist art" that can be seen equally in modernist literary anthologies and private art collections that both intervened culturally to form what he calls a "provisional institution" (p. 2, 3). Extending the ideological nature of modernist anthologies and their function as an alternative social construction, he also identifies American university archives, and the Poetry Collection in particular, as originating from that same modernist impulse to collect. While I think he is correct that a certain homology exists, I don't think his theory can account for Abbott's conscious decision to collect widely and inclusively, which seems in fact a very different collecting strategy than what Braddock derives out of partisan anthologies, magazines, and art collections. In fact, there seems something anticipatorily postmodern in Abbott's conscious decision to collect inclusively, and at the same time something Romantic about his hope to make visible the traces of poetic inspiration and creativity. That said, I don't know exactly what Abbott would make of our collections of ephemera, audio materials, mail art, photographs, artwork, and zines; they are the product of what a later generation recognizes as essential to the study of poetry. He himself situated his project squarely in what he called "the age of psychology" defined by a "contemporary will to know" the innermost workings of the mind (1948, p. 32). Here Abbott's forecasts have not come true, as multitudes of psychologists have yet to turn to manuscript studies in the ways he imagined.

If all archives share an ontological condition, it is one based on the *relationality* of their constitutive parts. Thus we speak of archives as collections, assemblages, networks, or constellations. In a large specialized collection like the Poetry Collection, where letters cross back and forth from one person's archive to another, and different literary communities overlap in the publication histories of books and in the contents pages of little magazines, one can easily develop the paranoia that all things are potentially connected. Since first hearing it quoted by Peter Tytell, a forensic document examiner specializing in typewriters and typescripts,

I've taken as talismanic what's known as the exchange principle of Edmond Locard, father of modern police work, which I would carve as a motto above the Poetry Collection doors: "Every contact leaves a trace." One could spend several lifetimes in the archive and not even begin to exhaust the connections and contacts waiting to be discovered. I am also quite fond of Alfred North Whitehead, the beloved philosopher read by many a poet, and his approach to relationality as articulated in *Process and Reality*, according to which all individual things always already exist in some relationship with everything else in their environment. More specifically, I've often thought his concept of the world as an "extensive continuum" to be a fitting description of the archive:

This extensive continuum is one relational complex in which all potential objectifications find their niche. It underlies the whole world, past, present, and future.... An extensive continuum is a complex of entities united by the various allied relationships of whole to part, and of overlapping so as to possess common parts, and of contact, and of other relationships derived from these primary relationships.... This extensive continuum expresses the solidarity of all possible standpoints throughout the whole process of the world. (Whitehead, 1978, p. 66)

All archives must make a decision regarding the competing interests of preservation and use. From its beginnings the Poetry Collection has chosen a position somewhere closer perhaps to the latter end of the spectrum than other institutions. Eschewing the value of a research collection acquiring books in mint condition, Abbot (1948) writes that "Mint copies, bindings that no finger has ever touched, pages unsullied by the human eye, are fair game for the connoisseur; we do not shoot in the same field. Our books are for use" (p. 25). In this regard and others I am a pragmatist in my personal philosophy, and would argue that the true value of the Poetry Collection lies in the ongoing use that is made of it by scholars, students, poets, and others.

Given the etymology of the word curator from the Latin *curare*, meaning to care for, I'll end these remarks with an aspect of the Poetry Collection's poetics that is more difficult to quantify and yet remains essential to its operation: love. In the introduction to *Poets at Work*, Abbott (1948) recounts his initial decision to dedicate his yet-to-be-determined research collection to the acquisition of twentieth-century Anglophone poetry: "This kind of downright master-building compels a strict specialization. It requires love, a purposed and resolute attachment that will not diminish in strength, however long and slow the period of construction" (p. 6). What can we say about care or love as a curatorial requirement that doesn't sound cliché or sentimental? However, at the

risk of both, I agree with Abbott that to curate a collection like the Poetry Collection requires such an endless dedication. Without a doubt the past two curators have been for me personal examples of such care. And I cannot imagine a future of the Poetry Collection without such care—for the endless, impossible, beautiful commitment to the ongoing evolution of Anglophone poetry in all its material forms.

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Curralating

Michael Basinski, Curator
The Poetry Collection of the University Libraries
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York.

A piece of mail arrived addressed to Michael Basinski, Cur.

Now, for more than three decades, I have labored in the poetry mines of the Poetry Collection of the University Libraries, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York. As I grow ever older, the name of the Collection ever grows longer. The Poetry Collection began in 1935, according to Charles Abbott, that person who first imagined it and founded the Collection. He fashioned the Poetry Collection to satisfy a poetry book collecting compulsion and to satiate his desire for poetry. He was an English professor and trained to do just that. However, he was convoked by the poem. Many are called but few are chosen. I might have done other things. I do not know what. Perhaps mattress tester or I could

have been a truck driver like my father or worked on a line assembling refrigerators? But there was the poem and always poetry. A curator has no free will.

So, I have been here, as in the Poetry Collection, for ninety percent of my adult working life and for more than a third of the life of the Poetry Collection. It has always been poetry and specifically a library of poetry that held me in this place. This poetry library is more than a library. The Poetry Collection is part museum and art gallery, part old-time research library, a tourist destination, Delphi, a poetry chat room, some otherworldly hybrid from the future, and it is very specific. The Collection contains poetry, poetry, poetry from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and wants and wishes it all. It is a poetry monument unlike any other. The imagination of the Collection is seductive and intoxicating. It is demanding and I find the demands most satisfying. I like the craving. I didn't set out to do this. I had no interest in working in a library, curating a monument, and I had, really, no interest in a career. I never really liked work at all. I cannot, however, imagine being any other place. What was and is endlessly completely fulfilling was and is servitude, serving an ideal in the community of poets who make poetry, the most ignored art form or our many art forms. Severin von Kusiemski! It is not a job but it is. It is not a career but it is. It is not fun but it is. A curator passionately acquiesces to the imagination of a collection. A curator must be crazy.

It always amuses me when individuals comment that I have the best job in the world. As if I show up to play in the realm of the poem each day as one would, for instance, step outside and garden, in the warm sun with leisure in July with lemonade or a beer and after the weeds are gone there are just pheromones, bees, and blossoms and the rest of the day is waiting for the moon. Contrary, arriving at work is stepping into a poetry warehouse and its metaphor I pull from memory when I once worked at Buffalo China. I pile boxes of caprice cups in one place and load conservo plates by the box onto trailers destined for Holiday Inn and White Tower. Or even more focused the Poetry Collection is a boutique supermarket because there are the consumers, the shoppers. What might they want? A folder of John Ashbery letters? An obscure magazine from Paris or Calexico, California? The book *Bad Mayonnaise* is under Wyszomierski. Curators are self-delusional.

Most of what I do is invisible. I use as guide the 1930s mandate for the Poetry Collection of the University Libraries, and that is to manifest poetry's library of record, to create a paradise for the bibliographer of twentieth- and twenty-first-century poetry, and to construct a laboratory for the study of poetic imagination. So I set out each day in a trajectory

to do that, to make that perfect picture without knowing what it is, with hardly any pieces like budget, staff, space, and with some exaggerated romantic loyalty to poetry. A curator must be dreamy and pragmatic. Negative capability. Keats would love it. I think the Poetry Collection is Eldorado. “Gaily bedight, / A gallant knight, / In sunshine and in shadow.” Shadow yes, a curator is doomed to failure. The goal is always in sight and out of reach. This is a good thing. The sting keeps the eyes and ears open in the ever quickly changing patterns and geography of the realm of the poem.

The realm of the poem is a place I enjoy more than the power of stewardship, career, academic, and other worldly accolades. Poetry first or for all curators, it is highest summoning. The stuff must be only first and there is no other call to answer.

Curators I propose should hold an unrealistic idealism and a strong dissatisfaction with the status quo. These qualities allow one to ignore the whims of academic and cultural hubris and to resist the reality that the power of authority can with one pen stroke dampen any naive idealism or succinctly, lock the doors. Therefore, I suggest a curator is never professional and always a playful amateur. Being too professional is playing to the crowd and not to the monument. The centrifugal force of conformity must be resisted. Curators should always be afraid. Deep in the night between prolonged periods of tormented sleeplessness, I dream about excommunication, exile, and assassination. At night I dream about retreat.

Every now and then, over the years, I am asked what do I do. And I offer a canned response: I administrate, I build, I look for money, or I assist faculty and students, or I say I stand round and think about poetry or I put poetry on carts and push it here and there, scrape it up and pile it up, put it on shelves, put all the red clothbound, perfect spine poetry books together and smile, and go out for Chinese food! And rush off to watch *America's Got Talent*. There have been no poets on the show. What do I do? What do curators do? Intellectual, historical, institutional tradition as a group imposes form and wants curators to follow prescribed form, obvious, definable, conservative, and utilitarian form. I suggest, however, curators are involved with the manifesting and facilitating of new forms, otherworldly forms. “Something that you feel will find its own form,” Jack Kerouac. Curators create form.

Throwing a Hail Mary!

The University of Maryland Football Film Project

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Abstract

Documentation of the planning, preparation, and implementation of moving image preservation and digitization projects is difficult to find in scholarly sources, despite the large numbers of deteriorating films housed in archival repositories and the increasing demand to access and utilize audio-visual materials. “Throwing a Hail Mary!” chronicles one such project, undertaken over the last seven years at the University of Maryland (UMD). Since 2008, the University of Maryland Archives has raised over \$100,000 to preserve and make accessible its collection of historical football film footage. This project faced long odds, representing the Archives’ first venture into serious preservation work on its athletics-related holdings and its first major digitization project with funds raised privately, rather than through grant allocations. In this case study, the UMD Archives staff traces the progress of the entire digitization project from start to finish, recounts challenges faced along the way, celebrates successes, and outlines plans for the future, to serve as a guidepost for libraries and archives interested in starting similar projects at their own institutions.

Keywords: digitization, audio-visual preservation, fundraising, archives, outreach, athletics

Throwing a Hail Mary!

The University of Maryland Football Film Project

Anne S. K. Turkos, Jason G. Speck, and Amanda K. Hawk, University of Maryland, College Park

Since 2002, the University of Maryland (UMD) Archives knew it faced serious challenges to the long-term survival of the historical football film footage in its holdings, dating from 1946 to 1989. Staff recognized that it would take significant external fundraising to execute crucial preservation and access activities. It was only a matter of time before a major portion of the University of Maryland's athletic heritage would be lost, and swift action was necessary. It was not enough, however, to simply digitize the reels. The Archives also needed to make the footage easily accessible, so it could be enjoyed by former players, their families, and Terrapin fans everywhere, as well as utilized by the UMD Department of Intercollegiate Athletics and broadcast media outlets. To reach these goals of preservation and accessibility, the Archives overcame major hurdles, and through a series of partnerships and collaborations, developed a solution that met the needs of all stakeholders in the project.

Project Origins

One of the first preservation initiatives undertaken by the UMD Libraries' Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) audio-visual archivist, hired in 2007, was a survey of the condition of the film holdings in the various SCUA collection groups. This survey generated some bad, but not unexpected, news: one of the largest components of the University Archives' film collection, the historical football footage, was in serious trouble, with 68% of the over 2,100 reels showing signs of advanced chemical deterioration. The staff was not surprised by this verdict, since the footage had been stored under very poor conditions for a very long time before the transfer of the canisters to the Archives began in earnest five years earlier. Armed with this

information and filled with the sense of urgency it created, we met with the UMD Vice President for University Relations to determine what could be done to begin preserving this massive, endangered collection and other sports-related holdings in the Archives. We felt confident in approaching the vice president because of the strong relationship the University Archives had developed with him over a period of years through interactions in support of alumni events and the university's 150th anniversary.

Kickoff

Our Vice President encouraged us to begin meeting with major university athletics donors to help frame our fundraising strategy. With some of his staff, he helped us set up consulting sessions with these individuals to make them aware of the problems the film collection was facing and the urgency of finding a solution. The fundraising ideas resulting from brainstorming in these meetings, held in late 2007 and early 2008, proved very helpful throughout the course of the project, and the donor awareness generated ultimately resulted in the largest gift to the project to date.

The Vice President also assigned a long-time development officer to this fundraising initiative in summer 2008, whose assistance throughout the course of the project became critical to its success. As the daughter of a long-time faculty member and an alumna, the development officer had a long history with the university and knew a multitude of individuals who could be potential donors to the project. Also, as a member of the central development staff and not assigned to a particular unit, she could reach across college, school, and department boundaries to encourage financial gifts from donors the Libraries ordinarily could not reach.

Creating a Game Plan: Initial Fundraising

With assistance from the development officer, we established an account for the project with the University of Maryland College Park Foundation to manage the funds raised. This also enabled us to begin contacting potential donors. We set a tentative overall goal for the project of \$200,000, based on initial estimates from digitization vendors and the count of film reels in the collection. However, we stressed to donors that we were committed to converting as many reels as we possibly could with the amounts raised as we moved through the project, rather than waiting to raise the entire amount before proceeding. Time was of the essence, given the continuing deterioration of the footage.

There are a number of organizations who support athletics at the University of Maryland. Initially, the Archives team approached the three groups most likely to contribute to this project: the Terrapin Club Scholarship Fund, the M Club (Maryland's organization for letterwinners), and the Maryland Gridiron Network (our football booster program), and received \$10,000 donations from each of them. An anonymous donor matched this \$30,000, and we were well on our way to what we thought would be an easy push to our final goal, unaware of the major impact the economic downturn of 2008 would have on our work.

We fought hard for each dollar raised from then on and employed every fundraising tactic we could imagine. For a private funding-type approach to be successful, we needed to carefully target those most impacted by the potential gains of such a project—the players and boosters who feel so passionately about Maryland football. Once we explained and demonstrated the seriousness of the issue facing the records of their past endeavors, many of the players dug deep and gave what they could to move the project forward. Our development officer and the Archives staff participated in alumni events the football team hosted, including their annual player reunion for team alumni in the fall and golf outing in the spring. The Archives staff made direct appeals to former players and encouraged them to contact their teammates, providing them with talking points for conversations, and helping them prepare letters of support to send out; these player-to-player contacts turned out to be one of the most successful strategies for us. By the end of our campaign, in addition to the \$60,000 seed money, we raised \$49,883, of which 81% came from former players.

Our athletics department, facing its own budgetary issues, could not support the project financially, but was able to offer numerous kinds of other support. Our project team created a fundraising brochure for the project that we distributed widely at the football annual recruiting celebration, and a short commercial about the project ran on the Jumbotron in the football stadium during games. Terps' radio commentators promoted the project during game broadcasts. We issued press releases and worked to place stories about the project in on- and off-campus print and broadcast media. We even hosted a pre-game open house in the Archives for donors we felt had the strongest potential to contribute, and we shivered through a late-season, outdoor tailgate to highlight the results of the project. Some of these tactics worked better than others, but all raised visibility for the project.

One unexpected benefit of our fundraising and publicity efforts was the return of additional reels of film to the Archives. Over the years, the Athletic Department had maintained fairly loose control over the footage

generated by the football program. One head coach even hosted a meet-and-greet for alumni where he encouraged former players to take any cans of film they wanted from the piles around the room. Quite a number of players claimed pieces for their own that meant a lot to them, even editing some of them into personal highlight reels by clipping the original film. Once many of these former Terps learned about the project, they were willing to return reels in their possession to the University Archives, and in return we guaranteed they would receive a free DVD copy of their donation when the digital files were created. This was definitely a win-win for the Archives—we re-captured some fugitive university property, and the players acquired a personal copy of footage they had not been able to watch in years.

Selecting a Vendor

As our fundraising efforts continued, we began the process of identifying potential digitization vendors and soliciting proposals from those companies capable of handling the type of project we envisioned. This was no simple task, unfortunately, since our audio-visual archivist had left the university and had not been replaced. The University of Maryland College Park Foundation required a minimum of three proposals from vendors for a project of our size. We sent requests for quotes along with a project outline to a local vendor and other firms across the country that we identified through internet searches. It turned out to be quite challenging to find vendors who performed the type of work we needed. While we asked for very specific information from each firm, what we received from them varied in format and content, making comparisons difficult. A trip through the exhibitors hall at the 2009 Society of American Archivists annual meeting resulted in a conversation with representatives from the A/V preservation vendor SceneSavers who provided solid, easily comprehensible answers to all the questions we had asked other vendors, excellent references, and highly competitive pricing. A critical piece of the puzzle had been resolved.

Packing, Tracking, and Shipping

By December 2009, we began preparing the films for shipment to SceneSavers. Prior to packing, we first had to determine which films would comprise the initial shipment, as we did not have sufficient funds to send all that we wanted to have digitized. We chose some of the oldest films (1940s and 1950s), the most fragile, films that documented notable games (such as Queen Elizabeth II's attendance at a football game in

1957), and color highlight films from the 1970s. These films were pulled from the shelves and boxed, with a spreadsheet inventory prepared for the entire shipment. The spreadsheet contained the following metadata fields that would be used throughout the course of the project: game date, opponent, number of reels, reel size, reel type (e.g. first quarter, highlights), collection accession number, and box location. We left the films in their original metal canisters, but purchased hundreds of chemically-neutral plastic containers and cores to ship along with the films for re-housing once the digitization work was completed.

SceneSavers picked up the first shipment in February 2010. They brought a van with them from their headquarters in Covington, Kentucky, and took possession of the films and replacement canisters and cores right at the library's loading dock. This decision saved both the Archives and SceneSavers the expense and worry of hiring outside shippers and ensured an unbroken chain of custody. SceneSavers drove the shipment straight to their facility for inspection and treatment without any consolidation or intermediate stops.

Arrival and Digitization at SceneSavers

Upon arrival at SceneSavers, the films were unboxed, checked against the inventory, and given a cursory inspection. The majority of films we sent were 16mm 400-foot reels, each running an average of 12 minutes. Some of the highlight films were larger reels of 1,200 feet, lasting approximately 30 minutes. The smaller films were mostly black and white, with no sound, while the highlight reels were color projection prints with sound. In total, the first shipment contained 1,037 reels of film for cleaning, repair, digitization, and new film-to-film transfers.

Many projects require adjustments mid-stream, often for a combination of factors: cost, time, staff, etc. One adjustment we made fairly quickly after SceneSavers received the films was to eliminate the production of the film-to-film transfers. The prohibitive cost to create the transfers, ranging from \$40,000 to \$70,000, would have eaten up an enormous part of our budget and forced us to scale back on our project. We quickly made the decision to have SceneSavers do scene-by-scene color correction to create top-quality digital files versus the film-to-film copies.

Ultimately, we chose two types of digital files, MPEG-2 master files and MPEG-4 access copies, as our final, desired product. These decisions were made in concert with SceneSavers and the UMD Libraries' Digital Systems and Stewardship (DSS) staff based on four factors: quality of

file, size of file, usability of the file, and long-term preservation concerns. Both formats can easily be viewed via a variety of platforms and devices. These files would be returned to us on portable external hard drives and eventually be delivered to DSS for loading onto the UMD Libraries' servers for preservation and access by the viewing public.

Before the film could be digitized, however, it had to be restored to a usable condition. The films we sent had been heavily used, no doubt due primarily to their creation as teaching film for the football coaching staffs. The heavy use left the films scratched, dirty, and faded, with projector burns and other damage. Many of the films also exhibited sprocket hole damage, which required painstaking work on behalf of the film technicians to repair the holes one at a time.

The cleaned and repaired films were digitized, re-cored, and placed in the chemically neutral canisters prior to being returned. The Archives received the first shipment of films in the summer of 2010, less than six months after they left the building. However, much work remained to make the films accessible and to organize the newly returned materials.

The Films (and Files) Return Home

The first steps upon the initial films' return were to verify the shipment's contents and shelve the reels. This was a tricky process, due to the fact that when the films first arrived at the Archives in the early 2000s, they were stored vertically. The re-coring and re-housing of the films now dictated that they should be stored horizontally, so they could not go back to their original locations. We successfully found a new space in the coldest room in our building for the returned films to reside, and then had to do the tedious work of consolidating our original accessions and updating our inventories to reflect the new locations. On the plus side, this resulted in the creation of additional space for newer accessions to occupy.

At the same time the films were received, we received the hard drives with the digital files and negotiated with DSS to purchase additional server space. We copied a handful of files onto our computers for publicity purposes and sent the drives to DSS. DSS staff employed the detailed inventory that we created for the project as the basis for the metadata used for searching and viewing the films through our online digital repository, University AlbUM (<http://digital.lib.umd.edu/album>), built using Fedora. Our team also made short-term arrangements for DSS to create DVD copies on demand, until we could obtain the requisite hardware and software to do so ourselves.

We were overjoyed by our first look at the films—SceneSavers had

done an outstanding job, and seeing the university's football heritage come alive before our eyes was a huge thrill. One major discovery was footage of the first football game in UMD's current stadium, from September 1950, spliced onto a reel containing another game. We leveraged this tremendous find to garner a wealth of publicity and to appeal for further funding to support the project. The University Archivist appeared on local morning news to discuss the find and the project, and we were featured in several campus print and web venues as well. Everything seemed ripe for the project to take off, and we anticipated that soon everyone would be able to view the films online.

Fumble!

Unfortunately, we would have to wait an entire year, from summer 2010 to summer 2011, before any of our newly digitized football films were viewable online. Multiple delays hampered the project's progress, many of which were related to staffing shortages in our DSS unit. At one point, the unit went several months without a director, which meant that there was no one with whom we could connect who would agree to move the project forward. The project also encountered technical issues, as the UMD Libraries switched video streaming services in spring 2011, a change that was also delayed due to staffing issues.

By this time, any impetus we accumulated through the publicity from the summer 2010 blitz evaporated. Worse, some donors and supporters expressed their frustration at the lack of tangible progress, and an entire football season came and went without the Archives being able to show off the results of the project to raise new funds. We struggled to get any information about the status of the files or to get copies of DVDs for donors. It was not until a new director for DSS arrived in late spring 2011 that the project regained some of its former momentum. In May 2011, we were able to work with our DSS unit to create a written work plan and timeline to describe the files and mount them online and provide the Archives with access to all digital files as well as the equipment to make DVDs for patrons. Finally, in August 2011, the first 447 digital files were loaded into University AlbUM.

Delivering the Goods

Fall 2011 found the Archives in a much better position to capitalize on football season. By this point, we had several hundred files available for viewing online, and we had the capability to make DVD copies of games for former players, fans, and alumni. We created instruction sheets for

locating and searching the film database that we took to various football-related events to hand out to anyone who wished to view the films. Immediately, we began filling orders for films, primarily for former players who had not seen themselves on film in decades and whose families had not seen them play at all. We were ready to push for more funds and were still adding files to what had previously been mounted online, for a total of nearly 800 videos. The films have become some of the most frequently viewed items in our digital collections repository. Having them readily accessible has also allowed us to rapidly fill requests from a variety of media outlets, where doing so before was impossible.

Initiating a Second Phase

The football film project continued in the same vein for the next two years: accepting additional film reels from alumni and former players, filling orders for DVDs of the digitized games, and promoting the fundraising initiative at various campus and athletic events. In February 2014, the University Archives hired a much-needed Athletics Archivist to oversee collections and projects in this subject area. With nearly \$32,000 left in the Football Footage Preservation Fund, the UMD Archives staff planned for a second batch of films to be sent to SceneSavers later that year.

The new Athletics Archivist took on the immediate task of surveying the remaining football films and selecting candidates for the second batch. Part of this work included creating a spreadsheet containing data for every football film that had not been digitized. After a complete survey, we identified 1,089 additional football film reels in the Archives' collections. Due to the limited funds remaining in the project account, Archives staff was forced to reduce this total to approximately 160 reels for digitization. All game films donated by alumni and former football players were automatically included in the second phase. We then devised several criteria to determine which films should fill the remaining portion of the shipment: (a) reels that completed a partially digitized game, (b) reels from conference championship seasons or from seasons with very few games on film, and (c) winning games against conference opponents. Once we finalized our selection, the Athletics Archivist prepared the final spreadsheet and packed the batch for transfer.

SceneSavers arrived in May 2014 to pick up the second shipment of 162 reels. As with the first phase of this project, we provided chemically-neutral film canisters and cores for re-housing. The technical specifications also remained the same, with the vendor creating MPEG-2 and MPEG-4 files. An updated metadata template detailing essential

fields requested by the library's DSS unit accompanied the reels. The second shipment of films returned to the UMD Archives in April 2015. We will likely again experience some delay in uploading the video files to our digital collections site, due to an imminent update to UMD's Fedora management system, but this will be unavoidable. In the interim, the UMD Archives staff will begin creating complementary DVDs for the alumni who donated films to the collection.

Moving Forward

While we consider the football film project to be a great success, we continue to face additional challenges and look for ways to improve the process. After the first two rounds of preservation and digitization, the Archives still has close to 930 original football film reels in the collection that need attention. Of that total, 750 reels represent game footage from 122 individual contests, with the remainder of the reels covering practice, drill, and scrimmage footage or JV games. Following six years of outreach and promotion, the fundraising initiative is now at a halt, facing project fatigue. We must determine when to resume soliciting the additional funds needed to complete this initiative. Meanwhile, digitization can continue on a small-scale, on-demand basis whereby alumni or other interested parties can work with the Archives to digitize individual reels. However, the costs can be prohibitively expensive for the average person, with one 7-15 minute reel of 16mm film costing \$150-\$200 to preserve and digitize.

Future work for the football film preservation and digitization project includes the continued monitoring of the condition of the film. PH strips have been placed in almost all of the football film canisters, allowing us to check on the status of the film on a regular basis and take action to preserve reels that show signs of further deterioration. It remains to be seen whether we will be able to raise funds necessary to digitize all of the film before time runs out.

In the meantime, the Archives staff has been frequently asked if we will be undertaking a similar program for our basketball film, and we do plan to proceed with such a project, as that film also faces the same problems. As with the football films, we will target and heavily rely on the individuals and groups most emotionally tied to the outcome—former players, boosters, and the athletic department. More alarmingly, a recent digitization project consisting of 16 videotapes (Betacam, VHS, and U-Matic) spanning from 1986 to 2002 revealed the serious problems with magnetic tape formats—10 of the 16 tapes exhibited irreparable video or sound deterioration. We are now hoping to target high priority video

footage, in addition to film, through future digitization initiatives.

As a cultural institution charged with preserving and maintaining fragile audio-visual resources, it is imperative that the UMD Archives staff find innovative ways to save our collections before they become unplayable. Most grant opportunities focus specifically on the arts and humanities or other moving image collections with a broad educational appeal, thus excluding most sports-related film, so we may have to turn to private funding or seek other collaborators like university athletics departments or booster organizations to raise the necessary funds. If the huge problem of deteriorating athletic film can be folded into a library-wide preservation survey of audio-visual materials, perhaps this approach could lead to a preservation grant for all materials at risk. Thinking of creative funding strategies such as these may be essential to care for these enormous segments of a university's athletic heritage, which may soon be lost without quick action.

Our project was a "Hail Mary," but not one without significant planning and determination. We gathered irrefutable evidence of a serious problem with a potentially devastating impact and carefully targeted key stakeholders to garner early support. Our team approached the individuals and organizations most likely to be affected by this impending disaster and acquired a number of supporters who gave time, money, and endorsements without which the project would not have succeeded. We took advantage of every break that came our way and never lost focus when the project lagged or ran into obstacles. Additionally, we promoted ourselves relentlessly and chose materials to save based on specific criteria. To complete a Hail Mary, then, takes the right play call, proper execution, and the ability to capitalize on one's good fortune.

In addition to the preservation of a critical part of the university's athletic heritage, another positive end result of this project was the increased accessibility to the films. Seeing football players from the 1960s tear up because they had never seen themselves play, or watching them show the footage to their grandchildren, is something the Archives staff will never forget. We forged alliances with people previously unfamiliar with the Archives and created new relationships we can utilize going forward. We now know that we can accomplish such a project, and also know exactly what kind of effort a project of this magnitude entails. The ability to click a link and see some of Maryland's greatest games and players is truly a victory in which all participants can take great pride.

The Simón S. Lucuix Río de la Plata Library

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Abstract

The circumstances of collection development and use vary wildly. The story of the library created between 1919 and 1963 by Simón Lucuix in Montevideo, Uruguay, and then purchased by the University of Texas in 1963, provides instructive scenarios in which to observe the continually changing needs and desires that impact collection development. The scenarios reveal the complex social relationships that created this library and the tumultuous political events that dispersed it. This account of the altered contexts of the Simón Lucuix Río de la Plata Library intends to challenge readers to research this collection and the history of those they steward.

Keywords: Simón S. Lucuix; Río de la Plata, Uruguay; private library; political agency; collection development; acquisitions

The Simón S. Lucuix Río de la Plata Library

María E. González Marinas, Cultural Heritage C&P Consultants

In January 2007, the University of Texas Libraries signed an agreement with Google to digitize close to a million books from its renowned Benson Latin American Collection in Austin, Texas. Within months of the agreement, dozens of titles from the Benson began to appear online, some of them bearing a bookplate identifying the titles as belonging to the Simón S. Lucuix Río de la Plata Library. As part of a team tasked to determine the scope of fair use of the texts to be displayed online by Google, I was responsible for investigating copyright laws of various Latin American countries. Already curious about the Lucuix library and encouraged by the equitable copyright framework established by Uruguay, I began my research about these titles, many of them published in Montevideo.

I discovered that very few of the librarians at the University of Texas (UT) knew about the Lucuix collection. Of the two or three that had heard of it, only one librarian had assisted in cataloging the original acquisition. To my surprise, the 1963 acquisition of the Lucuix private library turned out to be a major—but forgotten—purchase by the UT Libraries. The details of the transaction were lost to memory, but were documented in the annual reports of the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM).¹

The Lucuix library represented a phenomenal acquisition for UT Libraries and an incomprehensible feat for a collector in Uruguay. Few libraries of its scope and size existed in Montevideo or anywhere in

1. Reports from member research libraries with Latin American collections, including the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library, appeared regularly in the SALALM Annual Reports.

THE LATIN AMERICAN COLLECTION
of
THE LIBRARY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN



THE SIMON LUCUIX
RIO DE LA PLATA LIBRARY
Purchased
1963

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81
S359

LATIN AMERICAN COLLECTION

Figure 1. Simón Lucuix Río de la Plata Library bookplate. Photograph taken by author. Image courtesy of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

Uruguay in the 1960s. Of the purchases recorded in research library annual reports, the Lucuix was by far the largest single collection acquired by SALALM members during the 1960s. Other collections acquired by American universities between 1961 and 1971 seldom amounted to more than 2,000 to 3,000 titles, which makes it surprising to find so little information about the 20,000-volume Lucuix library.

In December 2007, when I was immersed in uncovering these details, I read that the Supreme Court of Uruguay indicted their ex-President General Gregorio Alvarez for human rights violations committed during his dictatorship. To exiles from Latin American countries like myself, who have given up language, culture, family, and home—and yes, sizable libraries—to escape totalitarian governments, these were potent words. The trial of General Gregorio Alvarez would cast a bright light on the rationale for dismembering a nation, specifically its artists and intellectuals. For me, the conjunction of our digitizing project and events half a world away opened up new dimensions about the dislocation of the Lucuix collection. Why had Lucuix given up this magnificent library? Why did no institution in Uruguay acquire it? What circumstances propel individuals, institutions, or nations to part with collections acquired over decades?

Over the years, the narrative that follows has taken form. Much remains unexplained, and a biography of Simón S. Lucuix, once an influential educator in schools for the elite, is still unwritten. His friends and protégés are long dead or passing; no one I have contacted in Uruguay can recall him. One historian remembers visiting the Lucuix



Figure 2. Lucuix Library books recognizable on the shelves of the circulating stacks. Photograph taken by author. Image courtesy of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

library as a young student. The building that housed the library then is the current location of the Embassy of Lebanon.

Present Day Uruguay

On October 22, 2009, the Supreme Court of Uruguay convicted former Uruguayan dictator Gregorio Álvarez (1981–1985) of thirty-seven counts of murder related to clandestine prisoner transfers. On February 10, 2010, the same court sentenced ex-President, turned dictator, Juan María Bordaberry (1972–1976) to thirty years in prison for two murders and nine forced disappearances. On May 8, 2013, military careerist Miguel Dalmao (1971–2010) was sentenced to twenty-eight years for the torture and murder in 1973 of an avowed left-wing academic. Thus continues a litany of sentences for crimes committed by the highest-ranking elected officials and military officers in Uruguay between 1973 and 1985.² Many more cases are pending.

The crimes committed include murder, extreme psychological and physical torture, indefinite incarceration without cause, and the removal of children from politically suspect families. Night arrests, interrogations, and lesser human rights offenses were committed with the intention of intimidating all citizens. At one point, the military rounded up and imprisoned thousands of individuals for their “unorthodox” political beliefs. To escape the threat, about ten percent of the population went into exile, including Uruguay’s artists and literary figures.

An unprecedented wave of political repression swept through Uruguay after June 1973, when President Bordaberry dissolved the Parliament, suspended the Constitution, and began to rule by decree, in effect putting the military in charge. Not long after, a military council in turn deposed Bordaberry and began a systematic purge of newspapers, publishing houses, schools, universities, and public agencies. The military effectively suppressed labor unions and all opposition political parties by imprisoning or disappearing left-leaning political figures.

To defend their actions, officials—then in charge—now claim that the country had been at war with internal enemies, communists, Marxists, and insurgents like the Tupamaros, an urban guerilla group. The military councils had sought to stem the “red tide” emboldened by the revolution in Cuba. The Uruguayan Tupamaros had gained prominence with the 1970 murder of United State Central Intelligence Agency adviser Daniel Mittrione, and a defiant escape from the Punta Carretas prison in September 1971.³

2. Comprehensive documentation about the state crimes perpetrated in Uruguay during this period has been catalogued in *Investigación histórica sobre la dictadura y el terrorismo de estado en el Uruguay, 1973–1985*. The three-volume set was published in 2008 by the Comisión Sectorial de Investigación Científica of the Universidad de la República Oriental del Uruguay.

3. The “Dirty War,” a deadly game of cat-and mouse escalated in Uruguay after July 1970, when the Tupamaros drugged Mittrione, shot him, and left his body in a car, later found by the authorities.

Prelude to Repression

How could Uruguay, a country that had been free of political violence for decades, have become a site of such self-destructive, criminal animosities? Up until the late 1950s, the people of Uruguay had considered themselves positively as the “Switzerland of Latin America” and Montevideo nothing short of a “new” Athens. Prosperity based on the export of meat, leather, and wool to nations engaged in two World Wars and the Korean War had sufficed to extend a progressivist vision promulgated by the Colorado Party. For the first six decades of the 20th century, Uruguayan society had been characterized as homogeneous, middle-class, urbane, liberal, modernizing, and well-educated. Citizens were supported by a wide coverage of services, including public education and health. One of the resounding myths echoing through years of incredulity and now nostalgia is the refrain, “Like Uruguay, there is no other.”

Fragmentation and Paralysis

After the end of the Korean War in 1953, Uruguay’s economy began to stall. Economic reforms failed. Wages and pensions plummeted; prices began to rise. Rural and labor associations began to agitate for better conditions and to hold on to hard-fought gains. In 1958, voters ejected the Colorado Party from the highest levels of political power the party had held for ten decades. The opposing Partido Nacional parlayed a mismatched coalition of rural representatives onto the national political stage, emphasizing decentralization and highlighting the interests of the agricultural interior. However, not long thereafter, workers noted that the capital needed to enlarge their sectors, to make them competitive in world markets, was instead going into speculative ventures. Popular discontent was growing into rebellion.

The already swollen public sector could not accommodate the growing number of unemployed. Many jobs had become sinecures offered by the politicians of both parties as favors in exchange for votes. In the capital city of Montevideo, as in the interior, unions of workers accompanied by students began to demonstrate publicly. Meanwhile, the United States was pressuring Uruguay and other countries in Latin America to professionalize their armed forces in order to integrate as a hemispheric Cold War force against incursions by the Soviet bloc.

Disillusionment

To date, many still claim that the failure was one of political imagination. A critical aspect of the disillusionment many felt centered on the failure of secondary education (high school) to propel young people into improved positions in society. Young people from the middle and lower-middle classes were seldom able to attend the higher levels of education that were previously open to them during the years of prosperity. A larger number of young women also began to attend the higher grades, raising expectations of employment in positions that would not be available to them without the requisite political patronage.

The so-called failure of political imagination may well have been a result of an inadequate education, but at higher levels of society. As much schooling as the ruling elite received, the training did not adequately prepare leaders to manage the changes brought about by technologically advancing markets and global finance. Reforms to make courses and schools more “practical, stimulating and efficient” did not begin until the early 1960s. The new diversified curricula finally allowed flexibility for students to pursue their interests and aptitudes with the assistance of the instructor, who functioned more as a tutor than an examiner.⁴ Before then, however, the curriculum was rigorous, but depended on rote learning of classic works. After the required thirty plus hours of class, students had to complete prescribed homework assignments. A national directorate structured assignments to prepare students for the exams required to gain admittance to advanced studies into select professional specializations.

An early critic of the intellectual and artistic environment of mid-century Uruguay, author and publisher Angel Rama, found fault with the long-term consequences of the education dispensed to his generation. In *La Generación Crítica: 1939–1969*, Rama (1972) noted that the education on offer to students was not only dull but also incoherent. The reality that surrounded young people was alive with film, radio, television, intercontinental flight, and the heady solidarity of Spanish exiles from fascist Spain. Young people of Rama’s generation, who were born around 1920, produced mature work around the 1940s, and attained some sort of prestige in the 1960s, confronted as he did, a society that was dynamic but fracturing. Perhaps more disturbing was the fact that the young saw no way of integrating themselves into the dominant classes or of making a living as creative people.

Rama also noted that many members of the educated middle classes of his generation moved into the less prestigious, but remunerative social sciences and technical fields. He thought that because of these choices,

4. Carolina Greising provides a general overview of education during and after 1950 in “La educación Uruguaya, 1960–1984,” an essay that appears in Bejamín Nahum’s compendium *Medio siglo de historia Uruguaya, 1960–2010*, published in Montevideo by Banda Oriental in 2013.

they no longer were active agents of their culture and had become instead functionaries, mere spectators. Their role as spectators—or at best—as critics, created an untenable anxiety. As critical spectators, they could more easily see the nepotism, the self-dealing, and the corrosion of democratic values. Relatively marginalized as intellectuals, his generation, la Generación Crítica, was no longer in a position to mediate or challenge conventional wisdom. The splintering of political parties and the emergence of new radical associations on the right and left indicated the need for additional outlets to exercise leadership, gain influence, and take corrective action.

Education in Uruguay, 1950s to early 1960s

Simón Santiago Lucuix (no dates available), a teacher and official examiner during the period in question, provides a singular opportunity to see if Angel Rama's critique was apt. Between the mid-1930s and late 1950s, Lucuix taught several courses in history and literature at the Instituto Alfredo Vazquez Acevedo (IAVA). The IAVA was a prestigious college preparatory school, sometimes called the “school of presidents,” because so many of Uruguay's top officials enrolled there. Prior to his service at IAVA, Lucuix also had served as an examiner for the Consejo Nacional de Enseñanza as well as a docent at the venerable Liceo Francés.

The topics Lucuix covered and his teaching style become apparent from the lecture notes and notebooks remaining in his small archive. His notes cover complete courses on European literature, colonial history of the Americas, the French Revolution, and the Gaucho and customs of the Pampas. The literature course included an overview from Greek tragedies and Roman speeches to the plays of Racine and the essays by Voltaire. Lucuix organized the notes in chronological order, with



Figure 3. Simon S. Lucuix, 4th from the right in rear, with other educators at Tienda Inglesa, no date. Detail of a photograph in the Simon S. Lucuix Papers. Image courtesy of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

preambles punctuated by bullet points. He set up each section as a series of probing questions with corresponding answers, much like a catechism. Undoubtedly, these were the “correct” answers which the student then had to absorb and, hopefully, be taught to challenge.

The otherwise secular curriculum emphasized logical reasoning and critical thinking as well as character building. The presentation of the material projected a historical continuum of social betterment, a positivist perspective. Even the evolution of vernacular languages from the Latin was posited as a cultural improvement. Lucuix assumed all students shared the same values and ethics and believed the intention of study was the development of a young person’s abilities and talents to become decent, measured, and honest for the benefit of democratic society. Historical figures, invariably male, were described as “glorious,” valiant,” “decorous,” or “indefatigable,” and always in action.

Undoubtedly, Lucuix fulfilled his role as teacher and examiner satisfactorily. He regularly received requests to serve various institutions as examiner and as far as the record of his public activities shows, he consistently sought posts as director of conferences and as head of educational programs. Rama may have been right about many of the shortcomings of education in Uruguay, but he was writing in 1971 and 1972, with the advantage of many years of hindsight.

In many ways, Lucuix was very much a man of the receding past. Up until the early 1960s, Uruguayan scholars felt that they were collecting and organizing documents and artifacts that would eventually yield useful truths about the country, its peoples and history. His generation had been tasked with revising myths and national identities; they had not been charged with preparing youth for a technologically advancing future, nor to prepare masses of students for jobs.

Critical studies in Uruguay also were hampered by the lack of basic research materials. Vital documents had been taken to Spain in colonial times or misplaced during the wars for independence. Even the seminal publication of what became the National Archives of Uruguay, *Revista del Archivo Administrativo*, consisted of compilations and transcriptions of 18th- and 19th-century documents that had been retained in the government building in Montevideo during colonial times. In the early 1930s, Elzear S. Giuffra personally had to consult sixty-seven cartographers, engineers, geologists, historians, and naturalists to compile his geography of Uruguay. The social sciences and related methodologies were not institutionalized in Uruguay until the late 1950s. No demographic census had been taken between 1908 and 1963, making collective self-awareness almost impossible. To what extent all these

factors played in the debate that befell Uruguay continues to be a topic of contention, but the analysis is instructive.

The Personal Papers of Simón Santiago Lucúx

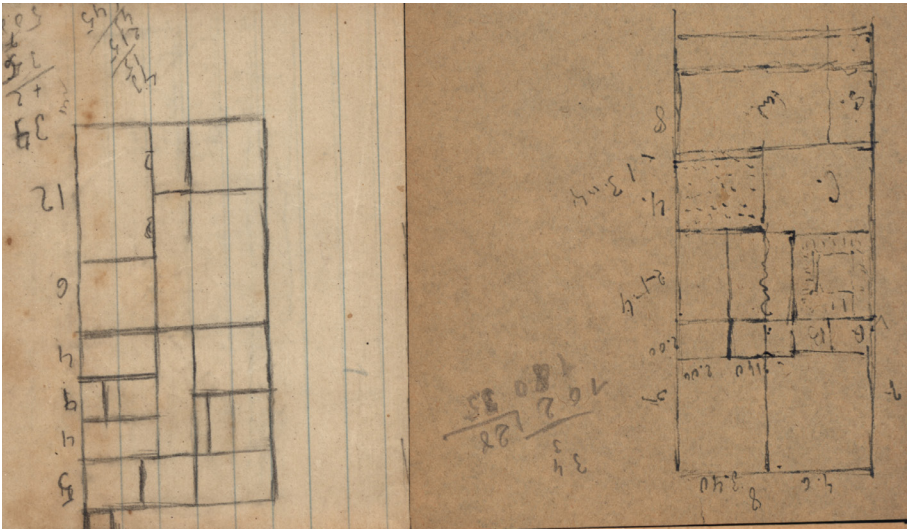


Figure 4. Lucúx sketches of bookcases. Details from loose sketches in the Simón S. Lucúx Papers. Image courtesy of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

Simón S. Lucúx seems to have been a person of status and privilege, but neither the briefest biographical note nor a necrology is available. It is a misfortune that what little is known about this complex man can only be deduced from the haphazardly saved items now stored in seven archival boxes. The boxes hold unsorted personal correspondence, mounds of newspaper clippings, notebooks, class materials, political broadsides, invoices, receipts, advertisements and promotional literature about men's fine clothing and liquor, photographs, event programs, student examination papers, pamphlets, and sketches of bookcases.⁵

He was well connected. Lucúx became involved in politics between 1916 and 1922, when he appeared as a candidate for the national assembly. He was a compatriot of Juan Campiisteguy, who eventually became president of Uruguay in 1927, as a Riverista (conservative in the nationalist, progressive party) in the Colorado Party. Lucúx admired Campiisteguy, whose political career he followed closely. In addition to his political affiliations, Lucúx attended affairs of state and educational functions as well as social events at the Yacht and Jockey Clubs in Montevideo.

Lucúx joined the Instituto Histórico y Geográfico del Uruguay in 1925; served as director of Programs and Conferences during the 1940s; and was the director of the Revista at least until the mid-to-late 1950s. He was a founding member of the Sociedad de los Amigos de Arqueología,

5. All Lucúx papers referenced here are available in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Division of the Benson Latin American Collection at the University of Texas at Austin. None of the material has been processed at the time of this writing.

where he cemented his relationships with Felipe Ferreiro y Horacio Arredondo. Among his bibliophile friends are many distinguished Uruguayan educators, historians, bibliographers, and ethnologists such as Fernando O. Assunção, Carlos Real de Azúa, Juan Carlos Gómez Haedo, Luis A. Musso, Eugenio Petit Muñoz, and Juan Ernesto Pivel Devoto.⁶

Between 1917 and 1963, Lucuix lived at five different addresses, all within a kilometer of the axis created by Bulevar Artigas and Avenida General Rivera. From there, his longest walk, of about four kilometers, would have been to Barreiro y Ramos, booksellers, and to the Bazar del Japón, a close by haberdashery. The places he frequented—the various institutes, the university, art galleries, observatory, national archives, and the national library—were located much closer; most were within one to three kilometers of his home. Along his path, he would encounter the countless monuments he diligently studied.

Lucuix's newspaper clippings revealed his penchant for considering multiple sides of an issue. For two major events in the diplomatic affairs of Uruguay, Lucuix collected articles from media presenting distinct perspectives. About the “Pacto de Paz y Seguridad” signed in April 1948, he collected articles from *La Prensa*, *El Diario*, and *El Día*. About the “Tratado de ayuda militar” signed on June 26, 1952, he clipped from *El Diario*, *El Día*, *Marcha* and *El Debate*, unaffiliated right, Colorado Party, unaffiliated left, and Partido Nacional, respectively.

Another telling item is a request from Conrado F. Monfort, dated June 26, 1957, entreating Lucuix to provide him with materials about the French biologist Étienne Saint-Hilaire and other explorers who had passed through the Río Negro basin. Monfort, editor of *El Litoral*—an independent newspaper published in Fray Bentos, Uruguay—was planning a surprise commemorative issue of the newspaper.

Lucuix received many letters like Monfort's, requesting books or thanking him for his bibliographic assistance and solicitudes. Often, grateful authors would send copies of their books in return; among these authors were literary critic Enrique Bianchi, architect Alfredo R. Campos, Franco-apologist Tomás Boada, and Uruguayan military Major Horacio J. Vino, a bewildering representation of political orientations and professions.

Don Lucuix's Río de la Plata Library

Between 1920 and 1963, Lucuix amassed a library of 18,000 titles in over 21,000 volumes. Current catalog records of the books in his library show titles published between 1698 and 1963 in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, France, Italy, Peru, Portugal, Spain, and Uruguay as well as in the United

6. Although many years his junior, Pivel Devoto's life parallels Lucuix's trajectory as an educator, bibliophile, and public figure. Like Lucuix, Pivel Devoto taught at the prestigious Instituto Acevedo and helped shape several members of the military. Pivel Devoto also built a sizable library, which he and his family donated to the University of Montevideo. The Archivo General de la Nación [Uruguay] houses his extensive archives. For some insight on the pedagogical concerns and the economic life of Pivel Devoto, see the text of an interview carried out by Alicia Vidaurreta and published in the February 1989 issue of *The Hispanic American Historical Review*.



Figure 5. Lucuix collection of business cards sent by friends with notes. Composite from various business cards in the Simón S. Lucuix Papers. Image courtesy of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

Kingdom and the United States. The books, printed in English, French, German, Latin, and Spanish, covered subjects from art, archeology and architecture to folklore, history, jurisprudence, law, literature, philosophy, political science, and religion as well as chemistry, natural history, and medicine.

His assiduous collecting included the purchase of new and used books at major bookshops in Argentina, Brazil, Spain, and Uruguay. In Montevideo, he relied on the services of Barreiro y Ramos, Adolfo Linardi, Palacio del Libro, and El Librero de la Feria. In Buenos Aires, he dealt with Benito and José Tiscornia, El Ateneo, Librería La Incógnita, and Librería del Plata. He did business with many other dealers and auction houses internationally. He purchased entire libraries or parts of them.

Lucuix also maintained an extensive program of exchange. From his position as editor of the *Revista* of the Instituto Histórico y Geográfico del Uruguay (IHGU), Lucuix sustained a fruitful correspondence with directors of various research centers, embassies, and the ministries of several countries who provided him with current publications.

He often received hard-to-get books through diplomatic pouch from friends located in far-flung Uruguayan embassies in Brazil, Peru, and the United States. He was a close friend of José A. Mora, Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington, D.C. between 1956 and 1968. Mora became a loyal correspondent with whom Lucuix could discuss books, current events, and political observations. In one of his letters, Mora mentions how impressed he had been by one of the programs broadcast by Radio Ariel; the program featured a talk by Juan José Carvajal, a political scientist active in the 1950s.

Correspondents, Borrowers, and Visitors

Lucuix's library satisfied his need to collect, his bibliophilia. It also satisfied his need to organize knowledge into some aesthetically pleasing and useful resource. His many scaled drawings of bookcases attest to that. He was a fastidious indexer and gloried in the work of Estanislao Zeballos, director of *Revista de Derecho*; and Alfredo Bianchi and Roberto Giusti, who edited *Revista Nuestros*. Lucuix respected Franco-Argentine librarian Paul Groussac, whom Lucuix considered a severe teacher.

The library served Lucuix as a resource for the many speeches he presented. He served as the master of ceremonies when the Amigos del Arte exhibit "El Gaucho y Su Medio" opened to great fanfare in May 1962. Lucuix was sought out to praise many Uruguayan intellectuals and to assist in paying homage to them at their funerals. He wrote the necrologies for bibliographers, historians, and geographers such as Carlos Ferrés, Silvestre Mato, José Toribio Medina, Francisco J. Ros, Julio María Sosa, José Pedro Varela, and Orosman Vázquez Ledesma. His words appeared as prologues in books; none have been collected in a single book edition or studied.

He lent his books and welcomed many to his library. Bibliographer Luis Musso consulted with Lucuix frequently in preparation for his long list of works which included library cataloguing works as well as annotated bibliographies of Uruguayan librarians and of journalists. Lucuix collaborated with Eduardo Gomez in elaborate searches about Artigas' decision-making and governance, when Gomez was writing an article about the applicability of Artigas' strategies to current events. He helped Francisco Oliveres hatch ideas for what became the historical museum in the capital of Treinta y Tres province. The library became an intimate extension of Montevideo's scholarly and intellectual life, but it provided Lucuix an opportunity to make protégés out of his more distinguished contemporaries. Lucuix only completed the equivalent of high school. Many of his colleagues had doctorates.

Given his contacts and resources, could Lucuix have acted any differently? Even if he could have foreseen what befell Uruguay within the decade or sensed that political and economic events were leading into a catastrophic situation, what changes could he and his colleagues have brought about to avert the dictatorship? Was the violent dictatorship inevitable?

Language and Area Studies in the United States

Circumstances in the United States differed at the time. Violence at the national level had not yet erupted nor had Vietnam drained its coffers. In 1963, the United States was expanding culturally, establishing federal agencies to fund the arts, humanities and international exchange. The Carnegie Corporation, the Rockefeller, and Ford Foundations were investing substantial sums to reinforce Latin American area studies and research centers. Sputnik and the Cuban Revolution had motivated the U.S. Congress to develop American expertise in Latin America and to fund language and area studies through the National Education Defense Act.

Unnerved by the lagging recognition of the Latin American research programs at UT, Humanities professor Harry H. Ransom persuaded university administrators to pursue the new funding to enhance the existing library collections. Ransom emphasized that UT once had led area studies when history professors Herbert Bolton and Eugene Barker were pioneering the field at the turn of the century. In the 1940s, the university had pursued funds aggressively to develop the Institute for Latin American Studies. Regents, administrators, librarians, and students had worked in concert to acquire significant collections like the Bexar Archives, the Genaro García, the Miguel Gondras, and the Arturo Taracena collections. Acquiring efforts then slowed. Ransom explained that these collections were essential, but had to be supplemented with grander acquisitions to attract researchers and serve their unique needs.

The Latin American Cooperative Acquisition Program

A handful of librarians and booksellers who understood the difficulties of locating and obtaining materials from Latin America formed into a specialized organization, the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM). A group within that organization formed what became the Latin American Cooperative Acquisition Program (LACAP). Members of LACAP included former Librarian of Congress Luther Evans, OAS Librarian Marietta Daniels Shepard, UT

Librarian Nettie Lee Benson, New York Public Librarian Robert Kingery, and international bookseller Stechert-Hafner representative Dominick Coppola. The group installed Shepard as Secretary and dispatched Benson, on leave from UT, as the first purchasing agent for Stechert-Hafner on behalf of LACAP.⁷

When he became UT President and then Chancellor, Ransom actively supported the acquisition plans laid out by Nettie Lee Benson. Benson had drawn up detailed plans for developing a comprehensive Latin American collection and bolstered her ambition with an unarguable rationale. Ransom too was a bibliophile and an advocate for large-scale library acquisitions. Both understood the role that the purchase of private libraries played in developing first-rate research collections and acquired them in large numbers. They also understood that to create truly great research collections, purchases had to be enriched with additional materials. Space, staff, and time were also needed.

Benson scoured bookshops, printing presses, private libraries, government agencies, and universities all over Latin America during three trips that occupied her for fifteen months. Her reports from the trips do not provide details about the individuals she met. However, in a 1983 article that appeared in the UT publication *Discovery*, Benson disclosed that of all the private libraries she examined, the Lucuix collection was the only one she thought worthy of acquisition by UT. She wrote to Ransom urging its purchase.

The University of Texas Advances

Stechert-Hafner, Inc. completed the purchase of the Lucuix library on behalf of UT on November 1, 1963. According to the bill of sale signed by Lucuix, his library of 21,363 volumes was packed into 604 boxes, and bailed into 10 shipping containers. The purchase amount was US\$40,000.00—the equivalent of at least US\$300,000.00 today.

It is likely that economic circumstances forced Lucuix to sell his books. The inflation rate was about 44% in Uruguay when the sale was complete in 1963; inflation then rose to 88% in 1965; and 135% in 1967. There is also a chance that Lucuix foresaw the need to get rid of his collection. He owned books fated for destruction under the harsh censorship enforced by the dictatorship.

Delays...

Formalities in the transaction between Stechert-Hafner and UT delayed the arrival of the books until 1966. By then, the UT collections had

7. The published literature about Latin American acquisitions made through the Farmington Plan and through LACAP is scattered, but discoverable. A singular book by M.J. Savary, *The Latin American Cooperative Acquisitions Program: An imaginative venture*, sketches LACAP's activities up until the time the book was published by Hafner in 1968.

swollen to 2 million volumes and countless manuscripts, maps, images, and recordings. The materials were overflowing in the stacks of the central library. Plans were drawn up to build three new libraries on campus. One of the buildings, inaugurated in 1971, now houses the Latin American Collection and is named after its leader, Nettie Lee Benson.

Cataloging of the Lucuix books continued through the 1970s as did the ruthless weeding. Individual titles that did not fit the Benson collection profile were sent to other libraries on campus. As of this writing, only 4,029 of the original 18,000 titles remain on hand. Of these, 1,100 are ensconced in the Benson's Rare Book Room and 194 still circulate from the main campus library. The balance is listed under the Benson's circulating collection, but an untold number of these are kept in offsite storage.

Over the years, the Lucuix library has been lauded variously for its size and quality; as a companion to the Miguel Gondras collection of manuscripts about colonial Paraguay; or as the bearer of several original editions of *Martin Fierro*. The Lucuix collection has been groomed, picked over, scattered, and almost forgotten as interests, needs, and modes of research have changed.

The bookplate designed to identify individual items from the Lucuix Collection reveals how UT administrators and librarians understood this treasure trove. The bookplate displays a simple silhouette of the ombú tree, with its abundant crown and immense, gnarly roots. Symbolically, the ombú appears repeatedly in the literature of Uruguay as a “place” of



Figure 6. Variety of Lucuix Library materials available to researchers. Photograph by author. Image courtesy of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

refuge, a marker in the vast landscape. The ombú is uniquely associated with the figure of the gaucho and is the only tree that grows in the pampas. Indeed, the ombú is not a tree, but a giant weed that grows from thirty to forty feet in height and may live for centuries. The ombú accumulates water in its capacious trunk so it can survive through many punishing droughts.

Despite the deaccessioning that has reduced the total number of titles to less than a third of the original count; the Lucuix collection still nourishes researchers. For instance, early editions of many Uruguayan classics are still to be found in their original bindings. Any search of the UT Library catalog yields the names of little studied publishers in connection with well-known authors and titles; a paradise of sorts for print culture and history of the book researchers. Significant bibliographies may be prepared on subjects ranging from Antarctic exploration and natural history of the pampas through the folklore that is at the root of contemporary rioplatense music.

At another level, the close study of the formation and sale of the Lucuix library reveals the actions and values of individuals who peopled the overlapping knowledge networks that still influence Latin American studies today. The dislocation and dismembering of the collection itself, as well as the persistence of its core, serve as a rich case for the study of the formation and deformations of collections and the effort necessary to reestablish educational and intellectual infrastructures after a period of suppression and systematic destruction.

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Objects in the Reading Room:

Centralizing Museum Collection Access through the Library, Archives, and Special Collections

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Abstract

This case study focuses on using a museum's library, institutional archives, and special collections spaces and staff to provide unified intellectual and physical access to all museum collections for research purposes (i.e., not for exhibition, conservation, or other curatorial functions). The case study describes the circumstances for this operational shift at the Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture (MAC)/Eastern Washington State Historical Society in Spokane, Washington from 2009 to 2014, how the model was implemented and differed from previous practice, and examines advantages and disadvantages for implementation and sustainability.

Keywords: access, public services, reference, museums, collection management

Objects in the Reading Room:

Centralizing Museum Collection Access through the Library, Archives, and Special Collections

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In the last ten years, there has been increased interest in cross-over between libraries, archives, and museums, often referred to as LAMs. For these cultural heritage organizations, much of the literature and practice has focused on institutions collaborating with each other, but less so about potential internal cross-over within institution's departments, such as museums that contain libraries, institutional archives, and special collections.¹ This article describes a model for intellectual and physical access to all types of museum collections—regardless of department or discipline—that leverages the human and facility resources of the museum's library, archives, and special collections to provide enhanced access for staff and the general public at the Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture (MAC)/Eastern Washington State Historical Society (EWSHS) in Spokane, Washington from 2009 to 2014. The model centralized all museum collection access through the museum library and its research reading room, taking advantage of librarian user-focused expertise to meet user requests for all collections.

Current Practice for Museum Collections Access

Museum Collections

The concept of a museum's collections varies greatly from museum to museum. Collections might include zoological specimens, paintings, books, costumes, photographs, sculpture, audio and video recordings, and many others. In some museums, a museum library “containing a

1. See the *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, & Cultural Heritage*, spring 2007 (v. 8, no. 1) special issue on libraries, archives and museums; Duff, et al., 2013; Tonta, 2008; OCLC *NextSpace* newsletter, April 2003; Novia, J., 2012; Cannon, B., 2013; Given, L. L., & McTavish, L. L., 2010; Lavender, K., Nicholson, S., & Pomerantz, J., 2005; Waibel, G., Zorich, D. M., & Erway, R., 2009).

collection of books, periodicals, reproductions, and other materials related to its exhibits and fields of specialization” might provide library and information services to the general public, or may restrict these services to only institutional staff and/or museum members (Reitz, 2004-2014, “Museum Library”; Bierbaum, 2000, p. 24). The museum library may or may not circulate materials to internal staff or the general public, and it is usually separate from the museum’s object collection (Bierbaum, 2000, p. 24).

A separate or integrated department or collection may include the museum’s institutional archives: “the records created or received by its parent institution,” such as board minutes, accession registers, building plans, and exhibit catalogs, among many other materials (Pearce-Moses, 2005; Wythe, 2004, p. 1-19). “Museums ... *create* several kinds of archives. ... The archives associated with the objects in the museum collections—the documents of history, provenance, and validation—are customarily the charge of the registrar or curator. When registration facilities are crowded for space and the library is the more secure area or has better climate control, the files of these archives may be stored there *but are not regarded as part of the library collection*” [emphasis added] (Bierbaum, 2000, p. 24). As records created and maintained by the institution, these are considered part of the institutional archive.

In addition to a library collection and an institutional archive, a museum may also contain special collections or historical archives: “those [archival materials] pertaining to the subject area (as in a history museum), which are subject to the same curatorial care as the objects” (Bierbaum, 2000, p. 123). “This type of collection is found particularly in the historical museum [and] ... if [the] archives are a small portion of the museum collections, or if the library offers better storage conditions, these materials may be kept there *but will not constitute an element of the library’s collections*” [emphasis added] (Bierbaum, 2000, p. 24). These special collections may include paper-based or documentary type materials that were acquired along with object collections, but that are managed separately from the object collection because of space, format, or other considerations (Wythe, 2004, p. 19).

Within library science literature, special collections are defined as materials that are treated separately from the main collection of information resources because of condition, form, subject matter, geographic area, time period, or value; they are usually physically separated from the main collection and may require special access provisions (Reitz, 2004-2014, “special collections”). Often, library special collections are combined with its institutional archives and/or rare books department (Berger, 2014, p. 2-3; Wythe, 2004, p. 18). Within

a museum, the library, institutional archive, and special collections may be combined into one department, although they are almost always separately managed and housed from the museum's object collection.

Collection Access

Museums, archives, and special collections as separate types of institutions are all concerned with preservation and security, more so than a public or academic library. At the same time, these institutions are committed to providing access to their holdings, especially if they are publicly funded. Guidelines for providing physical and intellectual access to special collections, archives, and object collection materials are covered in the literature.² Within the museum context, access to collections is mandated by codes of ethics and best practices. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) *Code of Ethics for Museums*, states: "Museums have a particular responsibility for making collections and all relevant information available as freely as possible, having regard to restraints arising for reasons of confidentiality and security" (ICOM, 2013). In the United States, the American Association of Museums directs museums to "provide regular and reasonable access to, and use of, the collections/objects in its custody" and notes that museums should be guided in decisions regarding collection access by their collections management policy (American Association of Museums, n.d.). While emphasis is placed on access to museum collections, most museum collection management literature focuses on public access through exhibitions or loans to other museums for exhibition purposes, preservation, and registration and security, with marginal space to providing access to objects and records. When this is discussed, it generally focuses on access for internal staff and "visiting scholars" (Burcaw, 1973, p. 114). In addition, collection access is described as requiring criteria for legitimate use and users, especially in regards to security: "The museum should however take special care with requests of this type [external research requests] and ensure that the bona fides of researchers are fully established and cross-checked for security reasons before they are allowed directed access to collections for purposes of research" (Ambrose and Paine, 2006, p. 132). For many museums, the focus on their public products—exhibitions and educational programming—can divert staff resources from providing collection access in a timely fashion; often, collection departments are only able to fit in collection access between exhibition installations, preparing objects for loan, and processing new acquisitions.

2. See Anderson, "Research Use: Ethics, Restrictions, and Privacy" in Wythe, 2004, p. 55-64; Kepley, "Reference Service and Access" in Bradsher, p. 161-73; Benedict, "Archival Ethics," in Bradsher, p. 174-84; Stielow, "Archival Security" in Bradsher, p. 207-17; Stewart, "Security" in Wythe, p. 109-11; Berger, 2014, Chapter 5: Physical Layout and Operations, p. 161-72, and Chapter 7: Security, p. 187-210.

Procedures and guidelines for providing access to materials in museum collections, archives, and special collections usually incorporate some elements of the following:³

- » Supervision of researchers at all times
- » Non-circulation of items
- » Limited or no access to storage rooms
- » Registration of researchers and documentation of all requested and examined items
- » Special handling of items

In addition, museums and institutional archives are concerned with privacy and confidentiality. For museums, this can include an object's storage location and valuation information (Bradsher, 1986; Wythe, 2004; Burcaw, 1973; Ambrose and Paine, 2006; Genoways and Ireland, 2003). For institutional archives, there may be legal reasons, such as attorney-client privilege, that require certain materials not be made available to the general public (Bradsher, 1986; Wythe, 2004).

Each type of institution—museum, archive, and library special collection—has a separate domain and body of literature describing collection access. However, there is little in the literature that describes how a museum might utilize its library, special collections or institutional archives staff and physical spaces to provide physical and intellectual access to all collections, including objects.

About the Institution

The Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture (MAC)/Eastern Washington State Historical Society (EWSHS) was founded in 1916 as the Spokane Historical Society. At first, its collections included “a meager display of a few curios in a single six foot show case ... on the fifth floor of ... City Hall.” In 1925, the museum moved to a permanent location, the 1898 A.B. Campbell house in Browne's Addition. The next year, the State of Washington authorized the museum to “collect books, maps, charts, papers and materials illustrative of the history of Washington;” this collecting scope expanded to include regional art in 1973. With the addition of the Cheney Cowles Memorial Museum building in 1960, the museum began to restore the Campbell House to its “Age of

3. See Ambrose and Paine, 2006, p. 132, 203-4; Genoways and Ireland, 2003, p. 189.

Elegance.” The physical plant continued to expand, with an addition to the Cheney Cowles Museum building in 1984 as well as a separate exhibition and education building in 2001. The extensive collections of the Museum of Native American Cultures (MONAC) were acquired in 1991. First accredited by the American Association of Museums in 1972, it became a Smithsonian Institute Affiliate in 2001, and rebranded itself the Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture (MAC). Its current mission statement is to “actively engage all people in the appreciation of arts and culture through collections stewardship, exhibits and programs that educate and entertain” (Schoonover, 1991; “About the MAC,” n.d.).

In 1960, the first museum library officially opened, which was envisioned to be a research library on the history of the Inland Northwest region.⁴ Previously, the library had been managed by volunteers under the direction of the museum’s director. The research library concept continued until the early 1980s, when the library changed its scope to collecting Inland Northwest special collection materials, and less library-type publications.⁵ These included significant historic photographs, manuscripts, and architectural drawings. The department functioned similarly to that of a special collections and archives division within a university library. The 1991 MONAC acquisitions added significantly to the book collection, as well as special collections materials. It also netted the museum a substantial increase in three-dimensional objects, which was the catalyst for the 2001 physical plant expansion. This building expansion and renovation consolidated all collection storage areas, including the library and archives, in the Research Center building (formerly the Cheney Cowles Memorial Museum building).

Operationally, the Museum Collection department and Research Library and Archives operated separately, although always under the umbrella of a Programs division. This operations model meant that collections which contained both Museum and Library/Archives materials were separated after accession and double or triple-numbering was applied. It also meant that separate collection management systems were used for many years. In addition, the Research Library and Archives focused on outside researcher needs, while the Collections Department spent more time on internal, exhibit-related needs. This meant different physical and intellectual set-ups and priorities for the two departments.

In addition, with the opening of the five-gallery exhibit and education hall in 2001, all museum staff was focused on exhibition and program development. It had been hoped that each discipline collection (Art, History, American Indian, Research Library and Archives) would have its own increased and dedicated staff. With the opening of the new facility in 2001, much hoped-for state funding did not materialize resulting in

4. The Inland Northwest is defined as the area between the Cascade mountain range and the Rocky Mountains, and southeast British Columbia and northeast Oregon; it is also referred to as the Inland Empire or Columbia Plateau (Stratton, 2005, p. 2).

5. The department came more into line with what is referred to as a “collecting archive:” “A repository that collects materials from individuals, families, and organizations other than the parent organization. Notes: The scope of collecting archives is usually defined by a collections or acquisition policy” (Pearce-Moses, 2005).

significant staffing cuts just as the museum opened the expanded facilities. Thus, the institution was already operating with limited staff before additional budget cuts during the 2008 economic downturn.

The Model

The integrated access model developed was based on a description of the access service model at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The V&A had established multiple reading rooms, which provided levels of access. The first room was for general browsers; the second for people who wanted to consult library materials; the third was the print room, where researchers could examine original prints and other archival materials that required increased security and special handling provisions.⁶

Between 2009 and 2014, the MAC used a modified model as there was only one reading room. The reading room was used to meet general access needs to the book collection, vertical file, finding aids for photographs and manuscripts, searching the collection database, as well as to meet the researchers' needs for physical access to original items, from a piece of ephemera to a three-dimensional model; from an archival collection of nineteenth century letters to a twentieth century quilt. Object collection storage rooms were also used as an access location point, though infrequently. Museum staff brought researchers into the object storage rooms only if the object they needed to examine was too large, fragile, or otherwise could not be accommodated easily in the reading room. Thus, physical and intellectual access to all the museum's collections was centralized within the reading room and its staff.

Catalyst for Implementation

The catalyst for implementing this centralized model of intellectual and physical collection access was the economic downturn of 2008. The downturn resulted in the loss of significant income for the MAC, both from the State of Washington and from private donors. The result included a 40 percent reduction in staff in 2009, with a further reduction in 2011 (Kershner, 2009; Kershner, 2010; Kershner, 2011). The Collections Department was reduced from three to one, and the Collections Librarian position split between the Library/Archives and exhibitions. Planned upcoming exhibitions, however, were not reduced, requiring the Collections Curator to focus strictly on loans (incoming and outgoing) as well as preparing the museums' own objects for exhibition.

6. At the time of this writing, the author has been unable to locate the article that describes this model.

Therefore, outside requests for information about or access to museum object collections were unable to be met.

Staff at the institution was poised to implement this model for centralized physical and intellectual access to collections. They had already been working together to implement a single collection management system for all collections, and hoped to develop a centralized digital asset management system and a cross-departmental digital asset manager position. Unfortunately, this position was lost during budget cuts. Most significant was the willingness of the staff and administration to try a new model for collection access. Willingness and buy-in came from the very top: the Executive Director, Museum Programs Manager, and Museum Operations Manager all supported the shift to a centralized point for information and access. Staff who implemented the model was willing to operate outside their traditional roles and responsibilities in order to create a streamlined user experience. These staff included the Collections Librarian, Museum Collections Curator, History Curator, and Special Collections Curator.

Implementation

The central change was in the revision of the Collections Librarian position scope to include access to all collections. Additional changes included updating public information and expanding physical and intellectual access permissions for the Collections Librarian and Special Collections Curator.

Collections Librarian Position

The Collections Librarian job description was revised to include responsibilities for meeting access requests for internal and external clients for all collections. All collection inquiries for external research and collection access were funneled through the Collections Librarian. This position received requests through all mediums: in-person, by telephone, and email. External requests initially received by other museum staff, such as the Collections Curator or History Curator, were directed to the Collections Librarian for an initial reply. If the referring staff member had suggestions for collection resources or information, these staff provided these suggestions to the Collections Librarian at the time of the referral. If they wanted to be involved with the outside requester or be informed of the outcome of the inquiry, they would notify the Collections Librarian. Generally, the Collections Librarian made a point to follow up or notify

curators if she was dealing with or had responded to an inquiry in their subject or collection area.

The Collections Librarian used a triage process for reviewing information and access requests that took into account the type of request, the extent of resources available, the extent to which special appointments might be needed, and the urgency of the request. For example, requests by local television news reporters or newspaper journalists were dealt with quickly so as to meet their short deadlines. The Collections Librarian attempted to respond back to requestors within 24 hours of their inquiry during the work week, so that requestors knew their request had been received.

Similar to reference service requests for archival or special collections, the Collections Librarian was able to provide requestors with an overview of object collection items or groups of items that might meet their research needs. She could provide lists of objects from the museum's collection management database in PDF form via email; these lists might include thumbnail images of objects, if they had been photographed in the last ten years. Sometimes the images were scans of earlier photo prints or slides. The lists included general information, such as object type, title, date, dimensions, creator, and object number. These lists were invaluable in helping researchers determine the extent, if any, of the in-person research visit they might need to make. In some cases, providing the information from the collection management database and/or object records met the researcher's needs and no physical access was required.

If the researcher did need to physically access collection objects, he or she would identify the objects based on the lists from the collection management database. A list of the selected objects would be sent to the Collections Curator and the appropriate subject curator for review in case, there might be any known handling or preservation issues. The Collections Librarian also consulted with these staff to determine which locations would be best to use during the researcher's visit. For smaller items in good condition, the researcher could use the Reading Room. Objects would be retrieved from storage, placed on carts or tables, and the examination area, usually a table, would be prepared for the material type. Usually this meant a padded blanket with clean cotton cloth would be spread on the table. For two-dimensional items from the art collection, such as photographs or other prints, there was little preparation of the area as it was already clean, large and flat. If the objects were too large to retrieve and bring to the Reading Room, the Collections Librarian would make arrangements for the researcher to view the items in their storage location. As with appointments in the Reading Room, the appointments in storage rooms were supervised and the room was prepped for the visit

by providing space around the object for the examiner to look without bumping into or damaging other objects. Many times, the object would be located behind other objects that would need to be relocated temporarily during the researcher's visit. For example, a researcher wishing to examine a stagecoach wanted to be able to see all sides; this meant other items had to be relocated to other storage rooms or work rooms, and the stagecoach itself had to be moved away from the wall. This required considerable time from the Collections Curator to prepare the physical space with the Collections Librarian. However, it still saved the Collections Curator time, as she did not also need to supervise the visit (several hours) or coordinate the appointment time.

The Collections Librarian supervised all access visits. She provided security, registered researchers using appropriate forms such as access agreements and publication permissions, instructed researchers in special handling guidelines, and assisted them if they needed to use the Library/Archive's copying services. The Library/Archives Reading Room already had a copy machine available for archives and special collections use; therefore, it was convenient to also use this space for review of collection object files and copying of selected materials, if needed.

In addition, because the Library and Archives already had a workflow and forms in place to accept reproduction orders from researchers—including publishers—requests for object collection imaging or reproduction were moved to the department. The Collections Librarian and Special Collections Curator reviewed requests to see if digital images already existed in the museum collection management system, coordinated with the museum's part-time photographer to have photography completed, delivered images to requestors, and collected payment. This change in procedure allowed the Collections Department to invent their own imaging request workflow and forms. Since these types of requests were not frequent, they were a manageable addition to the already-established workflow in the Library and Archives.

Finally, the funneling of information and access requests was not limited to outside entities. This method was also applied to internal requests from the public relations department, administration, and curatorial staffs. While curatorial staff already had individual physical access to their specific subject collections and could search the museum's collection management system themselves, the Collections Librarian could assist them in executing searches, as well as troubleshooting problems with the system. This was especially critical because of the limited data available in most object records. Knowing the data and structure allowed the Collections Librarian to search more efficiently.

This allowed curators to save time, although it also limited their knowledge of the system.

Public Information

In order to direct all inquiries to the Collections Librarian, the staff made a concerted effort in all marketing materials, including the website, to give out only the email address and telephone number of the Library and Archives. In addition, the museum developed a new website design during this time, which allowed the staff to group collections access under the Research category, rather than by each department. The same was true for grouping all collection types under Collections, rather than by departments. Another initiative was development of an online interface for the collection management system; the interface was developed so that users could search across all departments if needed. Staff thought this would meet user needs as they did not distinguish the museum's collections by departments or subject areas or formats. They just wanted to find "stuff".⁷

Expanded Collections Available to Researchers

Because of the change to how access was provided, a wider range of resources were available to researchers, both those undertaking archival research and those examining cultural objects. In the past, researchers would have had to make separate appointments in order to examine materials in different departments; for example, if they wanted to review the papers of a local inventor, they would need to schedule an appointment with the Research Library and Archives; if they wanted to also examine the models built by the inventor, they would need to make a separate appointment with the History Curator or Collections Curator. Because of exhibition deadlines, the latter staff was usually not able to provide access to the objects for several weeks or months after the initial inquiry. Once these types of requests for collection access were consolidated, the researcher could make one appointment to view all materials, and many times could examine the archival material next to the object it referred to, providing a seamless information experience.

The types of resources traditionally made available to researchers through the Research Library and Archives, or to museum staff through the Collections Department, were divided and different. This division caused information gaps; in bringing together information access, many of these gaps were merged and sometimes brought back together collections that had been separated because of format. The types of

7. Almost a century earlier, John C. Dana similarly described visitors' interests in viewing both the objects and information about them: "It would be difficult to find a point in time, in the life of any visitor who has shown a lively interest ... when a book would be as useful to him as when he has just been examining the collections which attract him" (as cited in Bierbaum, 2000, p. 154).

resources traditionally made available through the Research Library and Archives included books, periodicals, manuscript collections (personal papers, corporate records), architectural drawings, scrapbooks, historic photographs, and maps. In addition, the archival records of the museum could be consulted. These included records of the board of trustees and director, publications created by the museum (newsletters, press releases), photographs of museum events and people, curators' research files, and exhibition records. The Collections Department cared for and provided access to the object collection files, which included traditional museum forms and information, such as gift statements, donor correspondence, conservation records, copies of catalogs and exhibit label text, and additional information assembled about the objects, the creators or collectors, donors, etc. These records served as the basis for the collection management system records when the museum began using an automated system in the 1980s. These records also included information about library and special collections items that were accessioned through the Registrar's office prior to 1983, when all donations were accessioned centrally. This provenance was generally lost when the items were transferred to the Research Library and Archives, particularly when a new photograph numbering system was developed in the 1980s.

Extensions to Collection Access Model

In addition to changing the way the museum provided physical and intellectual access to its collections, the staff also envisioned implementing changes to the way object collections were cataloged. These changes would take into account the greater expertise of those with library or information science backgrounds in assessing and applying controlled vocabulary terms, as well as considering the "aboutness" of three-dimensional objects, not only their "of-ness".⁸ This change would also allow the library staff to bridge access for all collection types using the same controlled vocabulary terms in library, archives, special collections and object collection records. In this way, users could see the connections between materials based on subject, as well as material type or format. While staff hoped to implement this practice, it was not feasible because of changes in administration.

Changes in Practice and Training

In order to implement the access system described, the staff made intentional changes in their daily work, job descriptions, and training from other staff members. In daily work, this meant that the Collections

8. See Zoller, G. and DeMarsh, K. (2013). For the record: Museum cataloging from a library and information science perspective. *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society*, 32(1), p. 54-70 for an example of library/information science practitioner's crossing over into museum object collections.

Curator referred inquiries to the Collections Librarian, rather than reply herself; the same was true for subject curators. Changes were made to informational materials, such as the website, signage, telephone voice mail messages, and was communicated to visitor services staff, who were the front line when working with the public, and museum staff such as the public relations, administrative secretary, and others who received collection information requests and questions.

The Collections Librarian's job description was rewritten to include responsibility for access to all collections. Previously, this position had been titled Archives Librarian or Special Collections Librarian indicating that the position was focused on archival, special collections, and library materials. With the change in job description, the position was renamed "Collections Librarian" to encompass all collections and to indicate that the position, as a librarian, was focused on users and information access.

Significant training was given to the Collections Librarian and Special Collections Curator, and reciprocal training to the Collections Curator. This was an attempt to cross train so that each position could cover basic functions of the other positions, if needed. The Collections Librarian and Special Collections Curator learned proper object handling techniques as well as general guidelines for how to assess if objects could be safely moved and handled. In addition, staff cuts necessitated the Collections Librarian spend significant time supporting exhibition installation and de-installation, including retrieval and preparation of objects, as well as condition assessments. This work dovetailed well with her functions in providing object collection access to researchers.

Finally, extensive training on using the museum's collection management system was undertaken by the Collections Librarian. Because the Special Collections Curator had been involved in the migration from the previous system to the new, she had expertise and was able to train the Collections Librarian in how to use the system. In addition, training in the type of information available in the object collection files, coupled with instruction in the life cycle of information within the museum's institutional archival records, allowed the Collections Librarian to effectively track down information about objects for researchers.

At this time the object collection files (accession files) were physically relocated to the Archives Storage room and placed next to the Library and Archives' donor and collection files. This allowed for easy physical access to object collection files when assisting researchers, provided climate control and security for the files, which included degrading paper that should not have been frequently handled, and increased security in that only curatorial staff had access to the storage room.

Analysis

There were advantages and disadvantages to the implementation of this access model. Institutions considering a similar model should be aware of potential barriers or concerns to implementation.

Advantages

The advantages of the model are efficiency and increased focus on user needs. In leveraging the user-focused training of librarians, the museum was able to meet user requests for collection information and access more efficiently than in the past, especially during times of peak exhibition installation and deinstallation activity. Users were able to benefit from a one-stop approach to information and physical access that spanned all collection types. This approach benefited users as they were interested in any resource that related to their topic of interest, whether 3-D or 2-D, archival or material culture. This equated to users needing to contact the museum fewer times as they did not need to contact each department individually. In addition, this model allowed collections that had become disassociated to be reunited for the benefit of users, both internal and external. From the perspective of the museum's staff, the implementation of this access model was positive: "I certainly appreciate all of the support that [Library and Archives staff] were able to give to collection functions during those difficult times" (V. Wahl, personal communication, January 30, 2015).

Disadvantages and Barriers to Implementation

Disadvantages or barriers to implementation of this access model focus on physical space and personnel issues. In terms of physical space, the institution must have a large enough "reading room" or collection public access space to accommodate three-dimensional objects. Use of traditional library reading carrels is not feasible. Ideally, the space will have large tables adequately spaced apart, which allow for objects to be spread out and for users to move around the objects without risk of damage. Proximity to object collections is also an issue. Minimizing transport time and transport risks, such as moving through small doorways with large carts, is essential. Especially if the collections are physically located in separate buildings or connected by narrow passages or doorways, there will be increased risk of damage to objects during transport. In addition, adequate security provisions are necessary. If the physical space cannot be adequately secured—for example, if there are

windows that open to the outside or if the general public can easily access the space without being seen by staff—then it is not an optimal space for objects, let alone for archival or special collections materials.

Institutions should also consider the personnel and personality issues involved in implementing this model. Because the model diverts responsibility for collection information and physical access from their traditional positions within a collection, registration, or curatorial department to the library, which may or may not be part of the same division, there may be significant push-back from staff who will see this as a risk to their position(s). Curators in particular may not be comfortable with “the public” receiving uncurated information. In this case, continuing to consult the curator during the reference process is required. The curator may find that he or she appreciates the extra time available to do other work, or may resent not having the opportunity to display his/her expertise publicly. This will need to be navigated tactfully. In the end, personality may provide enough of a barrier that implementation is not possible.

In addition, all staff must buy into the new model, including the librarian, archivist, special collections curator, or combination thereof. Staff positions gaining new tasks under this model may need to give up other tasks in order to take on these responsibilities. The positions that take on responsibility for all collection access must also be able to think outside the construct of traditional library materials and consider all resource types as potential information carriers for users. These might include artist sketchbooks, donor letters describing the acquisition of an object, or correspondence between the museum director and donors. Finally, the staff who will be providing physical and intellectual access need adequate training in understanding museum object collection data, handling three-dimensional objects, and assessing object condition prior to physical access. These are aspects not usually learned in library and information science, although some aspects are taught in archives management or rare book courses. Providing adequate training to fill these gaps may be cost and time prohibitive to the institution. In addition, learning how three-dimensional objects are described, as well as deficiencies and changes in institutional cataloging practice over time are necessary in order for the staff providing intellectual access to exhaust the ways they search. Learning these methods may or may not be possible or efficient for staff.

Another disadvantage is in sustainability of the model because it is a hybrid of professional domains. When staff leave the institution, it may be more difficult to fill their positions because of the interdisciplinary nature of their position. The learning curve may be too high or the

position too diverse in terms of collection types. On the other hand, someone who is interested in access and is able to make the leap to material culture as information resources will be able to take advantage of this type of position. At the MAC, the centralized access model was not sustained after significant administrative changes and staff turnover in 2013 and 2014, which included the Collections Librarian and Special Collections Curator positions. The MAC has reverted to using the previous access model of separate physical and intellectual access through the Research Library and Archives or the Museum Collections department (V. Wahl, personal communication, January 30, 2015).

Other Issues and Potential Impact

Other areas that could be affected by implementation of this access model include physical space and intellectual systems. Because access staff is concerned with all collection types, they will need access to all storage areas. This brings up issues of security; the more access people have to collection materials, the higher risk to the collections and for the staff to be held accountable when items are identified as missing. On a positive note, the change in access could prompt a rethinking of the use of collection storage spaces, which are an expensive part of museum operations. Use of this model might prompt the movement of collection objects that are requested more frequently to be moved to storage areas that are more conducive to convenient paging by staff and that minimize the transport and handling risks described above. This may also prompt the decoupling of storage rooms and subject areas. For example, storing art materials, such as works on paper, in a room with archival collections or photographic collections might take advantage of spaces set up especially for these two-dimensional materials.

Another area that may be impacted is the museum's information systems. Because access is centralized, this may prompt the shift to a smaller number of systems in order to create a federated search or a discovery-type service. Whether the information system is adequate for many resource types is an issue. However, with continued movement on linked data initiatives, these may become less so in the future.

Information equity is an issue the institution and the librarian will have to grapple with a model such as this implemented. In the model, equal provision to intellectual and physical access for collections is mandated. This means the curator, scholar, student, and general public are treated as much the same as possible. Of course, the museum opens itself up to liability in providing information such as the object's valuation or provenance information for objects of questionable ownership. For

public institutions, this is less of an issue as they are subject to public records laws. For private institutions, this is a murky area. For the librarian who adheres to the ALA Code of Ethics, this will be cause for conflict. In addition, with the AAM describing “legitimate” access for users, this raised issues of equity. Who is “legitimate” and who decides who is “legitimate”? For institutions with American Indian objects, this will be an issue for objects that require special handling or viewing restrictions, based on the cultural practices of the tribe or people. Fifty or one hundred years ago, these same objects were considered legitimate sources of information about how aboriginal people lived, which is why they are in museum collections. But how do those charged with providing equitable access balance the cultural restrictions with fair access? This issue has been debated recently, especially with regard to American Indian materials in archives.⁹

Conclusion

Partnerships among museums, libraries and archives have been a recent trend. This case study described an internal partnership that leveraged the human resources and physical spaces of a medium-sized, general museum’s library, archives and special collections division to provide intellectual and physical access to all museum collections, thereby improving user access and experience.

The access model implemented centralized internal and external research requests through one staff position, the Collections Librarian, and utilized the library, archives, and special collections reading room as its central physical space. This model leveraged the user-focused training of the Collections Librarian to meet user requests for information about and access to all museum collections, as well as exposed users to a wider array of resource types than were available to them previously.

Institutions considering implementation of this model should consider several aspects, including staff willingness, administrative buy-in, and available physical spaces. Equitable access and sustainability are areas of concern when implementing the model. This access model was implemented as a response to reduced financial and staff resources, and but one example of how cultural heritage organizations are collaborating internally to meet user needs within an environment of reduced resources.

9. See the First Archivist Circle’s “Protocols for Native American Archival Materials” (2007, retrieved from www2.nau.edu/libnap-p/).

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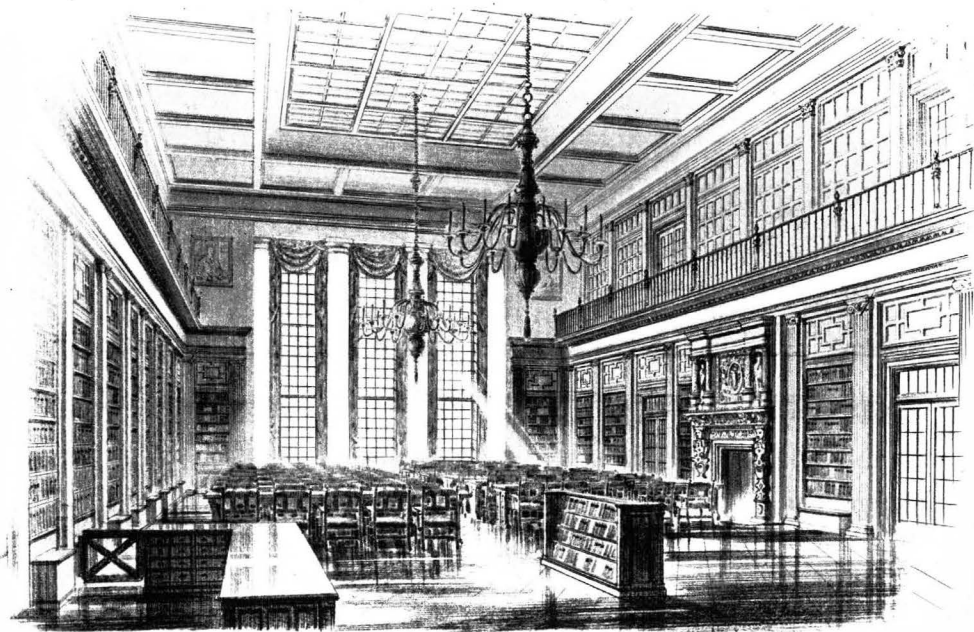
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