On the cover: The Hollins Authors Collection, including the Margaret Wise Brown Collection, in the Hollins Room at Wyndham Robertson Library, Hollins University. Photo by David Maxson. See article on page 26.
After earning my master’s in English literature, during the long search for a full-time job, I had the good fortune to answer a call for a temporary position at The Mariners’ Museum Library to perform an inventory of their collection as part of their retrospective conversion. While I’d worked for my local public library in high school and during my undergraduate years, and had used plenty of college and university libraries in the Hampton Roads area, this was the first time I’d set foot in a special library. The collection was breathtaking. The rare book room held volumes so tall some stood in the space of four normal shelves, with others so tiny they were half the size of my palm. Handwritten logbooks held drawings of ships, often with interesting bindings, such as one with wooden boards and chains with tiny anchors to lock the book. Books in a wealth of ancient and modern languages dated back to the 1400s. One volume consisted of beautiful watercolors painted by a woman who journeyed with her captain-brother around the world.

In addition to the rare books, the library held an amazing depth and breadth of maritime materials on all subjects, to the extent that staff were able to answer research requests from around the globe, and frequently had visiting researchers who’d travel great distances and stay in local hotels for weeks on end to conduct their research. Some were historians, some genealogists, some enthusiasts, and some creative writers; many of these would share their resulting books with the library, further enriching the collection. The archives themselves not only contained many cabinets of photographs, including a plethora of images of specific vessels, but also held maps, charts, programs for exclusive functions on board luxury liners, tickets, handwritten letters pertaining to the Titanic and the USS Monitor, detailed plans for Chris Craft boats, and a wealth of material that simply made one catch one’s breath with wonder at the sudden immediacy of the past.

I was fortunate to graduate to a full-time position at The Mariners’ Museum Library, whose collection I’d fallen in love with at first sight. My fellow staff members all shared my enthusiasm, and we enjoyed the cooperative, collegial atmosphere of those whose love of a subject inspires them to work toward shared goals. The collection itself was a constant delight. Today, as catalog librarian for Hampton Public Library, I am pleased to be able to indulge in original cataloging for the many interesting acquisitions of the Virginiana collection, and I greatly enjoy working in the supportive team environment of our Technical Services Department; but I will always think back with fondness on those golden years at the museum, immersed in that breathtaking collection.

While special libraries come in many shapes and sizes, serving a multitude of general and very specific populations, they share one thing in common: concentration on particular subjects at a level of depth able to satisfy serious researchers, aficionados, and the curious alike. Those engaged in such specific inquiries can find nowhere better to satisfy their interests; and the best part is, the staff usually enjoy the process of researching these requests and learning the results with the same enthusiasm as the searchers themselves.
President’s Column

by John Moorman

By the time this issue of Virginia Libraries arrives at your door or desk, I will be the past-president of the Virginia Library Association. The association presidency will continue in the good hands of Matthew Todd. I have worked with Matt the past two years as a member of the VLA Executive Committee and have the highest respect for his abilities and informed judgment.

What can I say about my year as your elected leader?

First, heartfelt thanks for the opportunity members of the Virginia Library Association gave me to be the association’s official voice for the past year. It is the greatest honor that I have received in my career and I will treasure the experience for the rest of my life.

Second, with the assistance of the VLA Executive Committee and Council, much was accomplished. The VLA Manual was updated, including changing the duties of the past-president and others to reflect the current needs of the association. The VLA Foundation was disbanded, and its funds are now an endowment account of the association, under the guidance of the Professional Development Endowment Committee. A new logo was designed with the assistance of the staff of the Central Rappahannock Regional Library. The VLA Newsletter began its transition to a web-based publication that can be updated on a regular basis. The association’s web presence continues to be upgraded as a part of ongoing efforts to provide better communication with all our members. The Legislative Committee, under the leadership of Bette Dillehay and John Halliday, kept us informed and up-to-date on legislative matters. The committee produced a legislative agenda in time for its adoption at the June executive committee and council meetings.

Third, this was a year of great change for the association. During the year, the process of changing executive directors was initiated. Early in the year, Linda Hahne, our executive director, indicated to the Executive Committee that it was time for her to retire. Linda has been the personal face of the association for the past thirteen years. Coming in at a time when the association’s existence was in question, Linda has done an outstanding job of guiding the association throughout her tenure as executive director. She leaves VLA in good financial and organizational shape. After considerable discussion and examination of several highly qualified candidates, the VLA Executive Committee approved a contract with Lisa Varga to become the new VLA Executive Director on March 1, 2011. This fall, Lisa will be working with Linda during a period of executive leadership transition.

Fourth, the year was a time to forge new partnerships. In July 2010, I met with the leadership of the Virginia Educational Media Association (VEMA) and the Library of Virginia to begin the process of enhancing communication and cooperation as we work together on projects such as Find It Virginia. Since that meeting, I have contacted the leadership of the Virginia Society for Technology in Education to expand our cooperative effort on behalf of Find It Virginia. I was a part of a meeting with the new Virginia Secretary of Education in July in which we outlined the value of Find It Virginia and the role that libraries of all types play in the educational process.

Fifth, I delighted in meeting new people and in attending events that I normally would not. For the second year in a row, I gave welcoming remarks at the VLA Paraprofessional Forum Annual Conference and heard the conference’s opening speaker. I came away wishing that I had the eloquence of Satia Orange and Sam Clay. I attended one of the two summer institutes sponsored by VLA/CRL. While it has been thirty-five years since I left the academic library realm, the meeting brought back memories of past work experiences. I also heard good presentations and a discussion on issues of concern to our academic library members.

Anyone’s time as an association president is short, and that is for the best. I hope that I have left the Virginia Library Association in no worse shape than I found it. With
a leadership change underway and new technology providing different ways to communicate with each other, the association confidently faces a future that is both challenging and full of opportunities.

As I indicated when I took office, membership participation and input is vital to the success of the Virginia Library Association. Without an active and informed membership, VLA cannot effectively represent your concerns and needs. Thus, join if you are not a member. If you are a current member, make your membership an active one by joining a committee, preparing a workshop or program, responding to a call for action from our legislative committee, or volunteering for an office in the association. Your association needs you!

Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve as your president for the past year. I have learned much and have grown both personally and professionally as a result of this experience.

Guidelines for Submissions to Virginia Libraries

1. Virginia Libraries seeks to publish articles and reviews of interest to the library community in Virginia. Articles reporting research, library programs and events, and opinion pieces are all considered for publication. Queries are encouraged. Brief announcements and press releases should be directed to the VLA Newsletter.

2. Please submit manuscripts via email as attachments in Microsoft Word, rich text, or plain text format. Articles should be double-spaced with any bibliographic notes occurring at the end of the article. Please avoid using the automatic note creation function provided by some word processing programs.

3. Articles in Virginia Libraries conform to the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style and Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged. Accepted articles are subject to editing for style and clarity. Authors will be consulted on points of fact.

4. All articles submitted for consideration are reviewed by the editors and may be refereed by the editorial board. Articles that are not selected for publication will be returned within three months.

5. VLA holds the copyright on all articles published in Virginia Libraries. Contributors of articles receive one copy of the issue in which their work appears.

6. Illustrations are encouraged and should be submitted whenever appropriate to accompany a manuscript. Hard copy illustrations will be returned if requested in advance. Digital images should have a resolution of at least 300 dpi. Authors are responsible for securing legal permission to publish photographs and other illustrations.

7. Each contributor should provide a brief sketch of professional accomplishments of no more than fifty words that includes current title, affiliation, and email address. Unless specified otherwise, this information will be shared with readers of Virginia Libraries. Physical addresses should also be provided for the mailing of contributor’s copy.

8. Articles should generally fall within the range of 750–3,000 words. Please query the editors before submitting any work of greater length.

9. Email manuscripts and queries to Cy Dillon, cdillon@hsc.edu, and Lyn C. A. Gardner, cgardner@hampton.gov. Please be sure to copy both editors.

10. Virginia Libraries is published quarterly. The deadlines for submission are: November 1 for Number 1, January/February/March; February 1 for Number 2, April/May/June; May 1 for Number 3, July/August/September; and August 1 for Number 4, October/November/December.
A Tale of Two Libraries: Combining The Mariners’ Museum Library and Christopher Newport University’s Trible Library

by Mary Sellen and Jennifer Anielski

One of the finest and most important collections of maritime artifacts and resources is located in Newport News, Virginia. The Mariners’ Museum, founded by Archer M. and Anna Hyatt Huntington in 1930, not only contains maritime artifacts, it also houses a research library for scholars pursuing all aspects of maritime topics, from historical to pleasure craft research and everything in between. It is one of the largest maritime research libraries in the world.

Across the street from the museum is the up-and-coming Christopher Newport University (CNU), an undergraduate institution that is in the process of rebuilding every one of the original structures created in the 1960s—including the library. In 2007, as the new library was nearing completion, the presidents of both institutions met to discuss the future of the nearly completed library.

Timothy J. Sullivan, then-president of The Mariners’ Museum, watched the new Trible Library go up. The museum at this time was struggling with the issue of what to do about the aging structure that housed its library, and Sullivan conceived the idea of moving the collection into the new CNU library building. As past-president of the College of William and Mary Sellen is university librarian for Christopher Newport University and library director of The Mariners’ Museum Library.

Jennifer Anielski is technical services librarian for The Mariners’ Museum Library.

Mary Sullivan knew and had worked with CNU President Paul Trible. Following many discussions with all stakeholders, they decided that the new CNU library would house The Mariners’ collection.

In the original plans for the CNU library, Information Technology (IT) services and ten years’ growth for both collection and study spaces were designed into the new building. Eliminating IT and putting the circulating book collection into compact storage freed up the 2,300 square feet needed by the museum’s collection and staff. The museum’s collection also went into compact shelving, providing space for significant growth for both collections.

Because The Mariners’ Museum Library is the depository for the USS Monitor Collection Associated Records, specific standards determined by the National Archives and Records Administration for storing these materials were incorporated in the architectural plans for the entire collection. Strict temperature and humidity levels; walls that are a minimum two-hour burn-through; and the use of specific materials, such as paint, that do not give off gasses that could influence air quality, among many other specifications, were included in the plans. Significant security issues were also a major consideration. Surveillance cameras and electronic access to the stacks and processing areas were issues that made the renovation of the CNU space for The Mariners’ more complicated than a normal library renovation project.

The Mariners’ Museum Library

Paul and Rosemary Trible Library
The Mariners’ Museum Library opened its doors on the campus of Christopher Newport University. The public-private partnership thus created has benefited both institutions and their patrons. While the Trible Library collection is a good undergraduate collection that supports the liberal arts curriculum of the university, the addition of The Mariners’ Museum Library adds another dimension to library experience for students and faculty. Not only is the rich content of the collection a significant enhancement, the collection provides opportunities for internship work in archival and rare books. It also provides opportunities for students to fulfill their community service requirements.

The move provided The Mariners’ Library with more space, a better facility for housing and storing the materials, and greater exposure. The museum’s patrons have the added benefit of using the public services of the Trible Library, including additional reference resources and the coffee shop.

The Trible Library is now not only a landmark on the campus and in Newport News, but also a content-rich collection that serves CNU and local and world scholars. The higher visibility of The Mariners’ collection has both enhanced the CNU community and brought more attention to the museum and its world-renowned research collection.
Exploring Virginia Life through the WPA Writers’ Project

by David A. Taylor

Among the resources that libraries can use to create life-changing reading experiences, the products of the Federal Writers’ Project under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) have great potential for links with local topics and reading programs. Many public library collections have the WPA guide for Virginia, titled *Virginia: A Guide to the Old Dominion*. Many also have others in the WPA series (though that may not always be obvious from the catalog entries). Supplementing these are Virginia life histories from the 1930s and ’40s and discussion tools produced by ALA last year.

The stories from the Great Depression can resonate especially in hard economic times, when the idea of widespread joblessness and an effort to capture forgotten voices is closer to many library patrons’ experience.

The guide to Virginia, which came out seventy years ago, demonstrates how the WPA books offer entry points for examinations of local history. It covers virtually every locality in the state, not just a tour guide’s summary of top tourist spots, and it contains unprecedented material on local histories: how towns sprang up quickly, how rivalries could shape borders, how citizens and outlaws forged their lives, and how people ate, worked, and worshipped. All these years later, the Virginia WPA guide still holds up well. A single sentence about the town of Marion paints a vivid picture: “This aggressive county mart, which has a private school, an asylum, and two newspapers, supposedly at political loggerheads but both edited by Robert Anderson, son of Sherwood Anderson, was founded in 1831 and named for the ‘Swamp Fox’ of South Carolina.”

The WPA Writers’ Project was a remarkable instance of democracy in literature. Begun in 1935 when Skyline Drive and the Blue Ridge Parkway were underway, the WPA hired (in addition to millions of people to build roads, schools, and bridges) thousands of schoolteachers, laid-off journalists, unemployed nurses, and fresh college graduates to create a series of state guidebooks that combined travel and history. In addition, the WPA produced books on cultural and ethnic history, including *The Negro in Virginia*, which despite its outdated title gives a remarkable history of black life in the Old Dominion. It was one of a series of titles on African American life nationally produced under the guidance of Sterling Brown, cultural historian at Howard University.

The WPA also interviewed Americans with an eye for histories that didn’t otherwise get caught on the page. This marked a shift when folklore, previously the domain of academics, grew in scope, leading to wider interest in oral history today and initiatives like StoryCorps, heard on public radio. For the Folklore unit of the Writers’
Project, WPA writers conducted life-history interviews throughout Virginia that reveal the state’s variety. These interviews offer librarians immediate, first-person encounters with how people lived that can engage young people directly with history.

“The entire tradition of oral history, in my opinion, arose out of the Writers’ Project,” says Stetson Kennedy, a folklorist who got his start as a WPA writer in Florida with Zora Neale Hurston. Kennedy’s interview appears in *Soul of a People*, a documentary film and book about the WPA Writers’ Project nationally. The film was produced with funding support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Smithsonian Channel. Others highlighted in *Soul of a People* include a hobo-turned-editor in Nebraska; Hurston and her folklore research in Florida (she had just published her best-known novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* when she needed the WPA job); John Cheever’s editing tasks in New York and Washington; and Studs Terkel, the oral historian (author of *Working* and *Hard Times*), who said his experience on the Writers’ Project in Chicago marked his start as a writer.

Virginia WPA writers interviewed nearly 1,400 people, including hundreds of formerly enslaved people. (In the 1930s there were an estimated 100,000 former slaves still living in America.) These interviews tell us how Virginians accounted for their lives, and are available now on the Library of Virginia website (http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/opac/wpalhabout.htm). Nationally, the WPA gathered more than 10,000 interviews. Many are on the American Memory section of the Library of Congress website. In addition to the written interviews, the site also includes audio recordings made by Hurston, Kennedy, and others in the South using what was then a state-of-the-art recording device resembling a record-player console. An affiliated 1939 field tour by John Lomax for the Library of Congress stopped in Galax but was unable to record during that visit. Librarians can use these recordings to point patrons to different kinds of folk music and their living traditions in Virginia, for example at the Richmond Folk
Festival held each autumn (www.richmondfolkfestival.org).

In association with *Soul of a People*, ALA provided grants for thirty libraries nationwide to host a series of events about America in the 1930s through the lens of the Writers' Project. For that, ALA produced a brochure, discussion points, and portals for libraries to use in exploring how the WPA guides and books may still show people's hometowns today, and how the WPA played a role, for example, in Virginia and American literature later, including the work of those who went on to become influential writers. The ALA program website is http://www.ala.org/soulofapeople/.

My own introduction to the WPA guides offers an example of how the WPA books can engage readers. For a cross-country trip, my friend lent me her father’s copy of the *WPA Guide to New Orleans*. When my wife and I reached New Orleans, I was struck by how much that 1938 guidebook said about how ordinary New Orleanians lived. The text was spirited and yet didn’t sugarcoat hard realities. It inspired me to explore the stories behind that book and find other WPA books.

The Virginia guide, like that New Orleans book, is a fine-grained history of the state’s regions: mountains, piedmont, and tidewater. All the state guidebooks share a similar organization: the first half consists of essays on the state’s history, economy, industry, geology, natural history, and folklore; the second half narrates a series of driving tours through the state.

WPA work was no badge of honor—it was one rung above joblessness for people struggling through the Great Depression. That’s one reason, I believe, why WPA writers made special efforts to canvass groups previously overlooked by history texts. In the Virginia WPA interviews and the state guidebook, you find unusual accounts of Virginians making it through hard times. Eudora Ramsay Richardson, the state director, wrote in the guidebook’s preface, “We have striven to record the exploits [of those who were famous as well as] those ‘to fortune and to fame unknown,’” and who would have fallen into “undeserved oblivion” without the guide.

For four years Richardson managed thousands of out-of-work Virginians to get the book done and cajoled essays out of prominent historians such as Douglas Southall Freeman. Local librarians throughout the state answered questions about landmarks, battles, and congregations, and reviewed drafts about their towns.

Richardson herself wrote for the guidebook, including a piece on Virginia foods, from spoon bread and battercakes to herring roe with scrambled eggs. She explained how dodgers were related to cornpone except fried on a griddle, and that real Virginia ham is the color of Cuban mahogany, and its fat should have the gold transparency of amber.

After exploring the Writers’ Project works for a view of the 1930s, library patrons can further track down books by the WPA writers who went on to literary careers. While many WPA writers returned to other vocations after the Depression eased, a surprising number went on to rank among the century’s prominent authors. Besides Hurston, Cheever, and others mentioned above, novelists of national note include:

- Saul Bellow—The only Nobel laureate to come out of the WPA, Bellow created memorable worlds of 1930s life in his classic novel, *The Adventures of Augie March*.
- Louis L’Amour—The bestselling western writer worked in the Oklahoma Writers’ Project alongside noir novelist and later screenwriter Jim Thompson.
- Richard Wright—The author
famous for *Native Son*, written while he was working on the WPA, also wrote the prize-winning story collection *Uncle Tom’s Children* and the classic memoir *Black Boy*.

- Dorothy West—Known now for the stories and sketches in *The Richer, the Poorer*, West tried to recapture the excitement of the Harlem Renaissance, but in the 1930s served as a welfare relief worker. She distilled the living conditions of many black families in a short story, “Mammy.”

- Ralph Ellison—The novelist whose *Invisible Man* is ranked among the twentieth century’s top novels began as a music student before his job on the Writers’ Project in New York.

- Meridel LeSueur wrote many novels, including *The Girl*, about a woman who gets involved in a bank heist. It was based on LeSueur’s interviews with women in Minneapolis during the 1930s.

- D’Arcy McNickle—The author of *The Surrounded* came to embrace his Native American identity while working for the WPA, and forever after declared himself “a native of the Flathead Reservation in Montana.”

Poets who came out of the Writers’ Project include Utah-born May Swenson and California poet Kenneth Rexroth, as well as Weldon Kees, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Margaret Walker. (Conrad Aiken was already a known poet when he joined the WPA.) Regional authors who came out of the WPA include Juanita Brooks in Utah (*Mountain Meadows Massacre*), Vardis Fisher in the Rocky Mountains, Jerre Mangione in the Northeast, and Lorin Brown in the Southwest.

Leading authors and historians in later generations have given credit to the WPA writers for paving the way. William Least Heat Moon told best-selling historian Douglas Brinkley that he might never have written his book *PrairyErth* without the WPA guide to Nebraska. (Brinkley himself notes, in the foreword to *Soul of a People*, how he found the WPA books as a high-school student by way of John Steinbeck’s *Travels with Charley.* Michael Chabon wandered the streets and subways of Manhattan with the WPA *Guide to New York City* for months while he researched his Pulitzer-winning novel, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*, and noted his debt to the WPA writers in that book’s acknowledgements. In 2009, editors Matt Weiland and Sean Wilsey published *State by State*, a book of essays about American life inspired by the WPA guides; Tony Horwitz, author of *Confederates in the Attic*, penned the essay for Virginia. That essay offers a departure point for library patrons to create their own responses to the WPA approach now.

By tracing the WPA Writers’ Project books chronicling the 1930s and by following the paths of its writers in their later works, librarians and patrons can discover a network of rich and imaginative stories of place and everyday lives. The WPA Writers’ Project also points to a more interconnected picture of American literature and culture, starting with Virginia.
Preservation and Access for the Old Dominion Land Company Collection

by Gregg Grunow

The Martha Woodroof Hiden Memorial Collection, more locally known as the Virginiana Room, is located within the Main Street Library of the Newport News Public Library System (NNPLS). The Virginiana Room contains a historically important collection of items from a land development company called the Old Dominion Land Company. This business collection contains one-of-a-kind documents, maps, brochures, photographs, ledgers, and minute books that document the development of the original City of Newport News from 1880–1948. This article will begin with a brief history of the Old Dominion Land Company and its relationship to the City of Newport News, Virginia. This will be followed by a detailed description of the multiple methods that have been incorporated to date, preserve, and provide extended access to these valuable and often fragile materials.

The Old Dominion Land Company was created by nationally known railroad magnate Collis P. Huntington and his business associates in 1880. Collis P. Huntington is well known for being a major contributor to the creation of the first intercontinental railroad. As can be seen by reviewing the documents and maps, this company was responsible for the development of most of the original City of Newport News, mainly the area now considered downtown. The company also owned the land in old Warwick County used to create the city’s reservoir system and had a hand in the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company.

The Old Dominion Land Company Records and Map Collection contains nearly 100,000 pages of documents and more than 700 maps. The information within these maps and documents is extremely valuable to anyone interested in the history of the development of the City of Newport News. Therefore, it has been a goal of the Newport News Public Library System to both preserve and provide wider access to this treasure trove of information. NNPLS has used several different methods to achieve this goal.

The first method of preservation and provision of access utilized on the Old Dominion Land Company Collection was microfilm. In 1982 and 2006, the Newport News Public Library System entered into agreements with the Library of Virginia (LVA) to microfilm the map portion of the collection and sections of the Old Dominion Land Company Records mutually agreed to be historically significant. The records were brought to LVA for microfilming. Use copies of the microfilmed records were given to NNPLS for the Virginiana Room. Another use copy was retained by LVA for its reading rooms. The master copy of the microfilm is in LVA’s safe storage facility. Through this joint effort, very important documents within the Old Dominion Land Company Collection have been preserved and had their accessibility increased for the patrons of both NNPLS and LVA.

In addition, the microfilm rolls will help protect the original documents from excessive handling by the public.

NNPLS next moved to digitization and conservation of the Old Dominion Land Company Maps. In 2007, the library contracted with the Northeast Document Conservation Center to have the Old Dominion Land Company Map Collection digitized. Some of the maps in the worst condition were also cleaned and had tears repaired and pressure-sensitive

Gregg Grunow is senior librarian at the Newport News Public Library System.
acidic tape removed. The first 300 maps by chronological order have been digitized. The archival digital files contain images of 300 to 600 dpi, depending on the size of the original map. At the same time, derivative files of 90 dpi were created for everyday use (to increase download speed).

While preparing the maps for their journey to the Northeast Document Conservation Center, the maps were rehoused in new storage and display folders to help support and enclose them. This method allowed for preservation and protection of the physical maps as well as the ability to provide greater access to them in both physical and digital forms.

The Newport News Public Library System previously purchased a server and digital library content management software called CONTENTdm. These purchases have allowed the library system to create a digital library containing and describing the digitized map collection. Now anyone in the world with Internet access can view these maps and learn more about the City of Newport News.

In 2009, an Epson Expression 10000XL scanner was purchased to provide the ability to digitize postcards, photographs, documents, and the smaller maps in-house. These items are being scanned at 600 dpi for very dense and high-resolution image files for archival purposes. The images are being stored on two external hard drives of two-terabyte capacity. When images are ready to be transferred to the digital library, lower-resolution images are derived from the archival files.

In addition to the Old Dominion Land Company Map Collection available in the NNPLS Digital
Library, there are two collections of postcards and a collection of early Old Dominion Land Company documents and booklets. The digital library is an ongoing project.

The final method of access is a twelve-panel exhibit that the library created utilizing documents, maps, and photographs from the Old Dominion Land Company Collection. The exhibit, “The Old Dominion Land Company and the Development of the City of Newport News, Virginia,” is available in both physical form and online. The library system contracted with Mellon Street Graphics to help create it. Funding was obtained from a bequest made to Main Street Library by Dr. Herbert Neisser and the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. Records contained in the Virginiana Room were used to provide a very creative form of public access.

Now anyone in the world with Internet access can view these maps and learn more about the City of Newport News.

The staff of the Newport News Public Library System have used multiple methods for preserving and providing access to the unique collections held within the Martha Woodroof Hiden Memorial Collection. It has definitely been a learning experience that will continue for many years to come. The collections in this article can be accessed at Newport News Digital Library (www.nngov.com/library/resources/digital) and “The Old Dominion Land Company and the Development of the City of Newport News, Virginia” (http://216.54.6.251/odlcexhibit/index/).
We might not think of community colleges in Virginia as institutions with deep historical roots. The Virginia Assembly established the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) in 1966 in order to fill the need for two-year college programs in the state. The fiftieth anniversary of VCCS will arrive in 2016, and that event suggests an opportunity to look back at the history of community colleges in Virginia. At the Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College, we have already begun this process by developing a digital collection to house and display historical documents from our campus archives. We have identified student publications, meeting minutes, event programs, and photographs as candidates for digitization.

In “Defining Collections in Distributed Digital Libraries,” Carl Lagoze and David Fielding define a collection as a “set of criteria for selecting resources from the broader information space.”1 Essentially, collections are sets of items that meet some specific criteria of provenance and pertinence. They are commonly found in libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural institutions. Digital collections take the concept and apply it to images of items on the Web. Those items might include printed text documents, printed images, video, and audio. They might also include born-digital items. Digital collections aim to extend the reach of these items beyond their permanent homes in an archive to anyone with Internet access. Digital collections make it possible to display items online that might not get as much exposure in their analog formats. Done well, a digital collection should tell the story of thematically similar cultural objects to an audience.

It is my hope that NOVA’s experience will enlighten and guide other similar institutions in creating their own digital collections. While institutions with valuable treasures in their collections might have a digital collections librarian or digital initiatives librarian, no one involved in this project at NOVA had any prior experience with digital collections. Despite that, we learned by trial and error and have managed to establish an effective workflow for digitizing our documents and making them searchable and browsable on the Web.

Given the limitations of our staff, it was important to start with a project modest in scope. Digital collections can start small. We identified the most appealing items in our archives—student newspapers, Campus Council minutes, commencement programs, and photographs. These core items made up our initial collections. The student newspapers reported on events throughout the college’s history and in some cases remain the only record of those events. Campus Council minutes describe the nuts-and-bolts decision-making processes that contributed to the development of the Alexandria Campus of NOVA. Commencement programs include the names of graduates and their programs as well as the names of speakers. Photographs of people and original building and site plans for the Alexandria Campus add depth and color to the collections. These items have comprised the core collection we have built to show the capabilities of digital collections on the Web.

There are some preliminary steps that institutions should take...
Digitally archived materials include these early sketches of the Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College.

Newspapers published by students at the Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College—October 24, 1975, and November 11, 1985.
before engaging in a digitization project for digital collections. Through trial and error, we learned a few:

- **Identifying items.** What should be included?
- **Software.** What kind of digital collections software will be used to display items on the Web, and what kinds of capabilities should it have? What kind of image processing software is necessary?
- **Hardware.** Should digitization be done in-house or outsourced? What kind of scanners should be purchased? How many computers and monitors will be needed for the project?
- **Staff.** How can this be done without additional staff funding or new positions?
- **Storage.** Files will need to be stored on some kind of server or other storage device. Digital files can be quite large. What quality of archival digital files should be kept?
- **Metadata.** How much metadata should be recorded for each item, and how detailed should that metadata be?
- **Intellectual property and privacy.** Is it legal to display items on the Web? Does posting items like photographs on the Web violate anyone’s privacy?

We identified items to be scanned that contributed to building a historical picture of Northern Virginia Community College. We reviewed a number of digital collections software options, comparing costs, ease of use, search features, and development time, and we selected CONTENTdm from OCLC. Based on our current subscriptions with OCLC, we were able to use CONTENTdm to display up to 1,000 items or 10 GB of items on the Web for free. We purchased a copy stand and a large flatbed scanner to digitize items. We were able to use existing computers and monitors to process images. For staffing, we relied on staff volunteers, an intern, and students to work on the digitization. We tried to make the workflow simple so that almost anyone could contribute to the scanning of items. For storage, we used a networked server to store large files as well as a portable hard drive to transfer them from one computer to another without taxing the network’s resources. We are still determining what level of quality of archival digital files we will be able to keep.

As we researched this project, we saw that a robust workflow is essential to making sure that digitization, metadata creation, and the building of a website are as smooth as possible. We realized the importance of tracking each item through each step in the process—removal from the archives, digitization, moving digital files, processing digital files, adding metadata to those files, uploading them to the Web, and finally preserving them in some form on a server. Establishing a clear workflow ensures that items are not scanned or processed twice and allows staff to pick up right where they left off regardless of where they are in the workflow process.

A basic workflow for digital collections has the following components:

- **Scanning items.** A copy stand or large flatbed scanner works well.
- **File management and storage space.** Once files are scanned, it is important that they have a place to be stored. Scans of images and documents can take a great deal of space.
- **Image processing.** Files directly from the scanner will probably require straightening, cropping, conversion to PDF or other file formats, and optical character recognition (OCR) processing that allows for full-text searching of items.
- **Metadata creation.** Once files are ready to go on the Web, they need metadata. Our digital collections software, CONTENTdm, allows us to create metadata templates that conform to Dublin Core and other metadata standards. Fields that vary from item to item can then be filled in.

- **Upload to the Web.** CONTENTdm allows us to monitor files uploaded to the Web and approve them once they are uploaded.
- **Build menus.** CONTENTdm allows users to do searches for items, and we have built custom menus to browse to collections of items as well.

Some challenges we have faced include finding networked server space to store files, finding the most time-efficient ways to scan and process images, and determining best practices for metadata within the context of our digital collections software. CONTENTdm is widely employed for digital collections, and the option to use it for free was an attractive one; but it required some time for development and troubleshooting. We worked with CONTENTdm’s customer service to deal with problems as they arose.

We are continuing to work to achieve our goal of building a stable, extensible, scalable, searchable, browsable digital collection that can serve to capture NOVA’s history for years to come. We hope that our model will inspire other community colleges to build their own digital collections.

**Notes**

Civil War 150 Legacy Project: Document Digitization and Access

by Laura Drake Davis and Renee Savits

The 150th anniversary of the American Civil War provides an unparalleled opportunity to examine the conflict that defined our nation like no other. One third of the battles were fought in Virginia, and four years of war ravaged the Virginia landscape. To prepare for and commemorate the sesquicentennial of Virginia’s participation in the American Civil War, House Bill 1440 was introduced in the Virginia General Assembly in 2006, creating the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission. The commission has developed numerous plans for the commemoration, including traveling exhibitions, conferences, educational resources, document digitization, and much more. In 2010, the commission and the Library of Virginia (LVA) partnered to establish the Civil War 150 Legacy Project: Document Digitization and Access, a statewide online collection of original Civil War manuscripts that remain in private hands.

A multiyear digital project, the Civil War 150 Legacy Project: Document Digitization and Access focuses on manuscript materials created during the period 1859–1867 that reflect social, political, military, business, and religious life in Virginia during the period of the Civil War and the early period of Reconstruction. The library’s experience and recent acquisitions have determined that many original manuscripts concerning the Civil War are still held and maintained in private hands. These items range from single letters and diaries to substantial collections of correspondence between soldiers and families at home. These first-hand accounts, often in fragile or deteriorating condition, are carefully guarded treasures that many families are reluctant to relinquish. By scanning these items and providing online access, the CW 150 Legacy Project will allow individuals to retain their original items, yet preserve the intellectual and historical content of these valuable documents.

Working with local sesquicentennial committees established by the commission and through a partnership with LVA and a network of statewide connections, the

Laura Drake Davis is the archivist for the CW 150 Legacy Project, Western Region, at the Library of Virginia. Davis is a member of the Academy of Certified Archivists and an active member of the Society of American Archivists and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference. She can be reached at laura.davis@lva.virginia.gov.

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CW 150 Legacy Project will provide individuals an opportunity to have their historic letters, diaries, and other collections scanned to preserve their valuable intellectual content. The goals of the CW 150 Legacy Project are to provide a central digital repository for newly discovered original materials; to seek a broad-based collection, both geographically and topically; to foster cooperation through partnerships with local commissions, heritage organizations, and libraries; and to enhance the commission and library’s websites using selected materials gathered during the project.

The digital images will be stored by LVA and made available through both websites. All digital images will be scanned at a high resolution and cataloged using current archival cataloging standards and Dublin Core metadata standards. When the commission ceases its work in 2015, the commission website will be transferred to LVA as a state archival record and made available through the library’s website.

In the pilot phase of the project, LVA archivists traveled to Danville and Winchester, Virginia, to gauge interest in the process. Individuals contributing materials for scanning—or “digital donors”—made appointments with their local sesquicentennial committees to minimize wait times and ensure that donors could be accommodated during their scheduled times. At the appointments, digital donors met with LVA archivists, who scanned the material for inclusion in the CW 150 Legacy Project. Information about the scanned materials was collected from each digital donor onsite and used to augment the library catalog records that would accompany the scans. Following the scanning of materials, images were loaded into LVA’s digital asset management system, DigiTool, and made available through the Virginia Memory website (www.virginiamemory.com). During the pilot phase of the project, a total of 909 images were created from public events in Danville and Winchester and materials from private collectors.

Following the success of the pilot project, LVA and the commission decided to proceed with the CW 150 Legacy Project in earnest. In June 2010, two library staff members, Renee Savits and Laura Drake Davis, were selected to coordinate the project, with each assigned to a specific region of Virginia. The coordinators have established formal policies and procedures for the CW 150 Legacy Project and have made contact with local sesquicentennial committees to schedule scanning events.

The first scanning events of the project are scheduled for fall 2010. A list of scheduled scanning events will be available on the commission’s website, www.VirginiaCivilWar.org/legacy. The coordinators are currently contacting individual local sesquicentennial committees to schedule events and appointments and assist with publicity. Following each event, materials will be cataloged and loaded onto the Virginia Memory website. The CW 150 Legacy Project materials can be accessed through www.virginiamemory.com/cw150.

The CW 150 Legacy Project: Document Digitization and Access has potential to become a premier resource for Civil War-era materials in Virginia and to help make the Civil War relevant today. By unearthing the numerous manuscripts and collections in private hands across Virginia, the commission and LVA aim to provide access to the personal stories of those who lived in the 1860s, giving today’s society a better sense of the challenges they faced, the hardships they endured, and the difficult decisions they made that led to our nation’s greatest conflict. This material will strengthen our knowledge of this pivotal event by confirming or repudiating current scholarly opinions and long-held beliefs—either of which can only enhance our understanding of this era in history.
Special Libraries in the Baptist Church

by B. Dawn Fisher

The Virginia Library Association (VLA) and the Virginia Baptist Library Association (VBLA) have much in common. In addition to their interest in libraries and the people who work in them, both associations seek to support services (otherwise known as ministry in the church) and advance knowledge (literacy and learning in the public library; theology and Christianity in the church library) through the progressive assimilation of information and its disbursement to those who will use it. VLA and VBLA provide workshops and links to resources to help the person in charge of running the library make educated decisions. Finally, both associations know the value of networking among their members to assist with both patron and purchase problems. Thus, it is in the materials housed on the shelves in the individual libraries that we find the greatest differences between the two organizations.

One such example is the library at Hunting Creek Baptist Church in Big Island, Virginia. Walk into the well-lighted room and scan the shelves. It is immediately apparent that the nonfiction section is nowhere close to being synonymous with a typical public library and is visibly unbalanced. Carolyn B. Morehead, the church librarian, uses Dewey Decimal Classification: 200 Religion Class (Albany: Forest Press, 1997; ISBN-10 0910608601) on a regular basis to clear up any questions she might have when entering a new item in this genre. The abbreviated book is an excerpt from the twenty-first edition of the full Dewey Decimal Classification by Melvil Dewey and is a well-used tool in the religious sector because it is in the 200s that the majority of nonfiction literature for churches will be clustered.

Page through the 200 Religion Class and find terms like theodicy, knowability, pseudepigrapha, and ecclesiology. Before the introduction of affordable and user-friendly cataloging systems like ResourceMate®, the one Morehead purchased a couple of years ago, collection development in the religious library could be a study in sacrosanct terminology as well as a testament to the faithfulness of volunteers with a burning desire to see their congregation provided materials that help elucidate church language. Thankfully, the reduction in prices of new technology has made it possible for many such libraries to be able to click their way to cataloging by searching other sources from which to import much of the MARC record provided through computerization. Of course, the Library of Congress online catalog is always a standby resource for libraries not able to invest in automation, but only if the DDC 200 resource is at hand. Warnings about accepting at face value the records from catalogs not tied to the religious community proliferate in training sessions, and are by and large prefaced by a modification of the old adage, “Do it right or don’t do it at all.”

Most Baptist church libraries house a large number of biographies about missionaries. The common rule of thumb is to make sure they are Southern Baptist missionaries, but in recent years, a softening of the stance on denomination versus and ecclesiology. Before the introduction of affordable and user-friendly cataloging systems like ResourceMate®, the one Morehead purchased a couple of years ago, collection development in the religious library could be a study in sacrosanct terminology as well as a testament to the faithfulness of volunteers with a burning desire to see their congregation provided materials that help elucidate church language. Thankfully, the reduction in prices of new technology has made it possible for many such libraries to be able to click their way to cataloging by searching other sources from which to import much of the MARC record provided through computerization. Of course, the Library of Congress online catalog is always a standby resource for libraries not able to invest in automation, but only if the DDC 200 resource is at hand. Warnings about accepting at face value the records from catalogs not tied to the religious community proliferate in training sessions, and are by and large prefaced by a modification of the old adage, “Do it right or don’t do it at all.”

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B. Dawn Fisher, a recent MLIS graduate from the University of South Carolina, Columbia, functions in the role of manager for the Montvale Branch Library of the Bedford Public Library System in Virginia. She worked as assistant manager at the Forest Branch for one and a half years and as an associate at the Big Island Branch for more than eight years. Carolyn B. Morehead, manager of the Big Island Branch since it first opened as a station in 1982, assisted in providing information for the article. Fisher worked under Morehead’s mentorship at the Big Island Branch and was encouraged by her to become involved in the Flat Creek Church Library. Morehead has worked on the staff of the Hunting Creek Church Library since the mid-1970s and has been the director since 1993.
Christianity has produced a more expansive selection. Books published by the International Mission Board, the organization in charge of assigning and supporting missionaries, provide cataloging information that is trustworthy, eliminating a couple of recheck steps in the process. Naturally, Lifeway Publishing (an agency of the Southern Baptist Convention) and the Baptist mission organizations are more attractive because of this feature, but churches are self-governing in all areas, including the library. Regardless of the predilection for favored suppliers, the materials found in the biography section of public libraries are generally cataloged differently in the church, some by choice and some by design.

Taking into consideration the importance of missionaries in the Baptist church, the 200 Religion Class reprint gives very specific instructions about classification in Dewey 266. For instance, the cataloger is advised to use 266.023 for “foreign missions originating in specific continents, countries, localities,” but at that level, instructed to go to 266.009 for “foreign missions characterized only by place served.”1 (Is it any wonder librarians try to buy books about missions and missionaries published by a press they can trust to have the correct cataloging information on the title page?) Lifeway Publishing provides a series of training manuals, one of which is How to Classify and Catalog Media: Technical Processes Guide 2 by Jacqulyn Anderson, which furnishes more explicit instructions about biographies. Missionary stories, those designed to teach mission facts and written in mission settings, are to be classified 266.09. With biographies, however, the cataloger gets four choices: individual biographies, including family, and excepting Bible persons, missionaries, and Shakespeare; collective biographies (two or more people) in the 920s; Bible biographies, which are shelved in the 220s and subdivided by Old Testament, New Testament, or special persons (i.e., Jesus Christ, Mary, and Joseph); and missionary biographies in the missions section (266.092).2

The Dewey 220s (Bible) and 248s (Christian living) in the church library generally comprise the largest sections. The 220s contain various translations of the whole and studies of individual books of the Bible (and pseudo-Bibles); the 248s, materials about worship, witness-bearing, giving, and guides for various groups of people on how to live according to the principles established in the Bible. Apart from the Dewey number, the one thing librarians are most particular about is making sure the item being processed does not promote behavior discouraged by the church, or direct the reader away from the truth of what is being taught by the pastor and other leaders. Although libraries may contain books about various religions to educate members about beliefs and practices, it is generally an error of judgment to have conversion manuals to another faith on the shelf. Even the fiction section provides reason for concern: for instance, Amish books are very popular in the church libraries mentioned in this article, and yet some would argue that this religion does not fully support Baptist beliefs. Along the same lines, inspirational fiction and religious fiction are not synonymous, and it behooves the librarian to make sure the collection represents the views of the church.

Materials for children are a little less restrictive. The librarian looks for items that encourage character development, good citizenship, and polite behavior, while at the same time reinforcing faith development according to the constitution of the church. When the church librarian also works in the public library, there is more opportunity to examine materials being considered, as well as to query readers about their selections. Library committee members often will help with the reading and are good resources to determine the appropriateness of the media in question. When all else fails, the pastor may be the best resource to
determine if a book goes against what the church espouses.

As mentioned earlier, church libraries in Virginia—Baptist ones in particular—are autonomous; just like public libraries, each serves a different community. Some of the media centers are so small they could have easily been converted from a janitor's closet, while others are larger than many of their counterparts in the public arena. Chester Baptist Church Library in Chester, Virginia, which uses the Concourse automation system, was planned and expanded during a building and renovation project, and services a preschool held in the church. The library workers prepare Sunday school packages with maps, supplementary books, and other resources for teachers of children's classes. They actually have a workroom—with microwave and small refrigerator included—for processing media. On the other hand, the Flat Creek Library in Lynchburg is as old as the church (1952), has shelves designed to hold trade-paperback-sized outdated Study Course materials, and currently houses just over 2,000 items. Space is a big issue here as well as in the Hunting Creek Library (collection of 4,000+), even though it is double the physical size of Flat Creek; to add new materials in both of these locations, items have to be weeded on a regular basis. This job is often left up to the director, especially when the top position is the only one filled.

Staffing for the church library is generally on a volunteer basis. Seldom is a librarian paid; and even when there are other members to help out with processing, purchasing, and shelving, these assistants often follow the same volunteer conventions as in the public library—being answerable to their own schedules and preferences in work type and time. Hunting Creek Baptist Church's librarian, Carolyn B. Morehead, services a congregation with an average attendance of 120–140 people. Her circulation in August was 139. She is constantly looking for ways to encourage the congregation to read and has, for many years, held a child-magnet summer reading program. This is one area where her staff shines; they come up with a theme, order supplies, decorate the library, and kick the event off with a Sunday morning open house complete with finger foods. The same women are willing supporters at the grand finale. Yet, despite a team of six, the majority of purchasing and cataloging at the Hunting Creek Library falls to Morehead. Her own time constraints make it difficult to stay ahead of the game. In particular, one group of older women reads so quickly that Morehead is hard-pressed to keep new fiction on the shelves, especially when she must weed to make room for the books. In a church library, that's a good problem to have.

Flat Creek, on the other hand, has only one or two dedicated adult readers in a congregation with fewer than eighty members. The lack of interest in the library causes the librarian great angst, but she has hope—circulation can't drop much farther, and it can always go up! The children are more interested than the adults, so a summer reading program is on the docket for 2011. Promotion sells the small library, and the goal at Flat Creek is to eventually put a link to a searchable catalog on the church website to make the collection accessible to other congregations. Of course, that would create an entirely different set of problems: what hours would the library be open to the public (so to speak), and who would volunteer to be there to serve potential users? There is indeed some flexibility in the church library—as long as a church member is available to unlock the door, writing the patron's name and barcodes of materials checked out on a note for the librarian is perfectly acceptable. Currently, the library is open before and after church on Sunday morning, sometimes on Sunday night, and occasionally on Wednesday night. Unlike at the public library, budget cuts can't be blamed for reduced hours; instead, conflicting priorities of volunteer staff members determine the schedule.
In many cases, however, the budget (or the lack thereof) does become an issue in the church library. Once this ministry is designated as a line item, planning an annual budget takes on greater significance; unless the librarian is able to pack business meetings with readers, it’s often hard to convince the participants that supplying the library with new materials is desirable and necessary. Lifeway Christian Stores offer a how-to resource, *Church Library Ministry Information Service*, which includes a section on administration to help the director prepare the budget; information on promotion gives suggestions to increase awareness of the library and draw users who will support requests for funds.

Some libraries are so small that they rely totally on donations, do minimal cataloging, and allow people to take out materials on the honor system. For the most part, donations are encouraged, but a collection development policy is necessary so that the librarian has the right of refusal (without alienating the giver). The Flat Creek selection policy begins with this statement: “In order for the Media Library Center to support the total program and mission of the church fellowship, all materials must be of the best quality and benefit for members and leaders. The church membership and the library staff have affirmed the following selection guidelines: 1. All materials are subject to approval by the library staff and church leadership as necessary.” The policy ends with the words, “All gifts, other than money, must meet the same standards and no provisional gifts will be accepted.” The conscientious librarian will have to know how to accept, and reject politely, gifts to the media center. Tight budgets may make the job look less critical, but bad books are still bad books even when the shelves don’t display many new titles. In some instances, people will purchase the next book in a series already owned by the library, read it, and then present it to the librarian for processing. This works well as long as the givers are not also the only readers in the church.

A simple library, be it public or private, may invite added input from its users solely because staff is more familiar and accessible. It’s a full-time job guarding the feelings of well-meaning advice-givers while providing good customer service, but even more difficult to make musty, dusty donations disappear without causing complete panic. The excellent idea of putting weeded books on a table labeled “Free! Take what you want” seems wise until a church member catches you in the hall and gives you an earful about getting rid of books donated by her grandmother or raises the age-worn argument of the “historical value” of the tomes being withdrawn. Interestingly enough, the people who complain seldom find anything on the table appealing enough to take home.

In many small churches, the library media center may be the storehouse for audio-visual equipment, and the librarian the most advanced technology guru in the church. Old documents, minutes to business meetings, church directories, pictures, and even quilts from anniversary celebrations are often stored alongside the books; historian, archivist, and preservationist simply become addenda to the title of library director. The benefits of church library work, however, far outweigh the seeming cacophony of responsibilities: there’s a satisfying joy in being able to put a book in the hands of a teacher or other church worker when class is beginning and a key piece of information is missing. And again, serving in the position of librarian is especially gratifying when someone who has never been a reader suddenly discovers an author who makes the written word come to life, especially when the new reader continues to check out books even when the series ends.

Finally, providing access to books for parents who may not have time to go to a public library, or whose job schedules don’t coincide with open hours, makes the process of selecting, purchasing, cataloging, shelving, and weeding a worthy way to work in the church. Certainly Jesus, a middle-class citizen at most, did not own a personal copy of the Old Testament, but used a library of sorts when attending synagogue, where he learned passages of scripture. Likewise, Christ’s followers should have the opportunity to do the same under the mission of an organization devoted to collecting, organizing, and disbursing information as presented in the official statement of the media center: “Our mission is to provide resources and services which advance learning about God, stimulate Christian growth, enrich worship experiences, and enable the ministry of the members and leaders of our church.”

**Notes**


A Special Relationship:
The Virginia Baptist Historical Society and the Boatwright Memorial Library

by Jim Gwin

Founded in 1876 on the campus of Richmond College (University of Richmond), the Virginia Baptist Historical Society (VBHS) has housed and managed the University Archives for the University of Richmond (UR) since 1981. This long relationship has proved beneficial to both organizations and continues to evolve as the emphasis on and importance of original source materials to research increases.

VBHS is located in a wing of Boatwright Memorial Library (BML). VBHS contains a large collection of books, manuscripts, and other materials related to Baptist history. Under a contractual agreement, research services for the University Archives are provided to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and anyone interested in the history, official records, and cultural life of the 180-year-old institution. Though the University Archives was established in the library by the University of Richmond’s Board of Trustees in 1975, little was done with the collection until Dennis Robison, the university librarian, and Fred Anderson, executive director of VBHS, came together to work out a special agreement with University of Richmond administration to transfer the archives from the library to VBHS. At the time, this collaboration was a win-win situation, since both institutions shared much of the same history. The university agreed to pay VBHS for housing, preserving, and providing research services for its archives.

Since the original agreement was negotiated, UR and the Baptist General Association of Virginia, the parent organization for VBHS, changed their relationship. A special agreement between VBHS and UR to continue to administer the University Archives was reaffirmed in 1999. The unique ties and relationships between the library staffs of BML and VBHS also continued to grow and develop as both institutions gained in prominence and reputation at the state and national levels. Boatwright public service and reference staff constantly refer UR students with class assignments, or others with questions concerning the history of the institution, to the University Archives resources in VBHS. Library staff

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can often be heard directing students and other researchers to the VBHS wing of Boatwright Library by saying it is “just to your left and up the path from the tower.”

Users are encouraged to seek the expertise of Fred Anderson, VBHS director and university archivist, or Darlene Slater Herod, research assistant. Over the years, both individuals have developed encyclopedic memories concerning UR and its history and people. Herod is a graduate of the university and has a keen memory of its alumni and faculty and their roles in building UR. Though most of the archives research is accomplished through walk-in appointments, scheduled individual research appointments are encouraged because of VBHS staffing limitations. Warm and friendly part-time VBHS staffer Elsie Richards is usually the first person most students encounter when they come to visit VBHS/University Archives or telephone for an appointment. Both telephoning ahead for appointments and sending written requests by mail are encouraged. Email research is also available, but more limited. Fred Anderson has reported that well over 3,000 individual researchers have used the University Archives resources since 1981. In-house archives usage is expected to expand greatly in the coming years with the increased emphasis in the university curriculum for students to participate in and use primary sources in undergraduate research. The resources and services of the archives will play an increasingly vital role for this part of their academic work.

Real collaboration between the library staffs of VBHS/University Archives and Boatwright Library over the years has often been limited. Some of these efforts were limited to things such as Boatwright Library staff encouraging faculty and staff or alumni to deposit their individual or departmental records with VBHS/University Archives. Occasionally the two organizations have worked together on exhibits for special university events or celebrations. Copies of various university publications, programs, and documents have been forwarded through the library for deposit in VBHS/University Archives. No reciprocal union cataloging or published finding aids have been created to make the resources of the University Archives available for the wider public due to lack of funding. Possible NEH and other grants have been considered over the years as a way to make this happen, but without success.

Discussion about more collaboration between the library and
VBHS/University Archives began in earnest when the university and library began to adopt the new digital technologies in all areas and departments of the institution. Inhouse and outsourced microfilming of certain publications had, for many years, been a regular part of the preservation practices of VBHS/University Archives. In 2003, as a part of the preparation for the 175th anniversary of the University of Richmond, some special funds were approved by UR through the vice president for information services to create a digital database of the "Collegian," UR’s student newspaper. The library staff, working with VBHS/University Archives staff, outsourced the microfilm archives of the "Collegian," and a searchable full-text database was created for the years 1914–2003 at http://collegian.richmond.edu/gsdl/html. A major record of the history of the university was then made available to anyone through the library’s website. Chris Kemp, head of digital initiatives in the library, has subsequently made major improvements to the online "Collegian." Plans are afoot to add the remaining years on a regular basis to the public digital archive.

Further collaboration with VBHS/University Archives continued in 2007, as Kemp and his staff, Crista LaPrade, Marion Dieterich, and student assistants took the "Papers of President Frederic Boatwright," housed within VBHS/University Archives, and digitized them for general searching (http://urhistory.richmond.edu/electronic.html). This is a valuable primary source for educational history, since Boatwright served as president of the university from 1895–1946, a pivotal period in the university’s history and one of the longest tenures in all of American higher education.

Late last spring, discussions began between the library and VBHS/University Archives to create a joint artifacts and digital online exhibition to celebrate the opening of the new on-campus stadium for UR in the fall of 2010. Mike Whitt, special projects assistant, and Fred Anderson from VBHS/University Archives organized and curated a large exhibit of sports materials from the archives entitled “UR Football Comes Home.” This timely and fun exhibit of historical artifacts, photographs, programs, letters, and other material is housed in eight display cases on the second floor of Boatwright Library. Chris Kemp and his staff worked with Andy Morton, the Boatwright Library web technologies librarian, to create an online exhibit with the digital images from the regular library exhibit. This exhibit is accessible through the library’s main webpage at http://news.richmond.edu/news/article/library/2211/ur-football-comes-home-archival-exhibit.html. For the first time, a major exhibition of historical materials from the University Archives was made available simultaneously on the web and in the library....

For the first time, a major exhibition of historical materials from the University Archives was made available simultaneously on the web and in the library....

Works Consulted


University Archives. Annual Reports to the University Librarian. Richmond: University of Richmond, 1998.

Margaret Wise Brown was “the first author of picture books to be recognized in her own right ... [and] the first author to make the writing of picture books an art.”¹ In fact, she also broke the mold of what was being written for children during the 1930s and 1940s. Fortunately for researchers and aficionados of children’s literature, Brown’s legacy of innovation has been preserved at her alma mater, Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia.

The Margaret Wise Brown Collection is housed in the Special Collections Department at Wyndham Robertson Library, Hollins University. Brown’s papers, along with the library’s collection of her books, comprise one of the most comprehensive collections of Margaret Wise Brown materials in the country. Behind this unique collection is the fascinating story of Brown’s prolific career and how the manuscripts found their way to Hollins University.

Born May 23, 1910, Margaret Wise Brown grew up in Brooklyn, New York, and attended her mother’s alma mater, Hollins College (as it was then called), where she received an AB in English literature in 1932. Although not academically inclined, Brown took an interest in writing due to the encouragement of her literature professor Marguerite Hearsey. Five years after graduation, Brown inscribed a copy of her first published book, *When the Wind Blew*, to Hearsey, “Remembering the stumbling words that led up to whatever clarity is here. And always thanking you for the first encouragement.”² A few years after graduation, Brown decided to apply for Bank Street’s Cooperative School for Student Teachers in New York City, a program of the Bureau of Educational Experiments. Entering the program in the fall of 1935, Brown soon fell under the influence of Lucy Sprague Mitchell, chair of the school. In addition to teaching, Margaret also became involved in the Bank Street Writers Laboratory, a group interested in applying the latest scientific theories to children’s stories. Referred to as the here-and-now approach, their textbooks and readers addressed the everyday world and concerns of children. The approach “represented a direct challenge to the widely held view of librarians and publish- 

Beth Harris is currently working at the Wyndham Robertson Library at Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia. As special collections and government information librarian, she manages the rare book, manuscript, university archives, and Hollins author collections. In addition, she oversees the library’s government document collection received through the Federal Repository program. She has also served as liaison librarian for both the sciences and fine arts divisions at Hollins and worked in the library’s cataloging and acquisitions departments. Harris received her Bachelor of Music Education at Houghton College (Houghton, NY) and her Master of Science in Library Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She may be reached at bharris@hollins.edu.
ers that fairy tales, myths, legends, and traditional nursery nonsense ... comprised the best introduction to literature for the young." During this time, William R. Scott, a young publisher, met Lucy Sprague Mitchell, who encouraged him to “devote his list to experimentally tested, here-and-now-style children's books.” Scott was given an office at Bank Street and eventually met Brown, who became his first editor in 1938. According to Leonard Marcus, “she was a highly innovative juveniles editor, and throughout her career she played impresario to the entire field, taking pleasure in discovering or furthering the careers of illustrators and writers such as Clement and Edith Thacher Hurd, Garth Williams, Leonard Wisegard, Esphyr Slobodkina, Jean Charlot, and Ruth Krauss.” Brown published a number of her own books with Scott, but eventually moved on to other publishers. Brown was illustrated by Garth Williams, Clement Hurd, and Leonard Weisgard, among others, and sometimes wrote under the pseudonyms Juniper Sage, Golden MacDonald, and Timothy Hay. In addition to picture books, many of her works were published in educational textbooks and some were even set to music. Her life was tragically cut short when she died of an embolism in 1952 at the age of forty-two. Along with the classic titles Goodnight Moon, The Runaway Bunny, and The Little Island (Caldecott Medal, 1947), originally published during her lifetime, her works published posthumously continue to grow each year.

Along with the posthumous works, newly discovered works have renewed interest in Margaret Wise Brown. In the early 1990s, Amy Gary, president of WaterMark Press, a small publishing firm near Birmingham, Alabama, thought there was a market for more of Margaret Wise Brown’s books. She contacted Brown’s sister, Roberta Brown Rauch, about reprinting some out-of-print titles. Rauch, who had gotten some of her late sister’s manuscripts published, had grown weary of dealing with large publishing and decided to work with Gary. During one of Gary’s visits to Vermont where Rauch lived, Rauch casually mentioned a trunk full of papers that had been languishing in her attic for the past thirty years. Gary was immediately intrigued and excited over the trunk’s contents: sixty-seven unpublished manuscripts Margaret Wise Brown had been working on before she died. The cedar-lined chest also contained numerous pieces of correspondence to her publishers and other individuals. Since unearthing Brown’s papers, Gary has spent time preparing many of these manuscripts for publication.
In the meantime, Gary told her grandmother, Fonnie Strang (Hollins, class of 1928), about the discovery. Strang, an active Hollins supporter, recognized that these papers with their connection to her alma mater would be a tremendous asset to their recently inaugurated children’s literature program. She urged then-Hollins president Maggie O’Brien to get in touch with Rauch about acquiring the manuscripts and papers, which Rauch generously agreed to donate. After three years of working out the details, the collection finally arrived at Hollins in the spring of 1993.

These papers include two hundred pieces of correspondence, more than five hundred manuscripts, music scores, papers relating to Brown's death, and legal records. The correspondence comprises letters from Brown’s publishers, editors, lawyer, collaborators, and various organizations. While most of the letters are addressed to Brown, many contain her responses drafted on the original letters. Subjects include contracts, royalties, copyright, and ideas for books and songs. Major correspondents include editors of the publishing companies Simon & Schuster, Harper & Brothers, and E. P. Dutton. Other correspondents include composers Dorothy Cadzow and Ruth Cleary Patterson, illustrator Garth Williams, photographer Ylla (Camille Koffler), Harper & Brothers editor Ursula Nordstrom, lawyer Harriet Pilpel, and members of the Artists and Writers Guild. In addition, the University Archives unit within Special Collections holds her academic records, photographs, sound recordings, and articles written by Brown, as well as articles and theses written about her.

Many of the manuscripts have notations and offer, along with the correspondence, a glimpse into the writing and editing process. In addition to the day-to-day business of publishing, the letters also reveal personal aspects of Brown’s relationships with her editors and publishers. In a letter to Brown, Ursula Nordstrom (Harper & Bros.) reassures her that they will work out communication difficulties and ends the letter with, “At the risk of sounding very stupid, I’d
like to say again how much having even a small connection with some of your books has meant to me, as editor and just plain civilian. We’ll now sing Hymn 303, Love Ursula.”6 Not all of Brown’s frustrations were smoothed over so easily, however. Georges Duplaix (Simon & Schuster) was visiting France when he received an angry letter from Brown, ending with “Happy Fourteenth of July, and be glad that the ocean is there. If you don’t make good your word to me I will be over to shoot you with a bow and arrow in August. Love Margaret Wise Brown.”7

Even the legal papers, complete with “legalese” terminology, reveal interesting tidbits of Brown’s personal history. Unpaid bills from the local pharmacy, a “French” cleaner in New York City, and the local grocery store provide insight into her character and life. A letter written to Brown’s lawyer, from one of Brown’s friends who owned

Unpaid bills from the local pharmacy, a “French” cleaner in New York City, and the local grocery store provide insight into her character and life.

Margaret Wise Brown’s published books. Brown was a prolific writer, with nearly one hundred fifty titles to her name. She once stated that she could write a story in twenty minutes but spent a year or more rewriting it.9 The Margaret Wise Brown book collection at Hollins, numbering more than 270 volumes in thirteen different languages, is an excellent example of texts and illustrations from what Maurice Sendak has described as the Golden Age of children’s book publishing in America.10 The diversity of Brown’s books at Hollins allows older readers to enjoy the nostalgic feeling of the early editions from their own youth, while younger readers can be introduced to book design and illustration styles of the period. Both will be delighted by new interpretations through modern illustrators. Margaret Wise Brown still touches readers today with The Runaway Bunny and Goodnight Moon. Some lesser-known
works in the collection, such as *A Pussy Cat's Christmas* and *Baby Animals*, have been paired with new illustrators and appeal to younger generations. Lastly, the collection includes new works discovered within the last decade, including *Mouse of My Heart* and *A Child is Born*, which are being read for the first time and have yet to stand the test of time.

The Margaret Wise Brown papers have seen frequent use since their acquisition in 1993. Jake Wheeler, college professor emeritus, reviewed the collection when it first arrived. A popular speaker on Hollins history and lore, he has often delved into this collection to enhance his presentations on Margaret Wise Brown. In an address to Hollins alumnae, Wheeler stated that “reading old manuscripts and seeing the correspondence has given me not only much amusement but insight into the life of a remarkable young woman who went places after starting at Hollins.”

Another researcher who has used these papers several times noted that she found articles, letters, and theses that she didn’t know existed and found articles, letters, and theses several times noted that she didn’t know existed and was “eager to return and give those papers my attention.... Anyone interested in the life and work of Margaret Wise Brown would find a trip to Hollins University more than worthwhile.”

Recently a visitor commented, “Where else can you hold in your hands not only Brown’s death certificate, but read scores of unpublished works, examine accounting records, or sift through correspondence? The collection is wonderful, including not only what might be expected but also esoteric, unusual, and surprising items.”

In arranging, indexing, and preparing a finding aid for these papers, I have found they make history come alive for me as well as researchers and casual observers. The laborious process of writing and negotiating with publishers is made clear as I read through the correspondence. One can reach out and touch the same things Margaret Wise Brown touched and created. After working many hours on this collection, I felt that I had a personal encounter with Margaret Wise Brown herself.

Numerous articles, theses, books, conference papers, and musical recordings have resulted from research in the Margaret Wise Brown Collection, including Leonard Marcus’s *Margaret Wise Brown: Awakened by the Moon*, Cynthia Rylant’s *Margaret, Frank and Andy: Three Writers’ Stories*, and the music recording *The Noon Balloon: Art Songs for Children* by Sandra Summer. Other potential uses of this collection include such topics as Brown’s literary development, women authors and the publishing industry (rights, fair treatment, etc.), and literary study. In addition, correspondents such as Clement Hurd, Dorothy Cadzow, and Elizabeth Randolph may be of interest to researchers.

Interestingly, Brown did not write out of her love for children but rather out of her love for language. In a 1949 Hollins alumnae magazine article, Brown said, “It is not hard to trace an interest in children’s books through a love of the English language. I don’t think I am essentially interested in children’s books. I’m interested in writing, and in pictures. I’m interested in people and in children because they are people—little primitive people—keener in some ways then they themselves will be later on. And, I am interested in simplicity. In children’s books all these combine.”

### Notes

4. Ibid., 89.
5. Ibid., 2.
12. Candidce Ransom, letter to author, TL, August 10, 2004, Special Collections Correspondence Files, Wyndham Robertson Library, Hollins University, Roanoke, Virginia.
Virginia Reviews


Putting a very short poem on a page by itself creates a certain risk for a poet. If the reader connects with the image or emotion of the poem, the white space is an invitation to savor the reading and let the words resound longer than if there is more on the page. If, on the other hand, the poem does not engage the reader, the empty paper is like the silence after an awkward remark at an intimate dinner. Following the success of his recent book *The Beautiful Tendons*, poet Jeffery Beam (see http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/VALib/v50_n2/beam.html) takes this risk something like one hundred and fifty times in his beautifully produced new volume, *Gospel Earth*; and he gives readers many opportunities to stop and let a small poem work.

The book, in fact, is beautifully printed, fitted with a striking cover, and produced with plenty of room for interesting additions to the body of short poems. These extras include a passionate prose introduction titled “Illuminations,” six pages of quotations gathered by the author over many years of careful reading, a prose piece and a longer poem near the middle of the book in a section titled “Green Man,” and a very fine introductory poem, “An Invocation.” In a collection of unusual and well-crafted small poems, I actually found this longer piece to be one of the most successful. Its call-and-response structure and persistent rhythm help bring the images to life, as in this stanza.

That is not to say that the shorter poems should be overlooked. They are good enough that I found myself pausing after reading each one, rereading and trying to enter the world they create in such a few words. Here is an example, the poem “Holy Well.”

Hot aching better dream heaved to wind
Ask Time when the enormous flood will stop …
Ask away … Then sit

The book is divided into six distinct sections, and the variety makes the collection much more than a group of short poems. The section titled “Travels” is also subdivided into groups of poems focused on the Appalachian Mountains, France, Tidewater North Carolina, Italy, and Ireland, allowing the reader to hear the same voice as it encounters very different settings. So, there is quite a bit of variety in *Gospel Earth*, but Beam returns to the short poem throughout. I think one of the very last poems describes my experience reading the book. It is called “Pause.”

Before you turn the page
Pause with me …
There
That’s it
The ancient place
Now go …
— Cy Dillon, Hampden-Sydney College


We happily live in an age where an increasing number of business leaders are also promoting social consciousness and community involvement. But Brand—founder of both the Stuart McGuire Company and Total Action Against Poverty, and a member of numerous charitable organizations—has been beating those drums for decades both from within his own company, where he was generous with benefits, and on the public stage of regional and federal politics.

Brand begins and permeates the book with his own story, as centered on his business life. Its successes, failures, and in-betweens are chronicled in detail not to establish credentials, but to document how he came to believe that businesses and the community’s well-being were inextricably intertwined—and how he went about attempting to better the community with lessons learned. This, combined with witnessing the injustices of segregation—particularly when it was dealt against his own employees and friends—and the horrors of poverty, convinced him of the truth of the question, “If not me, then who?” On today’s still-rising wave of economic hardship, Brand promotes the mantra

From rosehip & goldfinch
From storm clouds gathering
From April’s spring torrents
From pond over-flowing
thorn & bright needle
light darting through us
creek’s roaring persistence
swamp’s restraint ending
that employees should be grateful for their jobs and give all to their employers; nevertheless, he recognized early on that employers are also nothing without good employees, and should treat them accordingly. Happy, satisfied workers are also more likely to become involved in positive ways with their communities. “Doing well by people,” Brand writes, “not only has demonstrable benefits in terms of productivity, but the entire enterprise creates a community of interest that, if properly attended to, thrives and prospers. And it’s also the right thing to do.” Everybody wins; everybody comes out ahead.

Each of the subsequent chapters deals with a specific and sometimes seemingly overwhelming problem: issues of economic justice, education, health care, the environment, racial justice, and peace. Each contains detailed reports and statistics about how far the problems have gone and how deeply they’ve cut into our society. Yet Brand is never pessimistic. After expressing the belief that we cannot rely on politicians to help us—Brand is in fact quite critical of them—he assures readers that they themselves can change their neighborhoods, their towns, and their country for the better. His own experiences may often be very different than the average reader’s, and from a much different era than many will remember, but at their core, they hold similarities that reflect hopes and frustrations from across the human experience.

Brand impresses upon the reader over and over again that caring for each other, and trying to fix our communities’ problems, is the responsibility of every one of us—again coming back to the question in the book’s title. He always puts his money where his mouth is; and though this is sometimes to his own detriment and sacrifice, he pressures on unflaggingly, convinced that a rising tide lifts all boats. This short read—Brand accurately predicts that it takes about two hours—isn’t so much a blueprint for activism as a motivating force to convince readers of their own power to improve the world around them.

Brand never promises that it will be simple, but assures readers between the lines that it is both necessary and an endless font of reward. This is a book readers can return to for inspiration and energy. Brand rarely points fingers (and when he does, it’s almost always at failed government and private programs rather than the usually well-meaning people who implemented them), but instead offers a hand up with advice, encouragement, and optimism. In the end, he says, it is up to all of us; but his faith that we can do it never wavers, and in the end that faith proves both infectious and sustaining.

—Danny Adams, evening services librarian, Ferrum College


Nelson begins George Washington’s Great Gamble with words from a proverbial rhyme: “For want of a nail, a shoe was lost....” From here he records the actions that prove “that seemingly innocuous or at least minor affairs can look like major turning points when viewed in hindsight” (3).

Using firsthand accounts from correspondence, diaries, and memoirs, Nelson presents history from all points of view—British, French, German, Spanish, and American. Doing so reveals the intricacies of national as well as personal politics that influenced each strategic decision in the nearly six years of war. Again and again, as personalities and Providence altered plans, the reader sees the wonder of the outcome.

Nelson divides his book into three parts. Part One, “An Opportunity in Virginia,” introduces us to the leaders in the war. We learn of their previous experience, their temperaments, and their strategies, and we begin to see the genius of George Washington in recognizing strengths and weaknesses both individual and national.

From the first, when in 1775 he took command of the Continental Army encamped around Boston, George Washington hoped to retake New York, considering that to be the winning card against the British. Washington’s military experience prior to the Revolutionary War had been mainly on the Western frontier, and he “had had virtually no exposure to the openfield European-style tactics that would characterize the warfare of the next six years, and he had...
never worked with naval forces” (17). Again and again, however, Washington recognized the need for naval power.

Washington’s first encounter with naval issues came with the need to stop the resupply of the British in Boston. Washington did not have naval know-how, but he had men in his officer corps who did. Colonel John Glover of Massachusetts explained to Washington “that capturing unarmed merchant vessels required only small schooners armed with a few cannons” (17). The schooners were successful, but Washington kept his “navy” secret from Congress for two months in the summer of 1775, knowing that they were not ready to endorse a continental navy, which would look to the British like a declaration of war.

Washington realized the advantages of a navy, but also considered that the Americans did not have the resources to match the quality and quantity of the British vessels that “drove the Americans from Quebec, dominated the Hudson River, carried troops to Rhode Island, took command of the Delaware Bay, and landed the troops that captured Savannah in 1778” (19).

“By the time the Comte de Rochambeau [commander of the French Expeditionary Force which came to help the American Continental Army] arrived in America, Washington entertained no trace of doubt that without a superior or at least neutralizing force at sea, the Continental Army could never win, and, further, he knew that his only hope of matching England’s strength at sea lay with the French” (19). In his Memorandum for Concerting a Plan of Operations of 1780, George Washington wrote, “In any operation, and under all circumstances, a decisive naval superiority is to be considered as a fundamental principle, and the basis upon which every hope of success must ultimately depend” (19).

While the first section of the book is sweeping in covering people and places, Part Two, “Greene and Cornwallis: Looking North,” focuses on the face-offs between the southern Continental army, commanded by thirty-eight-year-old General Nathanael Greene, and the British, under the leadership of General Lord Charles Cornwallis.

Greene and Cornwallis played cat and mouse in North and South Carolina. The British believed that controlling the south was key to winning the war. But Cornwallis came to think differently. He did not find the alleged support from British sympathizers in the Carolinas. Frustrated by this, and with the loss of more than one quarter of his army at the battle of Guilford Courthouse, Cornwallis chose to head north to Virginia. “Cornwallis had come to believe that the entire southern strategy would never work until Virginia was subdued and the American pipeline of supplies and communications from the North shut off,” writes Nelson (129).

During the time Greene and Cornwallis were in the Carolinas, Benedict Arnold had been sent to Virginia as a British general to destroy all supplies headed south to Greene’s army, and to establish a British base on the Chesapeake Bay. He and his troops ravaged towns up and down the James River. Baron de Stuben, General Peter Muhlenberg, and the Marquis de Lafayette were there to oppose and even capture him. They were instead thwarted by the lack of cooperation from the government and residents of Virginia.

Part Three, “The Fight on Land and Sea,” sees the focus of the war come to Virginia. The British forces were digging in on both sides of the York River at Gloucester Point and Yorktown. It became clear to Lafayette, who had been following Cornwallis and trying to comprehend his plans, that the Americans and their allies had “the very real possibility of trapping Cornwallis’s entire army at Yorktown” if the French fleet could take control of the seas. The British were pinned in place by the Continental troops on land. Their backs were to the water.

On August 14, 1781, Washington received word that the Comte de Grasse was headed to the Chesapeake with between twenty-five and twenty-nine ships of the line. Nelson writes, “He [Washington] understood immediately that he must give up, at least for the foreseeable future, his idea of moving against New York, a plan that had been central to this thinking for nearly three years.” Nelson says that Washington probably thought that a Virginia campaign based on French naval supremacy might drive Cornwallis from the colony, but that he probably did not think that it would end the war. Nelson comments again on General Washington, writing that “Clinton may have had the upper hand in men, supplies, and naval superiority, but Washington possessed a decisiveness and a willingness to gamble that the British general could not touch, and it would cost Sir Henry the war” (266).

On August 31, the French ships arrived at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. Nelson writes, “The British were pretty well bottled up at Yorktown and Gloucester, [however,] and the French fleet was...
anchored inside Cape Henry, ready to meet any force coming to relieve Cornwallis” (269).

“After all the blood and suffering, after all the years in which it seemed impossible that the Americans could hold a ship in position, much less defeat a powerful, well-trained, well-equipped enemy—and worse, an enemy with an overwhelming command of the sea—now finally, all the stars were aligning,” writes Nelson (259). As Nelson’s record shows, this did not result from some grand plan. “Many factors, each operating independently of the others, had conspired to let things fall into place” (259).

Washington admitted throughout the war his lack of naval knowledge, once writing that some decisions “partly depend upon a knowledge of Marine Affairs of which I candidly confess my ignorance.” As Nelson’s history demonstrates, Washington’s humility in admitting his ignorance and his ability to thus trust those with naval skill were wisdom that led to victory.

Nelson’s book ends with an epilogue, a time line, endnotes, and a bibliography. He includes eight pages of illustrations, maps, and paintings between parts one and two. In part three, Nelson, himself a sailor, provides illustrations to correspond with his explanation of the fleet formations and winds affecting the British and French in the Battle of the Capes. However, not until page 272 does Nelson explain line of battle, “that orderly line of ships that was the standard arrangement for a sea battle in the eighteenth century, as it had been for centuries before....” This explanation, and a description of each type of ship mentioned in the book, would have been useful at the beginning.

Three maps near the front—America’s Atlantic Coast, Virginia Tidewater, and the Yorktown Region—are beneficial, although some imprecise markings on the Virginia Tidewater map render it difficult to understand. For example, there are two dots placed along the Chickahominy River, without any corresponding marking or explanation as to what they represent. Nelson includes a prologue, a fictionalized account of the battle at Yorktown. While it makes good reading, it is unnecessary and even out of place.

That a group of colonies with a ragtag army, but no navy of any consequence, won independence from a ruling world power with naval supremacy is a miraculous story. James L. Nelson excels at telling it.

The author of fifteen nautical-themed nonfiction and historical fiction books, Nelson received the 2004 American Library Association’s W. Y. Boyd Literacy Award, given to an author of a military novel that honors the service of American veterans during a time of war, for his novel Glory in the Name. In 1999 he was awarded the Samuel Eliot Morison Award by the Naval Order of the United States for his nonfiction book George Washington’s Secret Navy. Nelson lives with his wife and four children on the coast of Maine.

—Susan Larson, librarian and writer in Fairfax, Virginia


Russell McClintock, a teacher at Saint John’s High School in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, adds much to Civil War history with Lincoln and the Decision for War, which examines the months following the election of Lincoln through the secession of the first state, South Carolina. McClintock chronicles Northerners’ responses to the threat of Southern secession via a variety of perspectives and sources, thus providing readers with multiple angles of insight into political thought pervading the North at the advent of Lincoln’s presidency.

Lincoln and the Decision for War focuses on three states: Massachusetts, New York, and Illinois. By narrowing his focus, McClintock aims to understand the “immediate origins of the Civil War, the antebellum political system, and the early presidential career of Abraham Lincoln” (7). McClintock’s other goals include chronicling a wide analysis of the Northern response to secession in hopes of redressing the absence of analysis of the Northern public’s political attitudes and actions as chronicled by Kenneth M. Stampp’s definitive study of the North just prior to secession, And the War Came (1964). McClintock charts the Republican Party’s trajectory toward confrontation with the Southern states and investigates its divergence on the compromise issue of slavery in the Western states, as well as the predicament South Carolina’s secession caused the federal government.

Readers watch President Buchanan maintaining the status quo and taking no action to offer national leadership on the troubles brewing, and President-Elect Lincoln navigating the politics of cabinet selection. In the months between Lincoln’s election and the first shots of the Civil War, McClintock frames the transformation of the issue of African slavery that Northern citizenry and politicians held central to their beliefs about the Republic, to the belief that the federal government should evince authority to maintain itself in light of South Carolina’s secession from the Union. In effect, McClintock suggests that South Carolina’s actions caused the North to “man up” due to the direct threat of armed conflict that the Southern...
states intimated given their swerve toward secession and the formation of a confederacy.

By January 1861, governors of Mississippi, Florida, and Alabama confiscated federal forts and arsenals prior to officially seceding. Northern public sentiments regarded the actions as treasonous and thus were united by this belief to stand by and defend the flag, no matter the cost. At this point, a compromise was moot, given the seizure of federal property in the Southern states.

Chapter Six includes the experiences of four conciliationist men, Edward Everett, Amos Lawrence, John Munn, and William Kellogg. Each approached conciliation from different perspectives in their specific political milieus. They agreed that the way to save the Union was via compromise and diplomacy through established channels such as conventions, petitions, and resolutions. Thus, their attitudes and approaches represented the status quo on secessionist thought in the North.

Once Lincoln took office, his passive approach to neither sacrificing the Union nor provoking war from the South fell aside as he dealt with the problem of Fort Sumter in South Carolina. Yet his leadership as events unfolded demonstrated his strength of character, decisiveness, and inflexibility, which directly countered Buchanan’s lame-duck wavering. Once the announcement of cabinet appointments was made, it was clear what the country’s course would be, given its composition of “radicals.”

The casual reader may feel lost to detail and presentation of his interpretation and information in this rich narrative. His ability to immerse the reader within the politics and personalities of the nineteenth century is skillful indeed.

Lincoln and the Decision for War is recommended for history collections with a focus on the Civil War. In fact, it should be the one book that scholars and interested readers consult on the matter of Northern attitudes towards secession at the brink of the Civil War.

—Rebecca Tolley-Stokes, associate professor and faculty outreach librarian, East Tennessee State University

**Sometimes Stuart seems to inhabit the animal, bringing news of its life to us.**

**STUART AND ELLIOTT REVIEW**


This award-winning Virginia poet, best known for his personal poetry and his dazzling variety of styles, has turned his hand here to verse for children, with delightful results.

Giraffes and hummingbirds, newts and water buffaloes, even the extinct and the mythical can be found here, in a paean to the varied creatures of the animal kingdom. The poet’s wordplay is sure to charm young readers and listeners: a born outsider, the water strider’s river rider, he informs us. His poet’s eye notices that the giraffe’s skin is a “soft patchwork puzzle.” In another poem, he describes the quail mother crossing the road with “her brood pearled out behind her.”

Sometimes Stuart seems to inhabit the animal, bringing news of its life to us. What does the yak dream of, on top of her mountain? Something hair-raising you can bet, like a haircut to take all that load off...

Young readers will be intrigued with the speculation in “Ex-Files”: “When a creature becomes extinct, / what happens to it, do you think?” As he plays with the distinction between being and not-being—“What does the pterodactyl do / not even available to the zoo?”—Stuart is sure to get children thinking and dreaming.

The collection is bracketed by two poems that invoke the sun. In the first poem, the sun cries, “Open the gates! / I have been down here in the dark too long.” At the end of the book, the weary sun confesses, “I’m tired / and almost gone from my giving,” as it goes down through the gates until it’s time to rise again. As the sun prepares to start up its arc, readers will surely be prompted to start reading again from the beginning.

Susan E. Elliott’s exquisite watercolor paintings accompany each poem. Some are wispy and delicate, like the black and white swirl of shell accompanying the poem “Snail.” Others are bold, like the full page-spread that accompanies “Iguana.” Beady eye, horned spine, and mosaic skin are rendered in bright blues, golds, and reds. In the illustration for “Whales,” Elliott uses blocky abstract shapes and a wash of steel blue to convey the “Great, gray sloping” creatures.

Children eight and up will enjoy hearing these poems read aloud or reading them independently. Stuart’s collection is sure to find a place on library shelves next to
Other distinguished anthologies for children such as Valerie Worth’s Animal Poems and The Beauty of the Beast: Poems from the Animal Kingdom selected by Jack Prelutsky. Pinyon Publishing books are available from Amazon.com.

—Caroline Parr, Central Rappahannock Regional Library


Readers will be drawn in right away by the intricate setting, quick pacing, and cast of fully developed characters in The House of Dead Maids. Tabby Ackroyd, one of many girls living at an orphanage, is selected to be the new nurse-maid for Seldom House. On her first night at the house, a female ghost, reminiscent of a non-flesh-eating zombie, crawls into bed with Tabby. Not until later in the story does Tabby realize that the cold, wet “girl” who shared her bed is one of the many ghosts she later encounters, ghosts with blackness filling empty eye sockets.

Dunkle provides a wonderful excerpt from the book—in addition to links for various essays she wrote about Wuthering Heights and her blog tour—on her website, www.claredunkle.com:

The old looking glass in the beaded frame returned only a suggestion of features. I longed to see my new clothes, and as I stepped into the passage, I was just turning over in my mind where I might have seen a better mirror. When first I caught sight of the small figure in black, I thought it was my reflection.

She stood very still in the dusky passage where the light was poorest. Like me, she wore the black dress that proclaimed her a maid of the house, but whereas mine was new, hers was spoiled by mildew and smears of clay. Thin hair, dripping with muddy water, fell to her shoulders in limp, stringy ropes. This was my companion of the night before—and she was dead.

Tabby is so frightened and lonely in the town where Seldom House is located, without churches and with residents who point at her and whisper, that she rarely ventures out of the house where she’s employed. Thus, it is, in part, a relief for her when her charge, called only “The Young Master” or “Himself,” arrives to live at the house. The child is reckless and conceited; after all, he is master of the house at an early age. He lacks manners, is unkempt, and goes without shoes most of the time.

Soon after his arrival at Seldom House, Himself does reach out to Tabby, in part because he is so desperate for a playmate and is seeing his own share of ghosts. Tabby, still practically a child herself, begins to enjoy the young master’s companionship and seems to find him a source of comfort at times, despite his recklessness and ill-tempered behavior. Tabby even seems to enjoy participating in rather bizarre and disturbing games with him, such as tying fancy knots using earthworms.

The House of Dead Maids maintains an eerie tone throughout as Himself and Tabby explore Seldom House looking for answers to the secrets that the maid and the butler are obviously hiding. The truly creepy experiences with ghosts recur throughout the story, and slowly reveal the shocking secrets lodged inside the puzzling house with no windows on the inner walls. The secret that the house and townspeople harbor is shocking, and leads to a satisfying ending that inspires the reader to find out what Emily Bronte actually wrote about in her classic novel, Wuthering Heights.

One of the best things about The House of Dead Maids is that it may encourage teens to read Wuthering Heights to look more deeply into Heathcliff’s character. In my experience, talking to many teenage girls who “just love” Wuthering Heights, teens view the book as a romance rather than the desperate tragedy it really is. Somehow they ignore Heathcliff’s behavior, which is at times frightening, as when he hangs a little dog. The doors Dunkle opens to a deeper exploration of his character may make a difference for girls who seem to view dominating, possessive, and violently passionate men as romantic.

Fans of ghost stories and of Dunkle’s popular Hollow Kingdom series, and those aspiring to read the classics, will all find The House of Dead Maids an appealing read. The cover of the book, with its gilded silver hue and hollow-eyed “dead maid,” should make it jump off library shelves. It’s a must-have for schools and public libraries alike.

—Laini Bostian, Culpepper County Library