Center For Research Libraries Chooses U of I to Receive Children’s Literature Collection

The Center for Research Libraries (CRL), a national association of research libraries, has chosen the University Library as the new home for its 58,000-volume collection of children’s literature.

The acquisition, combined with the more than 43,000 volumes of children’s literature already held by the Library, makes this the largest collection of its kind in the country outside the Library of Congress.

“This gift of materials from the Center for Research Libraries really represents a turning point for the University Library regarding its ability to support a broad-based research program for children’s literature specialists,” said University Librarian Robert Wedgeworth about the acquisition.

“This is the place for it, we’re prepared to support it, and we are delighted with the growing number of scholars attracted to the University of Illinois as specialists in that field.”

CRL decided last year to relocate its children’s collection when it began plans to move its offices and book collections to a new location in Chicago. The reason for not keeping the children’s books, according to Nancy O’Brien, acting head of the Library’s Education and Social Science Library, was primarily because the uncataloged collection had extremely low usage.

CRL chose the Library from among several contenders based on the Library’s already wide reputation for its children’s literature collection, its leading role in interlibrary loan, and its known ability to catalog large amounts of items efficiently.

“The CRL collection is very prestigious and has long been recognized as a comprehensive record of publishing for children,” says Professor O’Brien, “It has the potential to become the heart of an active repository of the American children’s book trade.”

CRL’s collection of children’s books dates from the Center’s founding in 1949 and is particularly comprehensive because the Center for Children’s Books, the premier institution of its kind in the country, contributed to CRL the review copies of books it would receive from publishers.

In addition, research libraries nationwide continually deposited some of their own children’s volumes for which they might not have room, but which were deemed important for future research.

The Center for Children’s Books moved to the U of I last year and now contributes its books to the Library. The research library deposits also will be coming to the U of I Library.

Despite the apparent wealth of items, however, no one knew just what CRL had and therefore rarely thought to inquire.

“According to their usage figures, they had eighteen requests last year for the collection, mainly because it’s not cataloged,” says Professor O’Brien. “On the other hand, we always have between ten and twenty-five users every day. Some use is related to classes requiring these materials for teachers in training, some for research by scholars here and at other universities, and some from the occasional nostalgic person looking for books from their childhood.”

The Library’s own 43,000-volume collection dates back to the 1800s and is particularly notable for its holdings of Aesop’s fables, alphabet books, biographies for children of Lincoln and Franklin, pop-up books, and fairy tales from around the world.

The range of research conducted from this massive collection includes not only studies of the literature for its own sake, but also research about the children’s book trade, portrayals of different cultural groups over the years, and comparisons of fairy-tale motifs as seen in tales from many countries.

“This is truly a growing, vital collection that is heavily utilized on a daily basis,” says Professor O’Brien. “And it’s not just visiting scholars—it’s undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and current school teachers.

Cataloging of the 58,000 CRL books will begin shortly and will take several years (“We will not let them sit in a warehouse forever!” she says emphatically).

Receipt of CRL’s 58,000 books, however, does not mean that Professor O’Brien isn’t looking for more children’s books to add to the collection.

“Many of our materials are gifts, although we do purchase items regularly,” she says, “so we’re always eager if someone wants to donate something. We’ve had people donate to us who have kept their parents’ and grandparents’ old textbooks and story books. We’d still love to have them!”
The Peristyle, hand-painted chromolithograph (lithograph company unknown) of a painting by John Ross Key. From the Ricker Library's collections.

Rare Lithographs from Library Highlight Exhibit on Columbian Exposition

One hundred years ago, there arose along the shores of Lake Michigan a “white city” like none that had ever been built before or seen since—the more than sixty-five buildings of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition.

Within a year of its closing in 1894, nearly all the buildings had vanished, leaving the impression that it had all been a vast dream.

Reconstructing the vision of that dream was the purpose of a recent exhibition at the U of I’s Krannert Art Museum, which featured several beautiful items from the Library’s collections.

“While other museums are examining the social history of the fair or are presenting some of the art work exhibited there, here at Krannert Art Museum we wanted to show some rare glimpses of a visual environment,” says museum curator Eunice Maguire about the show.

To that end, the Museum borrowed several rare souvenir fair albums from the Library’s Ricker Library of Architecture and Art, including: World’s Fair Photographed, by James W. and Daniel B. Shepp; The World’s Fair, 1893, an anonymously produced album; Portfolio of Photographs of the World’s Fair, published by the Werner Company; and Beautiful Scenes of the White City: Farewell Edition, by Laird and Lee.

The Ricker Library also lent one of its most unusual (and, as it turned out, mysterious) collections—six hand-painted chromolithographs based on paintings of the exposition by landscape artist John Ross Key (1832-1920).

How, when, why, or by whom the chromolithographs were donated to the Library is unknown, according to Ricker Library head Jane Block, who found them in a stack of uncataloged material when she arrived at the university five years ago. A quick check at the time with the Chicago Historical Society revealed that such prints were known to have existed, but the Society had never seen a set.

In addition, neither Professor Block nor Professor Maguire was familiar with the artist, and neither knew whether Key, himself, or someone else, had done the hand painting on the prints. It was not until Professor Block lent the prints to the museum that some of these mysteries were solved.

The artist, John Ross Key, grandson of Francis Scott Key, began his career as a draftsman for the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey and thereafter turned his talents to landscape painting. In the 1870s, his landscapes of northern California were turned into chromolithographs by the same company that produced the now famous chromolithographs of paintings by Thomas Moran. Key later went on to win several awards for his paintings and became a well-known artist during his lifetime.

The Library’s chromolithographs were produced by one of Chicago’s leading lithographers of the time, the Orcutt Lithographing Company. According to Peter C. Marzio, director of the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston and author of a book on American chromolithography, it is likely that the Orcutt Company commissioned paintings about the exposition that made Chicago famous, and Key, like Moran, was known to have painted on commission for chromolithographers.

The Library’s prints, then, probably come from such a commission.

“Thousands of these were probably made and sold,” remarks retired U of I professor of journalism Glenn Hanson, who taught graphics and printing for thirty-two years. “However, because they were ephemera—something to be tossed—the fact that any of them survive makes them rare.”

Rarer still is the hand painting on the Library’s prints. “I have never seen a chromo which was painted over by hand,” says Mr. Marzio. “It sounds like you have a cross-over between commercial and folk art!”

The views include the Art Galleries on the North Pond; the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Buildings across the Canal; the Peristyle; the Court of Honor, Peristyle, and Agriculture Building from Machinery Hall; Liberal Arts, Electricity, and Administration Buildings from the Corridor of the Woman’s Building; and the Golden Entrance to the Transportation Building.

Robert Wedgeworth Named University Librarian

Robert Wedgeworth was named University Librarian by the U of I Board of Trustees at its November 1993 meeting.

Mr. Wedgeworth had been serving as interim University Librarian since September 1992.

The appointment follows on the recommendations of a committee composed of Library and campus-wide faculty members, who had solicited and received comments from Library and campus faculty members and sought advice from a panel of outside consultants.

“We are very fortunate that Bob Wedgeworth has accepted the position of university librarian,” said Theodore L. Brown, interim vice chancellor for academic affairs. “He has demonstrated extraordinary leadership, not only on this campus, but nationally and internationally.”

Said Mr. Wedgeworth on his appointment, “I am very pleased and honored. It’s one of the finest opportunities in my field and in the country.”

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Charles H. Sandage (left), U of I professor emeritus of advertising, autographed a copy of his autobiography, "Reads to be Taken: The Intellectual Odyssey of Charles H. Sandage," for University Librarian Robert Wedgeworth last October. Professor Sandage, considered the originator of the study of advertising as an academic field, donated two copies of the work to the Library.
The Technological Revolution for Libraries Is Topic of Fourth Mortenson Lecture

The technological revolution that has changed the way we find information has radically, and permanently, changed the centuries-old mission of libraries as repositories of accumulated knowledge as published in books. That was the message given by Interim University Librarian Robert Wedgeworth in his lecture on “The Heart of the University: The Making of the Global Library,” delivered September 29 as the fourth annual Mortenson Distinguished Lecture.

“The concentration throughout most of this century to build large on-site collections...has begun to give way to the idea of a university library as a gateway to knowledge and information that is accessible from any computer work station with an Internet connection,” Mr. Wedgeworth told an audience of nearly 200. “What appears to be emerging is the concept of the global library connecting users to sources of information well beyond that which has resulted from traditional scholarly enterprises.”

Using the history of the University Library as an example, Mr. Wedgeworth traced the development of the idea of large, self-sufficient collections backed up by the expertise to find information in such large collections. Until the 1970s, that expertise depended on the personal knowledge of librarians as much as on the volumes and volumes of bibliographic reference tools.

With the advent of computers in the 1970s, however, things changed as libraries first made their catalogs accessible by computer and then started creating online databases of specialized information that could be shared throughout the country. What started as a method to improve patron use and ease interlibrary lending has grown to the point that, according to Mr. Wedgeworth, “some of the largest computer installations outside of the Pentagon do nothing other than communicate bibliographic information among libraries twenty-four hours a day.”

Unfortunately, just as these new technologies began to make it easier for users to find out about books and journals worldwide, libraries were forced to wrestle with unexpected inflation in publishing costs, which, according to Mr. Wedgeworth, were “rapid and in some cases unjustified...”

“What has been a slowdown for libraries in North America and Western Europe,” he added, “has brought collection development to a virtual halt in libraries in the developing world...[These libraries] are almost entirely dependent on gifts and exchanges for additions to their collections.”

The technologies also have outpaced the ability of publishers to deal with the accompanying issues of proprietary rights for translating and converting materials into formats that can be transferred around the world.

“Copyright laws and the reluctance of publishers to make available their intellectual products for fear of losing control are probably the most significant barriers to achieving widespread access to published information...,” he said. “Without more cost-effective means to gain access to published information, the enormous technological capability already developed will be increasingly devoted to the transmission of unauthorized documents.”

Mr. Wedgeworth also noted that what many see as breakthroughs in information technology others see as threats to cultural and national sovereignty in countries that enforce censorship. Instant access to information—even full texts—via computer makes censorship difficult to maintain. However, as Mr. Wedgeworth pointed out, “The new information technologies can sometimes be an ally to the censors as it can allow content to be altered almost without detection.”

Library Strengthens Ties with Moscow’s Rudomino Library

The ties linking the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs and the M.L. Rudomino State Library for Foreign Literature in Moscow, Russia's third largest library, have been strengthened once more with the visit of that library's assistant director, Evgenia Rosinskaya.

Mrs. Rosinskaya spent three weeks at the Library last October as a Mortenson associate primarily learning about library fund-raising as well as library management, electronic communications methods, and automation.

In addition, she and the director of the Mortenson Center, Marianna Tax Choldin, discussed implementation of several new joint projects between the Center and the Rudomino State Library.

The visit is a direct result of the seminars in Russia last year given by the Library's director of development and public affairs, Joan M. Hood, arranged by the Rudomino State Library.

"After her presentations and discussions with librarians from all over Russia, we understood that we must begin fund-raising programs all over Russia," explains Mrs. Rosinskaya. "We had already made some steps in that direction, but we were making them like blind people, with no experience at all and no examples to follow."

That’s why the Rudomino State Library’s acting director, former Mortenson fellow Ekaterina Genieva, decided to send Mrs. Rosinskaya to Urbana to learn from one of the most successful library fund-raising programs in the United States.

During her three-week stay, Mrs. Rosinskaya not only met several times with Mrs. Hood, but also learned how the Library development office maintains its mailing list and develops publications, met with the head of the U of I Foundation, Dr. B. A. Nugent, attended the U of I Foundation annual meeting, audited several class sessions on library management at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, and received training in using electronic mail and other electronic forms of communication.

The ideas she has gathered will be used to start fundraising programs in a country that has not had a tradition of individual philanthropy for more than seventy-five years.

"I'm thinking of forming an organization—a kind of foundation—that would be a support foundation for all Russian libraries," says Mrs. Rosinskaya. "In this idea, any fundraising the libraries do they would share on a percentage basis with other libraries so that those libraries that are successful in fundraising can help those libraries that are unable to do their own."

The Rudomino State Library already is in the forefront of cooperative library ventures, having initiated gift book programs with three western countries through which it distributes books to libraries across Russia.

Last year, the Rudomino State Library also sponsored the first-ever exhibit in Moscow on censorship during the Communist era. The exhibit, which also was shown in St. Petersburg, was jointly planned and produced by the Rudomino State Library’s director, Dr. Genieva, and the Mortenson Center’s director, Professor Choldin.

Notes Mrs. Rosinskaya, "Professor Choldin is one of the key figures in the development of Russian libraries and in obtaining programs for Russian libraries."
New Catalog Puts Library's Prize Emblem Book Collection on Scholarly Map

A new catalog has been published that has set the world of emblem scholars alight.


Why the excitement? "Among people specializing in emblems, it was always known that the U of I Library was good, but they didn't know how good," enthuses U of I professor of germanic languages, Mara Wade. "This catalog shows that the U of I emblem collection is the best in North America, better than several European collections, and is really the outstanding feature of the University Library."

The catalog now establishes that the Library holds one of the largest such collections in the world. It was a fact that even the Library did not know when work started on the catalog ten years ago.

Remembers Dr. McGearry, currently a visiting teaching associate in rhetoric, "We had some checklists from [Professor Emeritus of German] Henri Stegemeier, who really developed this collection, when we started, and from that we thought we'd have about 200 to 300 books. Well, by the time we finished, we had 601. We knew we had a lot, but we didn't expect 601!"

Emblem books, which flourished from the mid-1500s through the late 1700s, were an extremely popular form of literature that combined wise sayings with engravings that alluded to the sayings.

Although the illustrations were not direct representations of the words, the meanings usually were clear to readers of the time, who were steeped in the traditions underlying the symbolism.

Today most emblems seem like forgotten inside jokes of the Renaissance and Baroque eras. "It's a sort of a challenge now," says Professor Nash. "Sometimes it's like a crossword puzzle to figure out the meanings."

Those puzzles, however, are invaluable to anyone studying Renaissance or Baroque literature, politics, art, history, music, science, and even alchemy.

"These are wonderful windows on the world of the past," says Dr. McGearry, whose interest in emblems stemmed from research he was conducting on mottos emblazoned on harpsichords.

"For instance, the Dutch emblems show mainly domestic interiors. These were always always fun to look at because they were not only beautiful engravings, but they also have an interesting middle-class point of view and a very strong moralizing, Calvinist bent to them."

"What's really interesting, though, is that you also quickly discover these symbols in Dutch painting—the same groupings, the vast moralizing tableaux. The painters took them from emblems, which belonged to a centuries-old iconographic tradition."

Shakespeare scholars also rely on emblem books, he says, to clarify some of what today is considered obscure imagery, but what in the sixteenth century would have made instant sense to the audience.

The emblem tradition still survives today, though in very truncated form, according to Professor Wade. "If you look on the back of a dollar bill, for instance, you'll find a pyramid with an eye plus the Latin motto that means 'a new order of the ages' and 'he smiles on our endeavor.' That's an emblem from 1776."

"Even now there are what I call proto-emblems, such as the robed, blindfolded woman holding the balance scales. That's emblematic thinking."

The two-part work describes in detail every aspect of the 601 emblem books owned by the Library up to the time of publication, including a quasi-facsimile transcription for the title page of each book, a description of each book's collation by signature and pagination, and an inventory of illustrated material in each book.

This extremely detailed information not only makes known to scholars what titles the Library owns, but also whether the Library's copies differ from copies owned by other institutions.

Adds Professor Wade, "There is no doubt that this catalog is a very, very important key to open up this collection to the research community. It will certainly put us on the map."

Die Eulen - lehe.

"Eternity through the Muses," says this emblem, a personal favorite of Henri Stegemeier. The emblem shows allegorically that scholars are immortal by virtue of their work. From Moralia Moratiana, a 1656 edition modeled after Otto Veenius's emblematized editions of Horaeis Moralis.

'Stifications underlying the symbolism.

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So, title by title, book by book, Professor Stegemeier slowly built up the Library’s collection of what he considers a cultural phenomenon of major significance.

Along the way, he also created his own bibliographies on emblem books showing which libraries in the United States and West Germany owned emblem books. These invaluable lists, as well as the Library’s growing collections themselves, influenced the important bibliographies compiled by John Landwehr and Gerhard Dünnaaupt.

Even Hester Black, who was the original cataloger for the world’s largest collection of emblem books at the Scottish castle of Sir William Stirling-Maxwell (now located at the University of Glasgow), had been at the U of I for a year and knew the Library’s collections well; her successors eventually came to the U of I to learn the Library’s method of cataloging emblem books. Notes Professor Stegemeier, “This helped to spread the tentacles to other bibliographies.”

In recognition of his central role in creating the Library’s emblem book collection, Professor Stegemeier was named by the Library as honorary curator of emblem books and emblematics in 1983. Still, he prefers to downplay his role in creating the Library’s collections, noting the willingness of the Library to purchase these books for what was then an unknown scholarly field, and the help he received from three generations of rare book librarians.

“Orders for emblem books were never automatically approved,” he notes, “but as I firmly believe, it has been money well spent. However, the big hero, from my point of view, is really Fred Nash. He often had to approve the orders, and that’s how he got interested in this.”

“So, he was the chief help at the Library in supporting my books, calling all the different continents to order these very precious volumes.”

### Friends Host Mystery Literary Tour in England

Last October, twenty-two Library Friends from four states participated in a very special Friends event—a nine-day “Myth and Mystery” tour of England.

The trip, offered in cooperation with Friends of Libraries USA (FOLUSA) and British Heritage Tours of Chester, England, was arranged specifically for the U of I Library Friends and featured lectures and tours unavailable to private individuals or commercial tour groups.

Among the highlights of the tour were a visit to the Old Bailey and inns at the court; a bell-ringing demonstration at Great St. Mary’s Church in Cambridge (Dorothy L. Sayers’ The Nine Tailors), followed by a lecture at the home of the president of the Dorothy L. Sayers Society; tea and lecture at the home of mystery writer Jessica Mann (Deadlier than the Male); guided tours of Glastonbury Abbey and Dozmary Pool (sites of Arthurian legends); a tour of the Gordon Museum of Forensic Medicine and a lecture by Dr. Stephen Leadbetter of the Wales Institute of Forensic Medicine; “Pathological Errors in Mystery Books.”

“We really enjoyed everything about the tour, especially the inns at the court,” says tour member Barbara Genster of Cary, North Carolina. “The guides were wonderful, and we covered a lot of ground. It was a great experience—we loved all the places we went.”

Adds Library development director Joan M. Hood, “Dr. Leadbetter’s lecture, given at our hotel, was just top-notch. The head of the Gordon Museum also showed us how forensics helped solve some real crimes. It was a little grim, but very different—certainly off the beaten track!”

Other highlights included a visit to the village used by the BBC for the Miss Marple series, a Jack the Ripper street tour, and tours of the Cornwall locations associated with novels by Daphne du Maurier.

### From the University Librarian

Many students entering the university for the first time are overwhelmed by its size and complexity. This is especially so with the University Library. Trying to find a specific item among its millions of volumes and following its confusing directions may be closely akin to looking for a needle in a haystack for many new students.

It is primarily for this reason that the Undergraduate Library (UGL) was conceived. Its emphasis on openness of space, friendly assistance, exciting technologies, and a collection of books selected to support the undergraduate curriculum all have contributed to its great popularity, attracting five to eight thousand students daily.

Current emphasis on strengthening undergraduate education at Illinois will place new demands on the UGL and perhaps bring about a re-conceptualization of its services.

Some of these demands may be addressed by the university’s instructional programs. New courses that broaden the intellectual perspective of undergraduates are already being proposed. Efforts to engage more undergraduates in research will become apparent. These courses will necessarily have an impact on the UGL in terms of materials to support study and research. However, an even greater agenda awaits the UGL.

Responding to new demands, the UGL will need to develop instructional programs that will teach students how to find, analyze, and evaluate information using advanced information technologies. The UGL will also need to teach “navigational” skills to assist students in relating what they wish to know to what is already known. The new multi-media classroom installed in the UGL over the past summer anticipates these requirements.

With the opening of the new Grainger Engineering Library Information Center, Illinois will have the facility to begin developing the kinds of programs that can increasingly be delivered over the campus network or at local work stations. The importance of the Library for undergraduates then will be not only as the place with the books, but also the place with the capacity to connect students to the many kinds of learning experiences demanded by the new requirements for undergraduate education, including the millions of volumes located in the stacks of the main library.

The current philosophy of the UGL emphasizes its role as a “gateway to learning.” In its new conceptualization the UGL will move the student beyond the gateway and towards an active arena of learning and research connected to information sources in the library, in the university and elsewhere in the world via telecommunications.

—Robert Wedgeworth
University Archives Celebrates Its 30th Anniversary

It's in the Library, but it's not a library. It holds the equivalent of more than twelve million manuscripts, yet it has no acquisitions budget. And it's one of the few units on campus, other than the campus police, to have the force of state law behind its edicts.

It's the University Archives, repository of the university's official documents and home to one of the most fascinating collections of personal papers in the country.

The Archives celebrated its thirtieth anniversary last September. Not surprisingly, for an organization dedicated to preserving history and making it accessible to the public, the Archives used the occasion to mount an exhibit on its own history and to host an open house.

“When I came in the fall of '63, the university's records were unorganized,” remembers university archivist Maynard Brichford, who has held this position for the entire thirty years. “The university had become aware that its centennial was approaching, so a committee decided that they should hire a historian to write the university's history, and that the university should have an archives so that the history could be written.”

Unfortunately, no one had ever systematically tried to collect university records. Although the tenure of the university’s first regent, John Milton Gregory, is thoroughly documented, the administrative files for 1880 to 1897 were apparently discarded. Still, a 1962 inventory of what had been saved showed that there were 6,000 cubic feet of records in existence.

So, the year before Professor Brichford’s appointment, the university engaged the services of a long-time Urbana resident and Library volunteer, Susan Shattuck, to try to bring some order to the chaos.

Upon his arrival, however, Professor Brichford quickly took care of the 6,000 cubic feet by visiting all departments to verify their holdings and to create detailed plans for the transfer, organization, and description of college and department records. Within ten years, he not only had one of the most well-organized university archives in the country, he also had taken 600 collections of faculty and alumni papers, started providing contractual archival services to national associations like the American Library Association, and even created the Library’s first comprehensive computerized database to describe the holdings of a library unit—a subject index to the total holdings of the Archives.

Now the Archives holds more than 17,000 cubic feet of material (equal to more than 11,000 file drawers) and is noted particularly for its collections in the sciences (the papers of two-time Nobel prize winner John Bardeen are just the latest), Olympic sports (the papers of former head of the International Olympic Committee Avery Brundage), student life and culture (the largest of its kind in the country, thanks to the Stewart Howe Collection), Russian studies (both pre- and post-revolution periods), and literary papers (279 writers on the Modern Languages Association’s list of authors are represented here).

It also holds the records of thirty-five national professional and educational associations.

But why would anyone care what happened in a particular office or to a particular person thirty or sixty or even a hundred years ago?

According to Professor Brichford, the answer for official university records is simple. “Wouldn’t it be embarrassing,” he asks, “to operate a university with an appropriation of billions and leave no record of how the money was spent?”

“But more than that, if you throw away financial records before they’re audited, for instance, there is the unfortunate appearance that you don’t want people to know how the money was spent. If it’s a question of legal responsibility, such as literary property or patents or real estate, the lack of documents may handicap the university in court. If you throw away information about policies or administration or teaching or research, you deprive researchers of the access to material needed for understanding history.”

In fact, state law considers university documents to be official state records, which means it is illegal to destroy any official university documentation without express authorization from the Archives and the State Records Commission.

So, among the Archives’ holdings is information on student grades, substantial quantities of faculty employment records, and the records of all board of trustees actions, all since the university’s founding; all official publications, including the student newspaper and yearbooks; and documentation of the university’s colleges, schools, and departments.

Not surprisingly, this vast body of information is valuable not only to university administrators, students, or researchers interested in the history of higher education, but also to researchers looking into the current Chief Illiniwek controversy or any other facet of university life since 1867.

But the Archives is more than just the repository for official records. It also holds nearly 1,000 collections of personal papers of faculty, alumni, students and, in a few instances, others not directly associated with the university.

“Jim Carey [former dean of the U of I College of Communications] referred to the faculty as the ‘chattering classes’ because they talk incessantly about what they do,” notes Professor Brichford. “But they are not only incessant talkers—they produce documents like mad!”

And that, according to assistant university archivist William Maher, is what influences written history. “Why are some people or some aspects of a subject written about so much? Because someone somewhere along the line kept their old correspondence or records,” says Professor Maher. “You can’t write about history if there are no documents.

“Take one of our newer collections, for example. The papers of John Thornton (former professor of physical metallurgy at the U of I until his death in 1987) probably will be of interest because he was involved in materials science in both the corporate and academic environments.

“But he also kept copious diaries about his student days. This will be very valuable and useful because very few people took the time to do that. Others may have had the same thoughts or experienced the same things, but they didn’t put it into a fixed, usable form.”

In fact, personal papers often turn out to be valuable for reasons no one could have anticipated at the beginning. For instance, noted anthropologist and U of I professor Oscar Lewis, who died in 1978, recorded all the interviews he conducted with the poor...
in Mexico while researching the sociology of poverty. The recordings have turned out to be invaluable to linguists studying Mexican dialects.

Even the Archives' collection of more than a quarter-million photographs have been used for unanticipated purposes. "One faculty member was engaged in a controversy over pollution from the university's power plant and wanted information on the direction the smoke was going," remembers Professor Brichford. "We happened to have several old photographs of the Assembly Hall area that showed the stadium and the smoke stacks. Of course, the person taking the photos had no interest in smokestacks, but the photos turned out to be important for that reason."

The moment when these unintended discoveries are made is what makes the work so exciting. "It doesn't matter whether it's the archivist processing the material or the researcher who makes the discovery," says Professor Maher. "In fact, it's often what the researcher brings to the material that is invaluable. When someone comes in to use our material, we are not just the provider and they the supplicant, the consumer. They usually are bringing with them an extensive background in their subject matter, which adds value to our holdings. "So, a little folded letter that wouldn't mean much to anyone else might change—and has changed—an entire line of thinking to a researcher who has been steeped in a particular subject."

You'd think after thirty years, the Archives would have no trouble obtaining the collections it wants from the campus and faculty. Unfortunately, severe understaffing, lack of space until a few years ago, and unacceptable environmental conditions for preservation have hampered official records collecting—a problem compounded by the fact that probably a majority of employees on campus are not even aware of the official state records act.

And retiring faculty or families of deceased faculty often think their old correspondence or other papers are of no use to anybody. Under beds, in corners of attics or musty basements—these are only a few spots where valuable papers have been found. "Frequently we are not contacted until after a person dies, or the janitors have just moved someone out of an office, and they're hauling boxes of what they think is garbage but what is really valuable papers," remarks Professor Maher. "In fact, just recently we literally saved from the dumpster the papers of a very distinguished academic career."

Just hauling the boxes down to the Archives, however, isn't enough to make personal papers or official records useful to researchers—the staff must process them to weed out what's not needed, place the rest of the items in acid-neutral folders, and create a descriptive guide for researchers.

That's where the Archives' rather unique teaching function comes into play. Since 1963, Professor Brichford estimates that more than 300 graduate students have learned archival processing while working for the University Archives.

"Faculty always seem to be surprised that the Archives is involved in teaching," he notes, "but in fact more than half the archival work is done by our graduate student assistants, whom we train. In addition to teaching a formal course in archives, we provide a kind of internship here so that the students do actual work in the archives. This teaching function has been important in accomplishing the goals of the Archives since the beginning, which is consistent with the general educational mission of the university itself."

The Archives is always looking for new items for its collections, especially student papers and scrapbooks, photographs, old and new picture postcards from around the world, and almost anything dealing with the university. "If it's an album or scrapbook, there's not much question that we'd take it because it helps document what's not in the official record," says Professor Brichford. "As for other materials, we're always willing to take a look to decide whether there is sufficient research value in the material to take it."

The Library is Looking For...

Donation to purchase eight microfilms of early American labor newspapers, including The Auto Worker, Machinists & Blacksmiths' Journal, and several others for the History Library. These are essential reference sources for the history of technology, industry, and work. Cost is $95 for each microfilm, or $760 for all.

$360 to purchase The Physiology of Reproduction, 2nd edition for the Veterinary Medicine Library. This two-volume work is the authoritative reference regarding research and instruments for reproductive physiology regardless of animal species. The first edition already is heavily used by veterinary medicine, endocrinology, and animal physiology students.

Also for the Veterinary Medicine Library, $190 to purchase Virus Infections of Ruminants.

$443 to purchase Atlas of Palaeogeography and Lithoclines for the Geology Library. This full-color work is crucial for the unit's reference collection on British paleogeography.

Funds to purchase the Atlas Linguistic de Mexico, Tomo I Volumen II for the Modern Languages and Linguistics Library. This important work, which charts Spanish dialects throughout Mexico, is essential for linguistic studies. Cost is $395.

Funds to purchase Foods and Nutrition Encyclopedia for the Home Economics Library. Cost is $354.

Funds to purchase Open Secrets: The Encyclopedia of Congressional Money & Politics, an analysis of campaign funds from political action committees and individuals, for the Documents Library. Cost is $149.95.

Also for the Documents Library, $190 to purchase Assistance and Benefits Information Directory and $49.95 to purchase Confidential Information Sources, Public and Private, which provides unusual sources of information about right of privacy concerns.

To donate any of the items mentioned above, please contact Sharon Kitzmiller, the Library's annual funds development officer, at 227 Library, 1408 W. Gregory Drive, Urbana, IL 61801, or telephone (217) 333-5683.
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Additions to the Annual Report

The following donors were inadvertently omitted from the Annual Report of the Library Office of Development and Public Affairs, 1992-93: In the Sponsoring Members category, Randall J. Billas, Barry E. and Christine M. Klepp, and Martin Koeck III and Doris Koeck; in the Subscribing Members category, John K. and Tamara E. Bouseman, and James R. and May L. Vieregg; in the Contributing Members category, Wayne A. Lobb.

We regret the omissions.

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