A Curator's Wunderkammer

A Decade of Collecting for the University of Virginia
A CURATOR’S WUNDERKAMMER

A DECADE OF COLLECTING FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

David R. Whitesell

Exhibition Catalog

2022
# Table of Contents

1  A Decade of Considered Curiosities
2  Introduction
4  Preamble
9  Jefferson, Virginia, & American History
43  English Literature
51  American Literature
63  Printing, Publishing, & Book Arts
87  Omnium-Gatherum
102  Coda
103  Credits
A Decade of Considered Curiosities

On the occasion of his retirement—after a decade of curatorial work at the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library—David R. Whitesell departs this Wunderkammer having made significant contributions to the collection. Upon his arrival in 2012, David brought with him deep expertise and experience in acquisitions, bibliography, cataloging, and curation from prestigious institutions, as well as essential knowledge of the rare book and manuscript trade. The Library has benefited from David’s work and has grown in extraordinary ways, all to the betterment of teaching and research.

While we celebrate David’s career, we also must acknowledge, as David does in his comments, the work of other curators, present and past, who have assembled this remarkable cabinet of curiosities. David didn’t collect in a vacuum. He built upon collections gathered over a 200-year period, strategized to fill gaps, and sought material he knew a world-class research collection should have. In these pages, David captivates with stories behind these selected acquisitions, and he opens the door to an insider’s perspective on the work of a curator, where curiosity is always a key to success.

Enjoy these selections and let them ignite curiosities that allow you to explore and learn about the wonders of the Wunderkammer.

Brenda Gunn
Associate University Librarian
for Special Collections and Preservation

Left: David Whitesell pondering a potential purchase in the Rulon-Miller Books booth at the 2020 New York International Antiquarian Book Fair; in foreground, booksellers Maria Lin (left) and Rob Rulon-Miller (right). Photo courtesy Karl Fong.
Since 2012 I have shared with curatorial colleagues the privilege of augmenting UVA’s truly remarkable rare book and manuscript holdings. My remit has been primarily pre-1900 materials in all formats. As I prepare to hand this responsibility to a new curator, it seems an opportune time to reflect on a decade’s worth of acquisitions. In this exhibition I offer a small selection with comments intended to illuminate UVA’s current collecting policy, the ins and outs of the unpredictable and highly competitive acquisitions process, and how curators add value to the collection, one acquisition at a time.

Even with a healthy budget, UVA curators can acquire only a tiny fraction of the material appropriate for UVA’s diverse research and teaching needs. No precise count is possible, but my purchases for UVA total approximately 15,000 items; the gifts I have helped bring in may exceed 100,000 items. This constitutes less than 2% of a collection that has been building for two centuries. Still, I hope to show that the value I have added is more than negligible, even if ultimately unquantifiable.

Were my acquisitions arrayed in one massive display, they would likely perplex the beholder by their apparent randomness—more akin to a Wunderkammer, or cabinet of curiosities, than a considered, curated selection—until placed within the larger context of UVA’s collection. This is inevitable given the capricious process by which we acquire rare, often unique, materials—a process dependent not only on funding, but especially on knowledge, considered selection, hard work, timing (from lightning response to extreme patience), relationships, market savvy, and luck.

The small sampling offered here has been ruthlessly pared by omitting gifts and items representing many areas in which I have collected. Despite having some topical and linear arrangement, it remains more a Wunderkammer than a coherent whole. I encourage you, then, to explore this exhibition in your own way, engaging with those curiosities which attract your gaze and, I hope, some that do not. If I have done the job well, these disparate objects will generate serendipitous connections, insights, and meanings for you, for whom we assemble our collections.

David R. Whitesell
Curator, Small Special Collections Library
My UVA acquisitions work actually began thirty years ago, when I sold to UVA some two dozen books—mostly Spanish and Portuguese—while working (1992-1996) for Richard C. Ramer Old & Rare Books. *Adventures of Alonso*—the first American novel*—was our most notable (and lucrative!) sale. Richard found this, the 12th known copy, in Portugal; I, as chief cataloger and head of customer fulfillment, researched and cataloged it for sale, prepared the invoice, packed it on the dining table, and schlepped it to the post office. A year later I chanced upon the 13th known copy, unrecognized in an English bookseller’s stock; we bought it, then quickly resold it to the Library of Congress. To my knowledge no copy has appeared on the market since.

*Defined as the first novel by a native-born American citizen. Published anonymously, *Adventures of Alonso* has been convincingly attributed to Thomas Attwood Digges. Born at his family’s Maryland estate across the Potomac from Mount Vernon, Digges lived abroad in Portugal, England (where he was imprisoned for supporting American independence), and Ireland from 1767-1799 before returning to Maryland. Digges’s only work of fiction, the novel is a lively tale of smuggling set in South America, with extensive meditations on political economy and colonialism. It is a fitting “high spot” for UVA’s magisterial American literature collection.

*Purchased from Richard C. Ramer, 1994*
Buenaventura Suárez, S.J. (1679-1750)

Eclipsis lunæ observata in doctrinis Paraquarīae
Societatis Isu, 5. Aprilis, an. 1708
[Nuestra Señora de Loreto, Paraguay, ca. 1708-1727]
(MSS 4530-a)

Curators build collections not only through new acquisitions, but by adding value to existing holdings. One way of doing so is by (re-)discovering the significance of items already resting on the shelves. Here is one of many examples I could offer. Donated in 1938 by the McGregor Fund, the Tracy W. McGregor Library of American History is the keystone of UVA’s nationally prominent holdings in this field. When selecting items for the McGregor Library 75th anniversary exhibition in 2013, I was astonished to encounter this modest broadside lurking uncataloged in a manuscript collection. It clearly had been printed at the famous mission press established ca. 1700 at Nuestra Señora de Loreto, Paraguay, by Juan Bautista Neumann. Loreto imprints, printed using a primitive press and crude types made locally, on paper imported from Europe, are of outstanding rarity. This broadside was previously unrecorded.

Printed here are lunar eclipse observations made at the Jesuit mission at San Cosme, Paraguay, on April 5, 1708, by South America’s pioneering astronomer, Buenaventura Suárez. A native of Argentina, Suárez arrived at San Cosme in 1703 where, with aid from the Indigenous Guaraní, he constructed a refracting telescope out of cane, wood, iron, and rock crystal. Over the next four decades Suárez surveyed the heavens from his bell tower observatory. Suárez enclosed copies of this broadside in his correspondence with European astronomers, who regarded his work highly. This example reached Cromwell Mortimer, Secretary of the Royal Society, who published its text in the *Philosophical transactions* for 1748.

*Purchased from Richard S. Wormser, 1954*

Tracy W. McGregor Library of American History
Jefferson, Virginia, & American History
3 Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) 
Draft rules for the Virginia House of Burgesses, November 1769 
(MSS 10803 [top half], 10803-a [bottom half])

I could easily spend my entire acquisitions budget adding Thomas Jefferson manuscripts to UVA’s outstanding holdings, the world’s third best. Instead, I acquire these very selectively, looking especially for unpublished or UVA-related items. This manuscript—or rather, the bottom half—is my most significant Jefferson-related acquisition. Entirely in Jefferson’s unmistakable hand, it is his earliest extant political manuscript. In 1769, at the age of 26, Jefferson took a seat in Virginia’s House of Burgesses, soon securing appointment to a committee charged with drafting new rules of procedure. Chair Edmund Pendleton tasked Jefferson with writing a first draft—this manuscript—which was refined in committee before securing approval.

The draft was unknown until 1988, when the top half only appeared unexpectedly in a small upstate New York auction. It was called to UVAs attention, and we were the high bidder; it has since been published in the Papers of Thomas Jefferson. Even more unexpectedly, and unbeknownst to us, the bottom half was auctioned in 2012 by the same upstate New York auction firm. Fortunately, the William Reese Co. bought it and, knowing that UVA was its ideal home, carefully laid a trap for me. As I entered the 2013 New York International Antiquarian Book Fair, a Reese staff member grabbed me, led me to their booth, and bent me over a glass display case containing the manuscript, while another staff member photographed the moment for posterity (you can see it on Facebook). I am not smiling, having accepted that UVA must purchase it, but not yet knowing how we would pay for it. A way was found, and this still unpublished portion was happily reunited with its mate! This is the first time they have been exhibited together.

The story does not end here, however. The manuscript is incomplete, for we know from the text’s final version that Jefferson’s draft originally consisted of two leaves, not one. Given the unusual circumstances of how these fragments came to auction 25 years apart, I am convinced that one, possibly two more fragments remain in private hands and will surface someday. May my successor keep a keen watch and secure these for UVA!

Purchased from the William Reese Co., 2013 
Robert and Virginia Tunstall Trust Fund
When attending the major antiquarian book fairs held annually in New York, California, and Boston, I expect to make significant “finds” but rarely real bargains—this because dealers exhibiting at the fairs typically have time to shop before the public is admitted. Hence, I gaped in astonishment on spotting this pamphlet—properly described but in my opinion underpriced—still unsold a full day after the 2017 Boston fair had opened. I gratefully reserved it for UVA.

This unassuming four-page, unbound leaflet is the only known copy of a work published by Thomas Jefferson while serving as American Minister Plenipotentiary to France. Early in 1786 Jefferson received the welcome news that Virginia had enacted an amended version of the statute of religious freedom he had drafted in 1779. He immediately engaged Philippe-Denis Pierres (printer of his Notes on the State of Virginia) to reprint the statute in English, French, and (per a letter sent to James Madison) Italian. Hoping to encourage religious toleration elsewhere, Jefferson bound copies with the Notes while distributing others through the mails and, presumably, in person on his European travels. But no copy of the Italian translation had ever been located until the Parisian bookseller Rodolphe Chamonal acquired this one in 2017.

Purchased from Rodolphe Chamonal, 2017
Tracy W. McGregor Library of American History
Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)
Friends et fellow citizens ...
[France?, 1801?]

UVA’s remarkably rich and varied Jefferson holdings contain few contemporary prints and portraits, a gap I have been filling. Here is one notable addition: a micrographic engraving containing the complete 1,716-word text of Thomas Jefferson’s First Inaugural Address, delivered March 4, 1801. Jefferson’s eloquent plea for national unity—“We are all republicans: we are all federalists”—was lauded in one newspaper for being “compressed within such precise limits, as to enforce them on the memory.” So, too, in this very rare print, 3 1/2 inches in diameter, of which I can locate only one other copy. Micrographic engraving was by 1800 a well-established means for engravers to demonstrate their skill through prints such as this. The curious substitution of “et” for “&” in the opening salutation suggests that the print was produced in France, where many held Jefferson in high esteem.

Purchased from James Arsenault, 2019
C. Venable Minor Endowment Fund

Московская ведомости = Moskovskii viedomosti, no. 70, August 30, 1776
Moscow. (KF4506 .A3 M67 1776)

Albert H. Small’s magnificent gift of his unrivalled Declaration of Independence collection (displayed in the Declaration of Independence Gallery) presented a particular curatorial challenge: how to augment it when relevant acquisitions are often priced far beyond our means? My approach has been to round out the collection by adding more 19th-century broadside printings, collateral items (as in the “Eulogium” described below), and especially material documenting foreign reactions to the seismic events of July 4, 1776, which launched an international “Age of Revolution.” Here, for example, is the first printed Russian announcement of the Declaration of Independence, in the August 30, 1776 issue of Moskovskii viedomosti, one of only two Russian-language newspapers then published in the entire Russian empire. No other copy of this issue—or of the seven issues bound with it, all filled with news of America’s struggle with Great Britain—can be found in American libraries.

Purchased from Simon Beattie, 2018
Kerchof, Morris, and Tunstall Funds
One highlight of Albert H. Small’s Declaration of Independence Collection is the subscription book in which writing master Benjamin Owen Tyler collected over a thousand subscriptions for the first-ever engraved reproduction of the Declaration (both are displayed in the Declaration of Independence Gallery). Issued in 1818, the print features Tyler’s calligraphic rendition of the Declaration embellished with facsimile signatures of the 56 Signers, all faithfully engraved by Peter Maverick. Although Tyler lived at least into his sixties, rather little is known of his career as a writing master, and specimens of his calligraphy are virtually unknown. Hence, I was delighted when an astute bookseller offered this fine example of Tyler’s work, written in 1816 while he taught penmanship at West Point—the perfect complement to UVA’s Tyler holdings. The memorial features verses by Peyton S. Symmes of Cincinnati, Ohio, who likely commissioned it from Tyler for presentation to the sister of his departed friend, Capt. John F. Mansfield.

Purchased from Ian Brabner, 2019
Associates Endowment Fund
Of the many early Virginia imprints I have acquired—a perennial collecting priority for UVA—this is perhaps the most significant. Printing came late to Charlottesville, in 1781, when Philadelphia printer John Dunlap (of Declaration of Independence fame) was appointed Virginia’s state printer. Dunlap’s employee James Hayes brought a press and types to Richmond, where he set up shop. But with the Revolutionary War raging in Virginia, Hayes was obliged to pack up the press and follow Governor Thomas Jefferson and the state government as it fled westward. Hayes went first to Staunton; then, after Redcoats briefly captured and released the press, brought it to Charlottesville before returning to Richmond after the British surrender at Yorktown. The Charlottesville stay was brief—less than three months—during which time seven items were printed; copies of only four are now extant. This folio edition of Virginia’s 1781 session laws was the most substantial, and in 2017 it became the first (and still only) early Charlottesville imprint held by UVA. Printing did not return to Charlottesville until 1820.

*Purchased from the William Reese Co., 2017*

*Tracy W. McGregor Library of American History*
I have had the privilege of working with the world’s three foremost collections of works by the Mather family of Puritan ministers—first with the third best collection (at Harvard’s Houghton Library), then the second best (American Antiquarian Society, which also holds the largest remnant of the famous Mather family library), and now the best (given to UVA in 1938 with the Tracy W. McGregor Library of American History).

Burdened by Depression-era debts, Cleveland collector (and Mather descendant) William Gwinn Mather was obliged to sell his superlative collection en bloc to McGregor in 1935. What the collection did not include were twenty-seven items of sentimental interest that McGregor graciously permitted Mather to retain. I discovered this in 2013 after locating a two-page listing of retained items in McGregor’s papers. It confirmed to my immense relief that an Increase Mather manuscript sermon on offer to us, but bearing William G. Mather’s bookplate, had not been stolen from UVA. We bought that manuscript, and since then I have reunited three more of the Mather disjecta membra—all manuscript sermons—with the parent collection.

Here is one: a Cotton Mather sermon which, surprisingly given the hundreds of sermons he did publish, remains unpublished and unstudied. Mather composed the sermon, on the text “We, – who first trusted in Christ,” during his wife’s final illness.

Purchased from John Waite, 2018
Tracy W. McGregor Library of American History
To the President and Executive Council, the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, and others whom it may concern:

The following representation on behalf of the people called Quakers,

SHEWETH,

that the outrages and violence committed on the property, and on divers of the persons, of the inhabitants of Philadelphia, of our religious society, by companies of licentious people, parading the streets, destroying the windows and doors of our houses, breaking into and plundering some of them, on the evening of the 24th of last month, encroaches the occasion of our present address to you who are in the exercise of the powers of civil government, which is in itself honorable, and originally instituted for the support of public peace and good order, and the preservation of the just rights of the people.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Philadelphia, 12th month, 6th, 1781 ...

[Philadelphia, 1781]

The UVA community, scholars, and the general public have access to an impressive array of primary sources that curators and generous donors have assembled within the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library. Yet our holdings are necessarily imbalanced due to finite resources; missed opportunities; shifting interests, priorities, and perspectives; and, yes, biases of various kinds. I hope that I have had the self-awareness to mitigate some of the biases I bring to acquisitions work and to address some of the inequities evident in UVA's collections.

In adding to UVA's truly exceptional American history holdings, then, I have searched in part for materials which help to challenge prevailing narratives and illuminate overlooked perspectives and communities. This very rare petition, for instance, complicates our view of the British surrender at Yorktown in 1781. News reached Philadelphia within days, and patriots announced a citywide celebration for the evening of October 24. When many Quakers refused to participate by, for example, not placing candles in their windows, some revelers coalesced into vindictive mobs which vandalized Quaker homes, thus laying bare long-simmering tensions exacerbated by the American Revolution. Here Philadelphia's Friends protest their unjust treatment and reiterate for Pennsylvanians the theological underpinnings of their pacifism.

Purchased from the William Reese Co., 2020
Tracy W. McGregor Library of American History

Saint-Domingue

Passport issued to the Brig Milford of Baltimore, January 23, 1800
(ViU-2020-0051)

UVA curators undertake new collecting initiatives for varied reasons: a newly endowed acquisitions fund, the welcome gift of a significant collection to build upon, a curator’s judgement that materials documenting a specific subject will be sought after by future researchers, even the belated recognition that UVA should have been collecting in a certain area and needs to catch up. We are especially eager to undertake initiatives prompted by the UVA community, in particular the innovative curricular and research interests of new and established faculty alike.

On arriving at UVA in 2012, I noticed strong cross-departmental interest in Latin America and the Caribbean that our uneven holdings—world-class in a couple of areas, deficient in most others—did not properly support. But without dedicated funding, progress in addressing these needs has been slow. Given its historic links with the United States, and UVA faculty interest, one collecting focus has been the French Caribbean. This ship’s passport permitting the Milford to load a Baltimore-bound sugar cargo was boldly signed by Toussaint Louverture, governor of Saint-Domingue and leader of the revolution that secured Haitian independence from France in 1804.

Purchased from Peter Harrington, 2020
Robert and Virginia Tunstall Trust Fund
We are grateful to the many alumni, friends, Virginia residents, and cold callers who contact Special Collections seeking to donate or sell items. But due to reasons of duplication, condition, suitability, price &c, we find ourselves declining most offers. Hence, an email from a Monroe County, Indiana, American Red Cross Chapter book sale volunteer did not seem promising until I read it closely. “Someone has donated to us an early German-language imprint about the Lewis and Clark Expedition” and we’d like to give UVA first refusal.

I was stunned: Lewis and Clark material has always been a UVA priority, but this very rare, amateurishly illustrated work cobbled together from various sources—important for introducing many German Americans to the American West—had long eluded us. Until now! After making the purchase, I had to ask: why did you contact us? “I thought of U.Va. because my wife” once worked for the UVA Library.

Purchased from the Monroe County, Ind., Chapter, American Red Cross, 2013
Tracy W. McGregor Library of American History
A REPORT

Of the Committee of Council on the late occupation of Alexandria by a British squadron, under the command of Captain James A. Gordon.

In Council, November 7, 1814.

Pursuant—The Hon. Robert K. McVickar, president; John Bird, Andrew Fleming, Henry N. Gallin, Charles Gillingham, James Martin, John Hunter, Robert Johnson, Jr., Peter Wm. Driscoll, and John H. White, constitute the Council of the town of Alexandria, by the consent of the inhabitants, having been duly elected and qualified to sit, hold, and dispose of all the offices, duties, and powers of an incorporated town, and in such manner as the inhabitants shall see fit.

A report of the Committee of Council on the late occupation of Alexandria by a British squadron under the command of Captain James A. Gordon.

This broadside—the only known copy—offers important insights into the whirlwind of war in which residents of Alexandria, Va., suddenly found themselves in late August 1814. Left virtually defenseless when the militia was summoned to repel the British advance on Washington, Alexandria's Common Council decided that the city's safest course was immediate surrender. A delegation sent to Washington the morning after it burned received British assurances of protection, but the real danger lay in the British warships advancing up the Potomac. On August 29 a second delegation formally surrendered Alexandria to the British squadron. Hence, the "depredations of the enemy, with a few exceptions were confined to flour, cotton and tobacco, which they carried off in some of the vessels then at the town; only one vessel was burnt; no private dwelling was visited or entered in a rude or hostile manner, nor were citizens personally exposed to insult." This hastily distributed apologia tried to deflect the intense criticism directed by humiliated residents toward city fathers.

Purchased from the William Reese Co., 2021

Warren Fulton Chauncey and Byrd Endowment Funds
Now it can be revealed that one of my secret acquisitions weapons is the bookseller Peter Luke. His uncanny ability to flush out interesting and unusual material, which he quickly resells at attractive prices, has made him a bookselling legend. I learned early on to buy from Peter whenever possible. If I did not, dealers would and then offer the material to UVA at a substantial markup. Hence, I have acquired more from Peter—fully 1,000 items, primarily 19th-century Americana, literature, and trade catalogs—than from any other bookseller. But buying from Peter is a challenge: he has no Internet presence, issues no catalogs, sells primarily at small book fairs in the Northeast, and is on the road constantly. I usually see Peter at three book fairs annually, and in the off-season he sends me the occasional approval box to select from. Eight times I have arranged to spend a full day shopping at his modest warehouse overlooking the Hudson River in upstate New York. And every February, during the California International Antiquarian Book Fair, I vie with dealers for a shopping appointment in Peter’s room at the East Pasadena Super 8, where we snap up his latest road trip finds.

That is where, late one February evening in 2014 after a 15-hour trip west, I encountered this modest, and very rare, three-page pamphlet. “Mr. Lincoln” (as the text begins), is, of course, Abraham Lincoln; and Public lands in Illinois takes pride of place as Lincoln’s first publication, number 1 in Jay Monaghan’s chronologically arranged Lincoln Bibliography.

Purchased from Peter Luke, 2014
Tracy W. McGregor Library of American History
Lunsford Lane (1803-1879)
The narrative of Lunsford Lane, formerly of Raleigh, N.C. ...
3rd ed. Boston: [Lunsford Lane], 1845. (A 1845 .L3)

UVA curators have long sought published autobiographies of the formerly enslaved, such as the Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, which were crucial in building support for the abolitionist movement. We now hold an impressive collection of these compelling accounts in first editions and contemporary reprints. Lunsford Lane’s Narrative was my first such acquisition for UVA. Here Lane recounts his youth as an enslaved person on a farm outside Raleigh, N.C. With his owner’s consent, Lane arranged (illegally) to rent out his labor so that he could establish a pipe and tobacco shop. It thrived, in part because Lane maintained the appearance of being poor and uneducated. Eventually he earned enough to purchase freedom for himself and his family. But in 1842, after being targeted by whites who feared he was spreading abolitionist sentiments, Lane fled north to Boston with his wife and children.

Purchased from L & T Respess, 2012
Tracy W. McGregor Library of American History

Lunsford Lane (1803-1879)
Letter to James Batchelier, November 4, 1846
(MSS 16376)

Once resettled in Boston, Lane self-published the Narrative, augmenting his income by selling copies while traveling the anti-slavery lecture circuit. With the exception perhaps of Frederick Douglass, letters by Black abolitionist lecturers are notably rare, hence I was delighted when the same booksellers who sold us Lane’s Narrative in 2012 kindly offered this manuscript letter in 2018. Writing from his home in Cambridge, Mass., Lane seeks to arrange a speaking tour of southern New Hampshire: “I am aware that a grate change has taking place in your state upon the subject of slavery of whitch I am glad & yet their remains mutch to be done yet & you know that abolishment wants to be steard up in their minds.”

Purchased from L & T Respess, 2018
Tracy W. McGregor Library of American History
E. C.
Practical illustration of the Fugitive Slave Law
[Boston?, 1851] (Broadside 1851 .P73)

During the 1960s UVA curator William Runge wisely acquired for the McGregor Library many antebellum engraved and lithographed satirical prints. These often-brilliant capsulizations of political issues are absent from many special collections libraries, perhaps because they have been viewed as “artworks” and tend to be sold outside the antiquarian book market. I have happily followed Runge’s lead by buying more prints, an initiative which nicely complements UVa’s holdings of 20th-century editorial cartoons and, fortuitously, the recently acquired Patrick Oliphant Artwork and Papers.

Practical illustration of the Fugitive Slave Law, a rare lithograph by the still unidentified artist “E. C.,” expertly conveys the furor following passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in September 1850. By requiring citizens under penalty of law to assist in returning those who had escaped enslavement to their former masters, the act helped ignite latent abolitionist sentiments. This busy cartoon incorporates many parties to the unfolding drama: enslaved and free Black Americans, William Lloyd Garrison, and newly mobilized white Northerners on one side, and Daniel Webster, Federal marshals, fugitive hunters, enslavers, and the complacent on the other.

Purchased from James Arsenault, 2020
Tracy W. McGregor Library of American History
Many of my best acquisitions have come, not from catalogs or auctions or book fairs, but from dealer offers. Indeed, booksellers often play God, deciding who among several worthy clients receives first refusal on a particularly rare and important item. Hence, I work hard to cultivate and maintain good relations with dealers, promptly addressing their offers and resolving payment snafus while encouraging them to quote material of special UVA interest. By now I have earned “first refusal” status, sometimes even standing 10–20% discounts, with many leading booksellers.

When the William Reese Company obtained this extraordinary Civil War diary, its staff knew just what to do: quote it to UVA! We bought it immediately. One of four known Civil War diaries from Fredericksburg, Va., and still mostly unpublished, it chronicles the painful coming of age of Mary Gray Caldwell from March 1863 until her 19th birthday in November 1865. Begun after an earlier diary was lost when Union troops ransacked the Caldwell home, Mary wrote it on whatever scraps of mismatched letter and note paper she could scrounge under wartime conditions. The entries range from the mundane to accounts of courting first Confederate, then Union officers, to the wildly inaccurate war rumors circulating in town, to the horrors of living repeatedly under occupation or while trapped in a war zone, to the bitter adjustments necessary following defeat and emancipation.

When I acquire manuscript collections, rarely is it clear whether the collection is intact or has been picked over, sometimes repeatedly, so that UVA receives only a portion of the original archive. Civil War collections are a case in point: it is often in the self-interest of both seller and purchaser to remove anything not directly connected to military matters. Hence when a specialist dealer in Civil War material offered me 54 letters written 1861-1863 by Confederate soldiers Charles W. and Henry Gay, I was unsurprised by the absence of contextual material but disappointed by the November 1861-March 1862 gap. Still, we had to buy these despite their rather high price. Originally from Staunton, Va., brothers Charles and Henry were VMI students when war broke out in April 1861. Both enlisted in the “University Volunteers”—a 60-member unit comprised mostly of UVA students who famously marched to war during Final Exercises—for which UVA has scant documentation. Charles’ letters have excellent content, as in this account of the Battle of Front Royal. Sadly, he would die five weeks later at Malvern Hill.

A month after acquiring these letters, I was delighted to spot in a manuscript dealer’s catalog what was clearly the archive from which the letters had been separated. I immediately bought this portion of the Gay family papers—three times the size, but one-third the price, of the original portion—and yes, the missing letters from November 1861-March 1862 were present! The happily reconstituted archive is of far greater utility than the military portion alone, for it documents one Virginia family before, during, and after a time of extended crisis. Civil War historians are increasingly mining archives such as this which document the critical dynamic between the home and military fronts.

Purchased from Paul Brzozowski and Michael Brown Rare Books, 2018
Elizabeth Cocke Coles Fund
William L. Jackson (1825-1890)
Order given to Lieut. George Julian Pratt, April 9, 1865
(ViU-2018-0037)

Here is a second variation on the theme of reuniting scattered Civil War archives. In 2006 UVA purchased from a bookseller the lion’s share of the papers of George Julian Pratt (MSS 11283); other letters were dispersed via eBay and other sellers. In 1861 Pratt (1843-1924), a UVA student and son of its Grounds superintendent, left school to enroll (as had Charles and Henry Gay) in the University Volunteers. Later Pratt joined the Confederate Army’s 18th Virginia Cavalry and served for the Civil War’s duration, rising to the rank of first lieutenant. He then settled west of Charlottesville in Waynesboro, Va.

Absent from the collection, however, was this key piece, a paper scrap bearing an order hastily scrawled by Brig. General William L. Jackson on April 9, 1865:

“Lieut. Pratt with squad will proceed to the Rail Road Bridge across the Canal near Lynchburg and the south side Rail Road Bridge to the Island and burn them.” If Pratt had succeeded, this desperate move might have bought time despite cutting off Robert E. Lee’s Confederate forces from their only supply source. But it was too late, for Lee was already negotiating surrender terms at Appomattox. The collection did include a photocopy of this document, and UVA’s cataloging noted: “Location of original unknown.” It was, in fact, framed and hanging on a wall in nearby Fishersville, Va., until sold at a Shenandoah Valley auction in 2017, then offered to UVA by a dealer who knew we held Pratt’s papers. I was happy to bring this evocative document “home.”

Purchased from Cal Packard, 2018
Elizabeth Coxe Coles Fund
The Civil War is such a vast collecting area that I have largely followed my predecessors by focusing on its impact on Virginia and Virginians. Fortunately, the magnificent John L. Nau III Civil War History Collection—donated in 2019 and comprising thousands of soldiers’ letters, diaries, and photographs—has vastly expanded and diversified UVA’s military holdings. Still, I have tried to round out the collection by selectively adding materials documenting other significant aspects of the conflict. This unrecorded broadside newspaper extra is one of several recent acquisitions concerning the June 1863 invasion of southeastern Pennsylvania by Confederate forces.

Published on July 1, it offers a full and accurate account of the prior week’s fraught events, during which the citizens of York, Pa., surrendered to General Jubal Early and negotiated to save most of the city from destruction, only to see Early’s forces suddenly end their occupation and move westward on June 30. “As we go to press the town is filled with rumors of skirmishing near Hanover ..., but as we cannot trace them to any reliable authority we refrain from publishing them.” The Battle of Gettysburg had already begun, but several days would pass before York’s citizens clearly understood this.

Purchased from James Arsenault, 2021
Associates Endowment Fund
Like my predecessors, I have generally collected American regional and local history sparingly, save for Virginia and the southeastern U.S. Some adjustment has been necessary, though, to expand our coverage of communities—many of increasing interest to UVA students and faculty—which have thereby been overlooked. (Less adjustment has been needed for American literature, which we have long collected as comprehensively as possible.)

An important inflection point for the nation’s Asian community is documented in this exceptionally rare newspaper issue. Although not San Francisco’s first Chinese-language newspaper, *The Oriental* was the first to take root, persisting for nearly three decades under various names and owners. As this issue was being published, proprietor Chock Wong was himself making news around the country by applying for American citizenship. Contemporary accounts indicate that he was among the few Chinese to become naturalized citizens before the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act shut the door.
Henry Fielding (1707-1754)
Examples of the interposition of providence in the detection and punishment of murder …
London: A. Millar, 1752. (PR3454 .E93 1752)

Most antiquarian booksellers are sole proprietors or small businesses without a brick-and-mortar shop, and they follow a variety of business models. Some booksellers I deal with regularly, while others I have no occasion to buy from because they specialize in materials outside my curatorial responsibilities. Still others I may shop with only when they have something of special relevance for UVA’s collection. This very rare Henry Fielding first edition was offered to me out of the blue by a British dealer I had never heard of and have not dealt with since, but who had researched the item and its market thoroughly enough to identify UVA as the ideal customer.

Our exceptional holdings of 18th-century British literature reflect the long-standing excellence of UVA’s English faculty and funding from several generous donors. Included is one of the world’s leading collections relating to Henry Fielding, which it has been a pleasure to augment. One key piece I have acquired is this curious late work illuminating Fielding’s secondary career as magistrate and social reformer. Intended for a popular audience, it contains 33 murder stories—some taken from historical sources, others from eyewitness accounts of recent crimes collected by Fielding—related in didactic but enthralling fashion to reinforce the moral that murder will out.

Purchased from Nicholas Marlowe Rare Books, 2017
Battestin and Ribble Funds
Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770)
“Poems, by Thomas Rowlie, Priest of St. John’s, in the City of Bristol … Transcribed partly from the Original M.S.S. and partly from authentic Copies in the Year 1771”  
[Bristol, Eng.] (ViU-2017-0188)

Only occasionally have I bought large collections, for significant duplication with UVA’s existing holdings often renders such purchases unattractive. But in 2016 a dealer offered a comprehensive Thomas Chatterton collection which plugged a hole in our splendid 18th-century English literature holdings.

Ever since his untimely death at 17, Thomas Chatterton has been one of England’s most fascinating literary figures. His “Rowley Poems”—pseudo-medieval verses presented by their “discoverer” Chatterton as the work of a 15th-century priest—are among the most famous of literary hoaxes. Yet Chatterton’s prodigious talent, which inspired the Romantics and Pre-Raphaelites, continues to dazzle.

Chatterton’s death—ruled a suicide, but likely accidental—left the still unpublished Rowley Poems in the hands of his Bristol patrons, who sold expensive transcripts to English literati. Approximately 25 of these coterie manuscripts are extant, including this volume (one of two I acquired for UVA). Copied for the Earl of Lichfield, this is possibly the exemplar read in 1772 by Thomas Warton, who was among the first to conclude that the poems were not genuine 15th-century works. When compared to Chatterton’s original, this passage from The execution of Sir Charles Bawdin reveals the transcript to be somewhat “modernized” for 18th-century readers.

Purchased from the Brick Row Book Shop, 2016
Battestin, Kerchof, and Tunstall Funds
My career path has unexpectedly brought me into close association with, among others, Jorge Luis Borges and the Mather family of Puritan ministers (documented elsewhere in this exhibition), as well as Samuel Johnson and his biographer James Boswell. A highlight of my decade at Harvard's Houghton Library was the week spent packing up the world's finest collection of materials relating to Johnson, then supervising the cataloging of its books. Knowing something about the subject, I was surprised to discover that UVA's holdings of Johnson, Boswell, and their literary associates were merely adequate, perhaps the weakest portion of our otherwise distinguished 18th-century English literature collection.

This weakness was remedied in 2019, when I spent another week packing up the splendid Paul T. Ruxin Samuel Johnson, James Boswell and Their Circle Collection, the gift of Ruxin's widow, Joanne Camy Ruxin. A UVA Law graduate, Ruxin collected with perspicacity and zeal, securing many "high spots" while leaving relatively few gaps for me to fill. One was to acquire the few items remaining in the Ruxin family, including this superb letter from Boswell to the overseer of his Auchinleck estate. Although dealing with mundane matters such as road repair, horse breeding, tenant relations, and timber sales, its distinctive style and script provide an indelible sense of Boswell the man.

Purchased from Sarah Ruxin, 2021
Marion duPont Scott and Tunstall Trust Funds

Since 1938 UVA has housed what is generally considered the world's best collection of English Gothic literature: the several thousand editions of fear-inducing novels and chapbook "shilling shockers" that captivated English readers from the 1760s into the 1830s, and that Jane Austen famously parodied in *Northanger Abbey*. The Sadleir-Black Collection—formed initially by British novelist and bibliographer Michael Sadleir, then expanded by Robert K. Black, who donated it to UVA—has long been a magnet for UVA students and outside researchers. Still, it grew slowly until 2012, when former Director of Special Collections Nicole Bouché secured for UVA the distinguished library of French scholar Maurice Lévy.

Knowing that world's-best collections rarely remain so unless they continue to grow, I made the Sadleir-Black Collection a special focus of my acquisitions work. Though Gothic novels and chapbooks are rare, they trickle onto the market at a steady rate, albeit at often elevated prices. I have swept up as many as I could, along with early translations into German, Russian, even Ottoman Turkish. Gothic novels were also popular among contemporary French readers, as the many French originals and translations of English works collected by Maurice Lévy attest, and I have added more of these rare editions as opportunities permit.

What I never expected, however, was the chance to add 41 Gothic novels in a single purchase! In 2019 the sizable personal library formed by Mary Hill (1764-1836), Viscountess Fairford, Marchioness of Downshire, and Baroness Sandys, came on the market. Its several hundred volumes included 67 Gothic novels, some already present at UVA. After some negotiating I secured for UVA the 41 we lacked, plus other relevant works—by far UVA's largest single Gothic novel acquisition since 1938. The Baroness was literary patron to, and devoted reader of, several Gothic novelists, most of whom were women. Several of the novels acquired are subscriber's copies, and two are dedicated to her, including Anna Thomson's two-volume *Excessive sensibility*. This is the dedication copy, in a deluxe presentation binding of red gilt-tooled sheep; only five other copies are known.

Purchased from Bernard Quaritch, 2020
Battestin and Nimmo Funds
James Malcolm Rymer (1814-1884)
The unspeakable; or, the life and adventures of a stammerer
London: Clarke & Beeton, 1855. (RC424 .R96 1855)

Given the sprawl of 19th-century English literature, it has been challenging to build out UVA’s solid base collection in a systematic way. Instead, I have been more opportunistic, seeking items of particular rarity, utility, and distinction. The unspeakable, attributed to the prolific “penny dreadful” author James Malcolm Rymer, is not only very rare, but virtually unique in Victorian literature. Perhaps the earliest example in English of dysfluency literature, this fictionalized memoir/novel—it is unclear which, given how little we know about Rymer—traces a stammerer’s Dickensian journey through Eton, Oxford, the military, and a largely ineffectual medical establishment before a cure is found. Recently scholars have delved into its prominent subplot of “unspeakable” love, resolved less well at the book’s end.

Purchased from Michael Laird Rare Books, 2021
Ray William Frantz, Jr. Fund
Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705)

Meat out of the eater, or meditations concerning the necessity, end, and usefulness of afflictions unto Gods children ... 4th ed.
Boston: Printed by R. P. for John Usher, 1689.

BOUND WITH:

Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705)
The day of doom, or, a poetical description of the Great and Last Judgement ... 5th ed.
Boston: Printed by B. Green, and J. Allen, for Benjamin Eliot, 1701. (A 1689.W55)

Whenever possible, UVA curators avoid acquiring “fixer-uppers”: materials requiring extensive (and expensive) conservation treatment before they can be used safely for research and instruction. But because we typically seek rare, often unique items in a wide range of formats, sometimes we must bend, even break, the rule and draw upon the expertise of UVA's preservation staff, as here. When this previously unrecorded copy—one of two known—emerged from the proverbial New England attic in 2013, I knew this would be UVA's only chance to acquire one. Sadly, the copy was in such fragile condition that any handling would damage it further. We bravely bought it anyway and, after washing, mending, and rebinding by former UVA conservator Eliza Gilligan, it is fully usable and should last until, yes, doomsday.

These two bestselling poetry collections by Massachusetts minister Michael Wigglesworth constitute the first collected edition of an American author's works. In 1701 some unsold copies of the 1689 edition of Wigglesworth's Meat out of the eater were reissued with copies of a newly printed edition of his famously vivid (and eminently readable) poetic description of Judgement Day, The day of doom, to form a collected works. All early editions of either work are of legendary rarity, and this copy is the cornerstone of UVA's colonial American literature holdings.

Purchased from James Arsenault, 2013
Tracy W. McGregor Library of American History
Thanks to the voracious collecting of Clifton Waller Barrett (1901-1991), who gave to UVA his superlative American literature library, we possess one of the nation’s best holdings of American literary manuscripts. Its strengths in such canonical authors as James Fenimore Cooper, Stephen Crane, Robert Frost, Bret Harte, Lafcadio Hearn, Washington Irving, Henry James, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Mark Twain, and Walt Whitman are well known. These authors’ manuscripts and letters still appear regularly on the market; but not having Barrett’s ample financial resources, I have been more sparing in augmenting UVA’s holdings. My priority has been to acquire materials shedding light on an author’s creative process and relations with publishers.

In 2017 the bookseller James Cummins offered a small cache of Washington Irving manuscripts collected by Irving scholar Andrew B. Myers. I immediately bought the five which best complemented UVA’s extensive holdings, of which this letter is the most notable. This fragment—page 3 only, of three—dates from a key time in Irving’s life. During the 1810s, while financially supported by his brothers’ mercantile business, Irving largely squandered his early literary promise. But after the firm’s 1818 bankruptcy, Irving found the resolve to become arguably America’s first successful professional author. Writing to Philadelphia publisher and bookseller Moses Thomas, Irving hopes to be “able to keep on quietly & regularly on the path I have marked out for myself, without the danger of being overtaken by want, on the way. In the mean time continue to have faith in me.” Thomas did, publishing a new edition of Irving’s *A history of New York* in 1819. Meanwhile Irving labored on his breakthrough work, *The sketch book*. But following financial reversals during the Panic of 1819, Thomas lost that prize to another publisher.
**Sally Sayward Barrell Keating Wood (1759–1855)**

*Le baron illuminé*


(PS3350 .W53 J814 1804)

UVA’s collection of pre-1900 American fiction is one of the world’s best. I have added heavily to it, in part because the titles we lack, though rare, steadily turn up on the market at modest prices; few research libraries compete with UVA for these; and these mostly forgotten works offer tremendous research potential. Still, among the 12,000–odd titles listed in Lyle H. Wright’s standard bibliography—to which one might add the several thousand titles, published as dime novels or in periodical series, that Wright omitted—UVA may hold perhaps half. I have tried in particular to bolster UVA’s relatively weak holdings in later 19th-century serially published popular fiction.

Another initiative of mine has been to document the early reception and dissemination of American literature abroad, whether in English-language editions published in Great Britain or in foreign-language translations published on the European continent. The editions I have acquired by no means skew toward canonical authors; rather, they illuminate a more complex story of how and why American authors gained foreign readers. Consider this work, the second recorded copy of a French translation of Sally Wood’s *Julia, and the illuminated baron*. Today Wood is remembered, if at all, as Maine’s first novelist and America’s first female author of Gothic fiction. This, the first of Wood’s four novels, was published in Portsmouth, N.H., in 1800. Later that year a pirated edition (possibly two) appeared in London, though only a single copy can be traced today. Three years later this French translation, likely made from the English edition, was published. But why? “English” Gothic novels were immensely popular with contemporary French readers, and Wood set her novel in Revolutionary France.

Purchased from Samuel Gedge, 2021

Robert and Virginia Tunstall Trust Fund
James Monroe Whitfield (1822-1871)
America and other poems
Buffalo, N.Y.: James S. Leavitt, 1853. (PS3180 .W45 A66 1853)

Early works by Black authors are, in bookseller parlance, nearly “unobtainable” on the market; and when found, the competition for them is fierce. Still, I have had some success in filling gaps in UVA’s already enviable holdings. This is perhaps my most significant acquisition: the only published poetry collection by the undervalued James Monroe Whitfield. Born free in New Hampshire, Whitfield settled in Buffalo, N.Y., where he opened a barber shop. By 1850 Whitfield was active in western New York abolitionist circles, working with Frederick Douglass and Martin R. Delany and publishing poems in The North Star, The Liberator, and other papers. America and other poems, whose two dozen poems of impressive quality constitute more than half of his extant work, established Whitfield as the abolitionist movement’s foremost Black poet. Whitfield sold copies from his barber shop and on his travels; today the book is rare, and the occasional copy offered for sale typically has the pristine look of an unsold remainder. Shortly after its publication, Whitfield broke with Douglass, partnering instead with Delany to promote Black resettlement in Haiti and Central America. By 1862 Whitfield was barbering in San Francisco and traveling throughout the West.

Purchased from Savoy Books, 2014
Associates Endowment and Tunstall Trust Funds
Many “rare” books are not difficult to find on the antiquarian market. Having decided to acquire a work for UVA, I may have the luxury of selecting from among two or more copies. Other books are genuinely rare and may appear for sale only once a year, a decade, or even a century. Simply acquiring any copy is satisfaction enough, but if that copy is in fine condition and has unique research potential, so much the better. Such is the case with this very rare copy, in the original publisher’s cloth binding, of an epic poem in 57 (!) books. The front endleaf inscription—“Miss Ellen M. King. Liverpool, N.Y. Book written by Grandfather King”—confirms scholars’ suspicions that “Mark Drinkwater” is a pseudonym for the true author: the Hamilton, N.Y., lawyer Nathaniel King.

The United Worlds is an exceptionally early and virtually unknown American work of science fiction (albeit in narrative verse) which embraces contemporary themes of utopia, geographic discovery, technological innovation, and the hollow earth theory. An American Arctic expedition finds, not the Northwest Passage, but an opening to a six-sphere underground world populated by tens of millions of “Subterraneans” who have created an ideal civilization served by giant, human-form “androides.” Their capital is the “Golden City” located directly beneath New York City, even then a den of iniquity. Having been converted to Christianity by the Americans, the Subterraneans offer in exchange to unite their world with ours to form a universal utopia. Naturally other nations resist until, following a cataclysmic war of the worlds, the United Worlds becomes reality.

**Mark Drinkwater [i.e., Nathaniel King (1767-1848)]
The United Worlds: a poem, in fifty seven books
Hamilton, N.Y.: [Nathaniel King], 1834. (PS1554 .D55 U5 1834)

**William Cook (1807-1876)
The Eucleia: works
Salem, Mass.: William Cook, [1865?]. (PS1378 .C7 1865)

It is a curatorial truism that one remembers potential acquisitions lost more than acquisitions successfully made. At UVA my deepest disappointment has been failing to interest my colleagues in acquiring the world’s best private collection of 19th-century American non-canonical verse. [Note to my successor: it remains on the market.] Instead, I have added piecemeal to UVA’s already magnificent holdings, seeking in particular rare and unusual works which, even if not accomplished poetry, document the vast range of American poetic expression and literary publication.

One poet deserving of wider recognition is William “Billy” Cook. A ship captain’s son and lifelong Salem, Mass., resident, Cook studied at Yale before physical and mental illness checked his ambitions. Back in Salem he conducted a private school and became a beloved eccentric. In the early 1850s Cook began composing verses about Salem, its residents, and contemporary political events and figures. After salvaging some worn type and a jobbing press from a local newspaper, Cook was able to self-publish his verses in nearly 50 broadsides and poetry chapbooks.

Strictly speaking, these are “mendicant verse,” a significant sub-genre of 19th-century American poetry. Cook supplemented his modest income by peddling these on Salem’s streets and to visitors who sought out his singular company. Many feature Cook’s charming woodcut illustrations, typically heightened with pencil to patch uneven inking, which qualify Cook as a significant folk, or “outsider,” artist. The Eucleia is a nonce collection of ten previously issued chapbooks with added title page, assembled ca. 1865 and bound by Cook in striped cloth with stamped woodcut title. This acquisition doubled UVA’s holdings of Cook’s recorded oeuvre.

**Purchased from the William Reese Co., 2012
Robert and Virginia Tunstall Trust Fund**
UVA’s American literature collection is justly celebrated for its stellar manuscript treasures, among these the original drafts of Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of grass*, Stephen Crane’s *The red badge of courage*, and John Steinbeck’s *The grapes of wrath*. Less well known is the extraordinary breadth of UVA’s literary manuscript holdings. Included are drafts and letters, ranging from single items to substantial archives, of over 500 authors. Many of the smaller groupings are important as the primary accumulation of that author’s few extant manuscripts.

In acquiring American literary manuscripts, I have managed to enlarge some of these caches and even add a few new ones. As is true for many authors, the fiction writer Frank Stockton’s papers are scattered among several libraries: Yale’s Beinecke Library holds the bulk, with UVA’s collection ranking second. This is the final corrected draft of *The magic egg*, one of Stockton’s best-known stories and an early foray into science fiction. Stockton submitted it in 1894 for publication in *The Century magazine*, then one of the nation’s leading general interest periodicals. Editor Richard Watson Gilder accepted it provided Stockton revise the ending for clarity. This he did: the typescript includes both the original and revised endings, with additional authorial and editorial corrections, together with Stockton’s letter explaining the revision.

*Purchased from Howard S. Mott, 2013*  
*Robert and Virginia Tunstall Trust Fund*
LOUIS FAIRCHILD (b. 1800)
Ream wrapper for extra superfine folio post glazed paper manufactured by John Butler, Hartford, Conn., ca. 1830

For eight decades now UVA has been the country’s leading university for the study of bibliography, that is, printing as material artifact. UVA’s program received a major boost in 1992 when Rare Book School, the world’s leading continuing education program for all interested in book history and bibliography, moved here from Columbia University. It has been my immense privilege to assist with both: teaching at Rare Book School while actively strengthening UVA’s magnificent research and teaching collections in bibliography, book history, and the book arts.

Paper has been sold in 500-sheet reams for nearly as long as it has been manufactured in the West. Typically, reams have been packaged in protective wrappers which are invariably discarded along with the all-important information on the paper’s maker, size, and qualities. Hence, ream wrappers are among the most fugitive of book trades artifacts. This spectacular example is one of the finer known American ream wrappers, important for Louis Fairchild’s wood-engraved view of John Butler’s paper mill along the Hockanum River in Manchester, Conn.; even the foldlines, which document the dimensions of Butler’s best quality folio post size writing paper, are significant.

Purchased from the Veatchs, 2020
Book Arts Press Fund

Vellum leaf from a 15th-century liturgical manuscript, reused in the late 16th century as a frisket sheet for red printing (MSS 16225)

Johann Gutenberg was printing books in multiple colors in the 1450s, but not until 1683 did Joseph Moxon explain how to do it in his manual, *Mechanick exercises*. It was only two decades ago, when the first color frisket sheets were identified, that historians confirmed that printers employed Moxon’s methods prior to the late 17th century. Since then, a worldwide census has located only 60 color frisket sheet fragments, of which this example is one of eight in American libraries.

The most efficient way to print red and black text on the same sheet on a common press (one is displayed in our building) was to print each color separately. A frisket sheet—typically recycled paper or parchment with holes cut out where the red text falls—was placed on the press between the red-inked type and the sheet to be printed, the frisket sheet acting as a mask to protect the black-printed areas. After many impressions the excess red ink would collect in a thick crust (as here) on the frisket, which was then replaced. This example is a vellum leaf from a 15th-century Latin liturgical manuscript, recycled in the 1580s or 1590s (likely in France) as a frisket for printing an edition of the *Missale Romanum*. The discarded frisket was salvaged ca. 1630 by a French bookbinder, who cut it into irregular strips for use in bindings. This piece was retrieved from a binding conserved in the 1990s.

Purchased from Christopher Edwards, 2016
Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia Gift Fund
Acquiring books for their texts can have the cumulative, if unintended, benefit of creating a noteworthy assemblage of historic bookbindings. This was generally the case at UVA until the mid-1980s, when first the Douglas H. Gordon bequest of magnificent French books in fine bindings, and then the 1992 arrival of Rare Book School and its world-class teaching collections, prompted curators to consider collecting bindings per se. Working closely with Rare Book School, I have acquired many notable and unusual bindings appropriate both for Rare Book School classes and for our own research and instructional needs. Our two collections combined constitute one of the nation’s strongest research holdings of historic bookbindings.

This exceptionally fine and very rare straw marquetry binding stopped me in my tracks at the 2020 California International Antiquarian Book Fair. A popular European technique for crafting small decorative objects, straw marquetry was occasionally employed to decorate bindings, especially in late 18th-century France. Straw was first split, soaked, and ironed flat; next, the strips were cut to shape, glued onto paper, then colored and varnished to resemble wood marquetry. The decorative panels were then inlaid into the covers of a traditional leather binding.

_Purchased from Musinsky Rare Books, 2020_  
_Book Arts Press and Kerchof Library Funds_
Apostolo Zeno (1668-1750)

Poesie drammatiche di Apostolo Zeno

Knowledge is power in the antiquarian book and manuscript market. The booksellers I buy from expect discretion from me in discussing our dealings with other booksellers and curators—the fewer specifics, the better—and I expect similar discretion from booksellers. (May my small indiscretions here be forgiven!) Sometimes, however, information sharing is not only appropriate but very helpful. Four years ago, a catalog offering a binding like this one arrived in my email inbox. I ordered the binding within 30 minutes, but it was already sold. Unbeknownst to me, the purchaser was Nicholas Pickwoad, an old friend, former Rare Book School instructor, and the world’s leading expert on European hand-press period bookbindings. The dealer told him that I was runner-up, and Nicholas remembered. Two years later another bookseller acquired this copy and contacted Nicholas. “You should offer it to David—he’s looking for one,” and Simon Beattie graciously obliged.

This is one of the finest of the few extant examples of, in Giles Barber’s words, “the first large-scale certain French publisher’s binding.” In the late 18th century Orléans was the center of France’s decorated paper industry. When a local publisher launched a 21-volume series, Bibliothèque des meilleurs poëtes italiens, in 1785, he commissioned François Michelin to design a decorative block-printed paper cover, customized on the spine for each series title. This landmark innovation—generic decorated paper covers had long been in use—would soon be adopted by publishers worldwide.

Purchased from Simon Beattie, 2020
Kerchof Library Fund
Francis Bond Head (1793-1875)
Bubbles from the Brunnen of Nassau
London: John Murray, 1834. (DD491 .H65 H4 1834)

Not until the 1820s did publishers regularly begin to issue books ready-bound in cloth “edition” bindings. Early examples were typically plain or sparsely decorated with gilding, printed text, or printed paper onlays, but publishers soon recognized the marketing benefits of pictorial binding designs. *Bubbles from the Brunnen of Nassau* is believed to be the first publisher’s cloth binding with pictorial covers designed specifically for the text. The concept was the author’s own. In the preface to this account of taking the waters at the Brunnen (springs) of the Bad Schwalbach spa, Head describes his objective as “blowing ... a few literary bubbles.” The artist who transformed this conceit into a binding design spanning both covers, with printed spine title, remains unidentified. The binding was reused for the second edition (also 1834), but extant examples of either are rare.

*Purchased from Ian Brabner, 2019 Associates Endowment Fund*

Netter & Eisig
Netter & Eisig, Göppingen, Bucheinbandstoffe

Once cloth became the material of choice for publisher’s bindings in the 1830s, textile mills began to develop specialty book cloths for this emerging market. By 1900, and for decades thereafter, the worldwide bookbinding cloth market was dominated by a handful of manufacturers. The Winterbottom Book Cloth Company (Manchester, England) dominated the British and American markets, while Netter & Eisig (Göppingen, Germany) supplied much of continental Europe; both firms are still in business. The sample books they sent to binderies are essential for the accurate, informed description of publisher’s bookbindings and for expanding our knowledge of bookbinding history. However, this research has barely begun because sample books are of outstanding rarity—manufacturers typically required that old sample books be returned before new ones were issued. I have been fortunate to acquire three for UVA: two Winterbottom examples (ca. 1900 and 1920) to complement a third (ca. 1940) owned by Rare Book School; and this previously unrecorded Netter & Eisig example. It contains 585 mounted cloth swatches of 45 different fabrics in various grades and colors, with samples of the 48 grains which could be custom embossed in the cloth.

*Purchased from Charles B. Wood III, 2012 Robert and Virginia Tunstall Trust Fund*
Since 2014 the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia's Council (on which I sit) has made several generous acquisitions grants to UVA Special Collections. I have used the funds to acquire significant books and manuscripts concerning the history of printing, publishing, and bibliographical scholarship. This document, one of few contemporary works on the 17th-century Spanish book trade, is a fundamental source for modern scholarship. In 1635 booksellers in the provinces of Castile and León retained the attorney González de Ribero to draft this memorial, which secured the repeal of a newly imposed tax on books. It describes in detail the parlous economic situation of Spanish booksellers who were burdened by heavy taxation on paper, binding materials, and imported books; complicated licensing procedures lubricated by fees and gift copies; the Inquisition’s heavy hand in determining what could be published; competition posed by religious institutions granted royal privileges; and the importance of barter to their cash-starved business. There are two contemporary editions of which this, the more useful glossed version, is the first copy to enter an American library.

Purchased from Leo Cadogan, 2017
Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia Gift Fund

Nikolaus Basse (1562–1601)
Collectio in unum corpus omnium librorum: Hebræorum, Græcorum, Latinorum necnon Germanicè, Italicè, Gallicè, & Hispanicè scriptorum …
Frankfurt am Main: Nikolaus Basse, 1592. (Z929 .B3 1592 pt. 2)

By virtue of its semi-annual book fairs, which continue to this day, Frankfurt became during the 16th century the central entrepôt for Europe’s book trades. In 1564 the Augsburg bookseller Georg Willer issued the first in a series of Frankfurt fair catalogs, which quickly became essential references for European booksellers and book buyers. In 1592 Frankfurt publisher Nikolaus Basse compiled Willer’s lists into a comprehensive three-volume catalog of all publications advertised at the fairs from 1564 to 1592—a de facto union listing of contemporary European imprints and a landmark in book trade bibliography. In this second volume, devoted to German-language works, books are arranged alphabetically by author or title under seven subject headings: Protestant theology, Catholic theology, law, medicine, history, a fascinating and important section on German music books (shown here), and miscellaneous.

Purchased from Hünersdorff Rare Books, 2017
Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia Gift Fund
Raymond de Saint-Sauveur (1728-1792)
Agenda des auteurs, ou Calpin litteraire à l’usage de ceux qui veulent faire des livres
Parnasse [i.e., Paris?], 1755. (PN144 .S3 1755)

Book history scholars at UVA and elsewhere have been studying questions of paratext—the physical forms assumed by a published work and its accompanying elements—and how authors and readers in different eras have viewed the business of publishing. Relevant source materials are not only elusive but, when found, typically allusive at best. This satirical look at book publishing in Enlightenment France is a most unusual, rare, and happy exception. Each paratextual element is itself a parody of that element. The lengthy errata section, for instance, corrects every mistake throughout the book and is itself corrected by a second errata list (shown here). No aspect of authorship and publishing is spared, be it the choice of paper, format, and binding, or advice for selecting a subject and title, composing the text while catering to popular tastes, negotiating a publishing contract, finding and flattering patrons, and licensing.

Purchased from Bruce McKittrick Rare Books, 2021
Associates Endowment Fund

Richard S. Gedney (1838–1856)
The poetical works of the late Richard S. Gedney … 2nd ed.

While many of my acquisitions have been secured through quick and decisive action, others have required infinite patience over several years. So it was with this extraordinary object: one of four known examples (and one of two which remain sealed as issued) of the earliest recorded American imprint in its original dust jacket. I first encountered it nearly fifteen years ago when I was Curator of Books at the American Antiquarian Society. Its owner, the leading private collector of early dust-jacketed books, was probing the market’s upper limits by offering it at a lofty price, which I had to decline. But I remembered.

In principle this book would ideally complement UVA’s stellar holdings on 19th-century American literature and publishing history. But I did not seriously consider pursuing it for UVA until 2014 when, at the New York International Antiquarian Book Fair, the dealer Tom Congalton offered for sale his outstanding collection—the largest in private hands—of 19th-century books in their original dust jackets. I promptly reserved it for UVA, and my colleagues approved the purchase. Just like that UVA advanced from possessing one of the world’s better to owning by far the world’s largest collection of these exceptionally rare survivals.

Many may be unique, for until the later 20th century collectors and libraries routinely discarded dust jackets. The full history of these early dust jackets—some of which, like this sealed wrapper reproducing the book’s title page, take unusual forms—cannot be written without resort to UVA’s holdings.

Since 2014 I have added three smaller collections and many single items to UVA’s holdings, which now number over 1,200 examples. Included are some notable “high spots” which, with my encouragement, the above-mentioned private collector gradually began to sell us. In 2020 the collector finally offered me this key example, which we gladly purchased at an eminently fair price.

Purchased from Mark Godburn, 2020
Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia Gift Fund
François-Ambroise Mairet

Notice sur la lithographie, ou l’art d’imprimer sur pierre

Dijon: F. Mairet, 1818. (NE2420 .M3 1818)

I realized early on that UVA’s otherwise excellent holdings of pre-1900 printing, book illustration, and bookbindings lacked many of the technical manuals in which book trades workers documented their methods and best practices. With the aid of several specialist booksellers, I have managed to fill most of the notable gaps, in particular early lithography manuals. Alois Senefelder’s 1796 invention of lithography revolutionized printing by offering an entirely new technology for replicating image and text. As lithography was adopted across Europe and beyond during the 1810s, 1820s, and 1830s, its many practitioners expanded and perfected its methods. Because Senefelder did not publish a manual until 1818, other lithographers filled the void with handbooks informed by their own experience and experimentation. This manual by François-Ambroise Mairet, hailed by historian Michael Twyman as “the first professional lithographic printer to write a book about the process,” was the most significant to appear before Senefelder’s. This fine copy in its original binding is inscribed by Mairet.

Purchased from Antiquariat Banzhaf, 2020
Robert and Virginia Tunstall Trust Fund

Frithiof Telenius

Skyltmotiv af Frithiof Telenius, skvitmålare i Stockholm.


While building a comprehensive collection of pre-1900 manuals documenting the techniques employed in letterpress printing, lithography, chromolithography, and photomechanical processes, I have also sought notable examples of these processes. A special focus has been early lithography and chromolithography as employed in book illustration. While scouting the 2014 New York International Antiquarian Book Fair, Rare Book School colleagues called my attention to this spectacular and very rare chromolithography specimen, which I immediately secured for UVA. This deluxe trade catalog contains 30 samples of the fancy lettering, wood graining, and three-dimensional optical effects which Stockholm sign painter Frithiof Telenius was capable of executing. Even more remarkable was Swedish lithographer Carl Adolf Carlsson’s ability to reproduce these effects chromolithographically by carefully assembling each image from as many as 20 colors, each applied with a separate lithographic stone. Alerted by my blog post about this book, Swedish printing historians have been delving into Carlsson’s career.

Purchased from the Vootch, 2014
Robert and Virginia Tunstall Trust Fund
Louis-Jacques Goussier (1722-1799)
“Hongroyeur, l’opération de mettre au suif,” drawing for an illustration in the Encyclopédie, ca. 1769; with the engraved plate from Planches, vol. 7.
(MSS 16429)

The highlight of Douglas H. Gordon’s magnificent collection of French books, bequeathed to UVA in 1986, is its superb copy of Diderot and d’Alembert’s Encyclopédie—likely the publisher’s own—with a supplementary volume of manuscript and printed documents tracing the work’s complicated publishing history. Knowing that I was seeking additional works concerning the Encyclopédie, bookseller Roger Gaskell kindly offered UVA this drawing in pen and ink with watercolor wash. Although unsigned, it is almost certainly a preparatory drawing by Louis-Jacques Goussier—one of only ten known—for the Encyclopédie’s famous engraved illustrations. Goussier devoted over two decades to the Encyclopédie, contributing some 70 articles plus drawings for over 900 of its nearly 2,600 plates. The drawing (below) depicts steps in the tanning of Hungarian leather; on the left, the plate engraved from Goussier’s drawing.

Purchased from Roger Gaskell, 2019
Kerchof Library Fund
Dressed prints of Venus and Paris
Germany, ca. 1750?

As an adjunct to my collecting of pre-1900 book illustration processes and technical manuals, I have been expanding UVA’s holdings in the fine and graphic arts generally. My acquisitions have focused on the history of art and artistic processes, the historical print market, and selected examples of popular prints which provide a broader perspective on “print culture.” These two unusual and rare dressed prints document a method of creating collaged images popular from the 16th century onward, first for enlivening devotional images, later for secular prints. They belong to a suite of four (?) mid-18th century German engravings on the mythological Judgement of Paris: Venus gazes admiringly into a mirror, while the shepherd Paris holds the golden apple. By carefully cutting away portions of the engraved image, then backing the cut-out areas with a colorful variety of fabric scraps which “dress” the figures, the prints are given an added, almost lifelike dimension. Other methods such as decoupage (pasting fabric, colored paper, or foil onto the print surface) were employed separately or in combination. One might dismiss these as mere fashion plates, but that is too simplistic a view of their decorative function.

Purchased from Musinsky Rare Books, 2019
Associates Endowment Fund
Shopping at the major antiquarian book fairs can be a challenge. When entering the hall, I am merely one of a thousand customers actively scanning the wares in upwards of two hundred booths. I am always the first to chance upon some items appropriate for UVA, but many others are undoubtedly lost to luckier buyers. In the last half dozen years, however, some booksellers have begun to circulate email lists a few days prior to the fair. Now the odds of my acquiring more of the better items have improved, provided I act promptly.

When Bernard Quaritch circulated its 2019 Boston fair list, I was immediately struck by this miniature manuscript and reserved it for UVA. Ten days later when the fair opened, I went straight to their booth to examine the manuscript and confirm UVA’s purchase. “We had seven orders for it, but UVA was first,” they told me. This extremely rare example of a Syriac Book of protection is a compendium of prayers and spells invoking various saints and other figures to ward off disease, mental illness, the evil eye, ferocious animals, war, and other dangers. Carefully written in red and black ink with nineteen illustrations, the manuscript retains its original blind-ruled goatskin binding and carrying pouch. As a vivid example of how manuscripts can embody folk beliefs and serve as talismans, this acquisition enriches our instructional capabilities in book history and Middle Eastern book culture.

*Purchased from Bernard Quaritch, 2019*
*Associates Endowment Fund*

When asked to identify my favorite acquisition, I always respond: “The one that just arrived!” In that sense every item displayed here is a favorite (or has been at least briefly), though the thrill of some “finds” lingers longer than others. This recent acquisition remains special: as UVA’s earliest example by far of Southeast Asian printing, it begins to plug a gaping hole in our coverage of Asian book history. Spanish missionaries brought printing to the Philippines in 1593. By 1675, when this collection of sermons by the Franciscan priest Baltasar de Herrera was printed in Manila, approximately a hundred religious works had been issued in Spanish, Latin, Tagalog, and Chinese. All are extremely rare, in part because the locally made “rice” paper (actually mulberry fibers) on which many were printed becomes brittle with age.

This copy splendidly exemplifies the surprisingly global reach of 17th-century publishing. It contains sermons preached locally, printed by a Filipino printer on locally made paper, employing a press, ink, and movable types transported from Europe halfway around the world. Though some copies were sold locally, most were shipped to Spain and the Americas for sale; today copies can be found in Spain, Mexico, Chile, Germany, and now Charlottesville. This copy went by Manila galleon to Mexico, where it was sold to the Convento de Nuestra Señora de Guadalajara de Valladolid in Morelia, Michoacán province. We know this because, after it was bound in limp parchment, the convent’s ownership brand was burned into the textblock edges.

*Purchased from Bernard Quaritch, 2021*
*Associates Endowment Fund*
When browsing a bookseller’s catalog or a book fair’s booths, I am not looking for specific items. Rather, I bring to these tasks my knowledge, built up over five decades, of rare books and manuscripts in general, and especially of the strengths, weaknesses, and potential of UVA’s collection. The items catching my attention are those meeting any of the thousand-odd selection criteria then running through my mind. Although I hope to codify some of these into a written collection development policy before I depart, listing them all would simply be too difficult—there are too many—and in one sense unnecessary, as future curators will apply their own criteria.

When I saw this book at a fair, I knew immediately that it was perfect for UVA’s comprehensive holdings on the history of Western printing. Although the earliest printing types were deliberate imitations of then-current manuscript hands, type designers soon began to differentiate their fonts so that printed books no longer resembled manuscripts. So-called “script” type fonts fell out of fashion until revived in the 19th century. This French translation of Books I-VI of Virgil’s *Aeneid* is a rare and glorious exception: one of relatively few books set in the calligraphic fonts designed in the early 1640s by Parisian writing master and printer Pierre Moreau (1600?-1648). This work, published by Moreau’s widow, showcases all his script fonts and calligraphic type ornaments.

Purchased from Bruce McKittrick Rare Books, 2016
Robert and Virginia Tunstall Trust Fund

Thanks to the specialist booksellers who have supplied UVA with some fine examples, I have made modest progress in documenting the 19th-century Islamic book. Arabic-script printing in Muslim regions was slow to begin and sporadic until 1821 when, as part of his modernization efforts, Egyptian ruler Muḥammad ‘Alī established an official state publishing house. The Būlāq Press—since renamed but still in operation after two centuries—embarked on an ambitious publication program. Over the next several decades it supplied Middle Eastern readers with hundreds of letterpress editions in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish on a wide range of subjects, including translations of Western works. This early Būlāq imprint in Ottoman Turkish reprints an early chronicle of the reign of 16th-century Sultan Suleiman I “the Magnificent.”

*Purchased from Bookvica, 2018*  
*Kerchof Library Fund*
Phra Mālai manuscript
Thailand, late 19th century. (MSS 16405)

As often for American academic libraries, curatorial responsibility for UVA’s Asian holdings, which are especially strong in Buddhist and Tibetan texts, mostly lies outside of Special Collections. But having few representative exemplars of Asian books and manuscripts has placed us at an instructional disadvantage that curators have begun to address. One of my remedial acquisitions—now a favorite with UVA students—is this striking illuminated manuscript of the Phra Mālai legend popular in Thailand from the late 18th century onward. The poem, which exists in several versions, recounts how the Buddhist monk Phra Mālai journeyed to heaven and hell through accumulated merit, then relates what he saw there while advising the faithful on ways of earning merit, both for themselves and for those suffering in hell. This manuscript is a typical example: written with a bamboo pen in Thai, in Khom script, in black ink on both sides of thick khoi bark paper, the sheets joined along the long edges and folded accordion-style, with gilt-decorated covers and edges. Included are various illuminated scenes which follow traditional decorative conventions.

Purchased from Asia Bookroom, 2018
Associates Endowment Fund
**Manoel Carlos de Andrade (1755-1817)**

*Luz da liberal, e nobre arte da cavallaria.*

*Lisbon: Royal Printing Office, 1790. (SF309.5 .A53 1790)*

Marion duPont Scott’s 1985 bequest of her distinguished collection of sporting literature, equestrian sports in particular, substantially strengthened UVA’s already respectable holdings. Scott, who lived near Charlottesville on James Madison’s Montpelier estate, was that uncommon benefactor who endowed her library with a significant acquisitions fund. I have acquired upwards of a thousand items on the fund, ranging from a 14th-century Italian veterinary manuscript to one of the country’s best holdings of 19th-century stock farm catalogs (essential for tracing equestrian pedigrees). Other acquisitions include early classic sporting books and materials we can leverage for interdisciplinary uses, such as equestrian fiction and 19th-century English color plate books.

I have never worked from a “want list,” but one book I was determined to find for UVA was *Luz da liberal*, the most important Portuguese work on horsemanship and a masterpiece of 18th-century Portuguese printing and book illustration. I first encountered this book in 1992 when my then employer Richard Ramer located a fine copy for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which I hand-delivered to its Department of Drawings and Prints. Twenty-five years later, Richard accepted my commission and eventually found for UVA a finer copy, also bound in the deluxe gilt leather publisher’s binding.

*Purchased from Richard C. Ramer, 2017*

Marion duPont Scott and Tunstall Trust Funds

---

**Biblisches Spruchbuch für Blinde**

*Zürich: Blinden- und Taubstummenanstalt, 1823. (BS394 .B54 1823)*

Early printing for the blind is of extraordinary rarity, as books employing pioneering raised letter systems such as Boston Line were typically discarded after new systems replaced them. It has been a challenge to build even a small collection of representative examples. This German-language collection of brief Bible passages may be the earliest imprint made from “prick type”: wood blocks into which pins were stuck to create dotted, reversed letterforms. When pressed into paper, the blocks produced right-reading letters; the completed pages were then pasted onto stiff sheets and bound so that the raised dots would not be pressed flat. The same blocks could also be used to “write” letters by hand. Prick type was a profoundly important innovation, for dotted letterforms are better suited to tactile reading than embossed versions of sighted letterforms. A few years later Louis Braille took the logical next step by converting the alphabet into a coded system of raised dots.

*Purchased from Charles B. Wood III, 2020*

Robert and Virginia Tunstall Trust Fund
A Curator’s Wunderkammer: A Decade of Collecting for UVA Omnium-Gatherum

John Hookham Frere (1769-1846)


Most booksellers now issue electronic rather than print catalogs. This is beneficial for UVA curators, for it increases our chances of acquiring the best materials, which may not appear again on the market for years, if ever. Provided, however, that we respond promptly once the catalog arrives in our email inbox, whether it be day, night, or weekend! A delay of even a few minutes can be fatal, for the best items are often snapped up immediately. My practice is to drop everything, if feasible, the moment a catalog arrives, then race through it, making quick but informed decisions as I go. Having done this a few thousand times, my efficiency and success rates are high.

Early one evening I received the latest Brick Row Book Shop email catalog—a must-read—and promptly started scanning it. Halfway through I spotted this item—well described, yet in an important sense under-described and in my view underpriced—and my heart raced. Unable now to finish the list, I immediately ordered the book and waited impatiently for confirmation. It came the next morning along with word that my order arrived minutes before one placed by a well-known institution.

What makes this book special? There is yet no definitive answer, but it is one of three known copies of possibly the world’s first photographically illustrated book. From the 1840s until photomechanical processes were perfected ca. 1880, publishers often achieved affordable, high-quality illustrations by pasting original photographic prints into their books. I was introduced to these in the late 1990s when cataloging Houghton Library’s world-class collection, and I have selectively acquired early examples appropriate for UVA’s impressive holdings in 19th-century illustration processes. Frere is remembered as a British diplomat and skilled translator of Classical Greek works. This volume is a collected reissue of the six translations he privately printed in small numbers, in London and Malta, from 1839 to 1842. Prefacing the texts is a one-page introduction lithographically reproduced from Frere’s manuscript, facing a calotype of John Hoppner’s oil portrait of Frere. If this reissue dates to 1842 or 1843, as seems likely, then it precedes William Henry Fox Talbot’s photographically-illustrated The pencil of nature by a year or more.

Purchased from the Brick Row Book Shop, 2019
Associates Endowment Fund

John Hookham Frere (1769-1846)

Often large gifts provide us with new collection strengths and acquisitions opportunities. Such was the case nearly two decades ago when UVA received the Graham Aeronautical Collection. Adding selectively to it has been fun, as with this second recorded copy of a Spanish *relación* (news chapbook). It relates what purports to be Spain’s earliest balloon ascension, nine months after news of the Montgolfier brothers’ first flight spread throughout Europe. The Spanish balloon, lavishly decorated with the arms of Valencia and King Carlos III and a Homeric inscription, measured 18 by 12 feet. At 5:15 p.m. on March 12, 1784, the balloon ascended from an orchard outside Valencia’s city wall, disappearing into the clouds before landing one league distant. Relaunched on March 15, this time with a large cat aboard, the balloon rose 3,000 feet before gently descending, the cat immediately fleeing after clawing free. The curious mix of precise and absent detail—who, actually, built the balloon?—reveals this as an amusing hoax perpetrated on a balloon-obsessed public.

*Relacion de las experiencias aërostaticas hechas en Valencia*
Valencia: Joseph Estevan, 1784. (TL617 .R45 1784)

Our music holdings are strong but somewhat patchwork in nature, ranging from Bay Psalm Book editions to 18th-century music treatises and scores, to antebellum American song books and sheet music, to the business of music publishing, to shape note hymnals. Although my hopes of bringing a first edition Bay Psalm Book to UVA were inevitably dashed, I have regularly added to our other strengths by acquiring significant 18th-century works on music theory, first editions of Stephen Foster compositions, rare music publishers’ catalogs, and antebellum sheet music by Virginia composers or published in Virginia and the Southeast.

This fine and rare third edition of Elisha J. King and Benjamin Franklin White’s iconic Southern hymnal, *The sacred harp*, is my key addition to UVA’s excellent shape note music holdings. Simplified shape note musical notation designed to aid group singing, especially of hymns, was introduced in America in 1801. By the mid-19th century shape note notation had taken firm root in the South. Although many shape note hymnals were published, *The sacred harp* soon became a favorite among Southern practitioners of a cappella “sacred harp” (i.e., the human voice) singing.

*The sacred harp: a collection of Psalm and hymn tunes, odes, and anthems …*
The “Black-Bird Minstrels” will give a concert at the N.Y. State Lunatic Asylum, at Utica
[Utica, N.Y.: New York State Lunatic Asylum, 1853?]
(Broadside 1853 .B53)

Booksellers often ask me what I am most interested in finding for UVA. My usual response: first, bargains; second, materials I had no idea existed and that catch me by surprise. The latter tend to be unrecorded and/or untapped by scholars; by making these discoverable at UVA, curators advance the course of scholarship in ways often small, sometimes great. This is that rare item satisfying both criteria.

I regularly add materials relating to blackface minstrelsy, distasteful as they may be, to UVA’s excellent 19th-century American social history and popular culture holdings. But when offered this unrecorded broadside program, I was astonished to learn that, in its heyday, minstrelsy was introduced as a therapeutic treatment at the New York State Lunatic Asylum. Occasional concerts by the Black-Bird Minstrels—patients (perhaps including some Black residents) performing for their fellow inmates and the public—are recorded from 1847 into the later 19th century, though documentary sources are vanishingly rare. Over the past two decades historians have become fascinated by the concerts’ supreme ironies, described by Emory University Professor Benjamin Reiss: “In masking themselves, the outcast actors imitated figures who were equally outcast .... They enacted scenarios of slave life for the ultimate captive audience; and under the watchful eye of asylum authorities, they turned a famously unruly form into a spectacle of their own capacity for self-control.”

Purchased from John Carbonell, 2020
Robert and Virginia Tunstall Trust Fund

Eduard Petzold (1815-1891)
Der Park von Muskau: für Freunde der Landschaftsgärtnerei und den Fremden zum Wegweiser
Hoyerswerda: W. Erbe, 1856. (SB466 .G32 M87 1856)

Much of my buying could be termed “building on strength,” that is, rendering UVA’s distinctive holdings even more helpful for research and instruction through carefully focused acquisitions. Sometimes, though, the process has been more one of building around anticipated strengths in certain areas, such as landscape architecture and the built environment. UVA’s holdings in this field do not yet meet the needs of its fine academic program, but with faculty encouragement—notably Professor Emeritus Reuben Rainey’s splendid 2018 gift of his library—I have been able to strengthen them significantly. Prior to the Rainey gift I was collecting “around” it by adding items that would complement its strengths in American landscape architecture and park design. Likewise, I have been building around a hoped-for major gift of classic English and European works. Should the gift not materialize, the rare German and Dutch books I have been acquiring will still serve UVA well.

This rare guide, for example, supports the Mellon-funded research of Professor Michael Lee and UVA’s Landscape Studies Initiative on Park von Muskau. A UNESCO World Heritage Site spanning the German–Polish border, the 1,400-acre park is considered a masterpiece of landscape design. Construction began in 1815 under the direction of Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau who, with the aid of court gardener Eduard Petzold, laid out the grounds largely per the design principles of Humphry Repton and other English landscape architects. Deeply in debt by 1845, Pückler-Muskau sold the estate to Prince Frederick of the Netherlands, who retained Petzold, by then one of Europe’s foremost landscape architects, to complete the project. The park attracted many tourists for whom Petzold wrote this explanatory guide, complete with large chromolithographed plan.

Purchased from Antiquariat Banzhaf, 2017
Associates Endowment and Kerchof Library Funds
Now I should acknowledge as fact what this exhibition has made clear: in building UVA’s collections I rely heavily on the expertise and kindness of antiquarian booksellers. Although I have bought from over 200 dealers worldwide, much of my business has gone to the smaller subset who seem to know instinctively which materials are suited to UVA’s needs and where to find them. Sometimes it seems as though my role is simply to recognize the obvious and say, “Yes, we’ll take it!”

Simon Beattie is one of these canny booksellers. His expert catalog description of this manuscript ended: “The volume is perfect for teaching, exhibition, as well as research purposes, showing the First World War from the ‘other’ side.” My thoughts exactly! Thanks in large part to the Joseph M. Bruccoli Great War Collection, assembled over three decades by many generous donors, UVA has an excellent holding of books, pamphlets, periodicals, sheet music, posters, photographs, ephemera, and manuscript material concerning World War I, though it skews heavily toward the home front and Allied participation. I have tried to address the imbalance through targeted acquisitions such as this and the newspaper described below.

Alois Neumayer of Cham, Germany, enlisted in the 3rd Bavarian Reserve Foot Artillery Regiment in August 1914; two weeks later he was fighting at the Western Front. His unit saw nearly constant action there and then on the Eastern Front through 1915, when this volume ends. Sometime after the war Neumayer carefully compiled from diary entries this full chronological record of his initial 17 months of military service, extra-illustrating it with over 700 postcards, original photos, artwork, mail he received in the field, ephemera, and news clippings.

Purchased from Simon Beattie, 2018
Associates Endowment Fund
Shortly after purchasing the Neumayer memoir (described above) from bookseller Simon Beattie, I saw him at the 2019 California International Antiquarian Book Fair. He would, he said, be exhibiting another unique World War I item at the upcoming New York fair, but I saved him the trouble by reserving it for UVA. The item: nearly complete runs (likely the world’s best surviving set) in all six languages—Arabic, Tatar, Russian, Hindi, Urdu, and Georgian—of a famous German prisoner of war camp newspaper, *El Dschihad* (*Jihad*).

One German strategy for the Middle Eastern and South Asian theaters was to radicalize Muslims against their colonial rulers. Some 5,000 Muslim prisoners of war were sent to Halbmondlager (Crescent Moon Camp)—a model prison camp, complete with Germany’s first mosque—at Wünsdorf south of Berlin. There they were well treated while encouraged, via this newspaper and other propaganda efforts, to switch sides and fight a Holy War against the Allies. The different editions—all containing the same text translated into one of six languages and reproduced lithographically from handwriting—reflect the prison camp’s diverse population. This issue is from the Georgian edition, published under the title *Kaukasien*. Germany’s experiment was only partly successful—the camp closed in 1917 and *El Dschihad* ceased publication soon after.

*Purchased from Simon Beattie, 2019*  
*Nimmo Fund*
Decades ago I had the unforgettable thrill of hearing the great Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges lecture to several hundred of my college classmates. Borges re-entered my life two decades later when, at Harvard’s Houghton Library, I served as liaison for a major traveling exhibition on Borges and curated another featuring Houghton’s holdings. One evening, due to flight delays, I even sheltered Borges (that is, a courier and suitcase filled with important Borges artifacts) at home. A decade later I found myself curating UVA’s renowned Borges collection, established in 1977 by former curator Jared Loewenstein and expertly built by him into what is arguably the world’s best institutional holding.

While adding rare editions, newspaper and periodical appearances, and other materials to it, I have gained entrée to the fascinating world of Borges scholars, enthusiasts, collectors, and dealers. Of special interest to me was the fate of Borges’ extant manuscripts—never large in number and dispersed following his death. Many have found their way into two private Argentine collections, while others have trickled onto the market and into institutions, of which UVA’s 59 manuscript items may be the largest such holding. Because the Argentine collectors were interested in selling, it was a high priority to acquire some of these expensive, yet priceless, manuscripts for UVA. The stars did not align until the spring of 2018, when we succeeded in purchasing eleven significant manuscripts. The original manuscript of *La biblioteca total* (*The total library*) is the prize and, if I must choose, my favorite UVA acquisition.

In this essay, written in August 1939 and published that month in the journal *Sur*, Borges first elaborated the concept of a universal library containing all knowledge. Two years later he reworked its themes into an indelible story, *La biblioteca de Babel* (*The library of Babel*). The essay closes as follows (in Eliot Weinberger’s translation): “I have tried to rescue from oblivion a subaltern horror: the vast, contradictory Library, whose vertical wildernesses of books run the incessant risk of changing into others that affirm, deny, and confuse everything like a delirious god.”

*Purchased from Víctor Aizenman via Librería de Antaño, 2018*  
*Nimmo and Tunstall Funds*
Will my curious Wunderkammer, in its randomness and reflection of relentless collection building, invoke for some the Borgesian terrors of a universal library? I trust not! Working as I do with very finite resources, I have never worried that my acquiring will plunge UVA’s library collections into a state of bloated disorder (though colleagues may sometimes harbor doubts).

I did recently overhear this aphorism of R. David Lankes, though: “Bad Libraries build collections. Good libraries build services (of which a collection is only one). Great libraries build Communities.” This puzzled me, for it contradicted my four rewarding decades working with several truly great library collections. Could great collections and community ever be mutually exclusive, and my work at UVA perhaps misguided? I would counterargue that collections and community are inseparable, indeed, a distinctive collection is a driving engine of community.

May the work of UVA Library curators, from Jefferson onward, speak for itself.

David R. Whitesell
Curator, Small Special Collections Library
SUPPORTING SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

As David R. Whitesell notes in his foreword, the 64 items described in this catalog are only a sampling of his decade of work to augment our collections, and a much smaller fraction of the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library’s holdings of more than 16 million objects, which include maps, manuscripts, papers and records, rare books, ephemera, photographs, audio and video recordings, material culture and much more. The depth and value of our special collections is well known, with collections ranging from American and British literature and the University archives to bibliography, pop-up books, typography, fine press and contemporary artists’ books, decorative arts, archeological collections, and everything in between.

Likewise, Whitesell’s work to select and acquire—to curate the collections—is only part of what goes into collecting and making available these remarkable materials. Archivists and catalogers must process, arrange, and describe them. Experts must carefully preserve, sometimes repair, and often make these collections digitally accessible. Reference librarians aid researchers on Grounds in our reference room, and virtually around the world. Outreach and instruction librarians examine and explain collections for the benefit of students and scholars, and of course, exhibitions staff feature them in displays such as Wunderkammer.

The reader may have noticed that the items in Wunderkammer were purchased through endowed funds, and the creation of these funds for special collections is vital to acquiring the broad range of materials necessary to further teaching and research in a variety of fields. Equally important are endowed positions for collection development and collection management efforts, which will help immeasurably not only in acquiring new resources but in processing, cataloging, and exhibiting them, alongside materials we currently hold.

Our rich and varied collections are a jewel of the University. Supporting the Library’s special collections is critical to furthering discovery, inquiry, and scholarship at UVA — your contributions will allow us to build collections, make them discoverable, and share our resources with scholars in the University community and beyond.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Friends of the Library is a new donor recognition program offering opportunities for enhanced connection with the Library through events such as tours, lectures, curator discussions, exhibition openings, and other special programming, with both virtual and in-person offerings. Members receive welcome kits from the Library and are recognized annually in our online honor roll. There are multiple points of entry into the society, including campaign gifts at the appropriate level.

For full details about Friends of the Library, visit library.virginia.edu/support-library/friends

HOW TO GIVE

BY MAIL
Simply send a check payable to University of Virginia Library to:

UVA Gift Processing Services
PO Box 37963
Boone, IA 50037-4963

ONLINE
Our secure online form allows you to make a credit card donation directly to the University Library for a one-time or recurring gift. You will receive an e-mail confirmation of your gift, and a receipt by mail for tax purposes.

library.virginia.edu/give

You may also make a gift through stock or bond transfers, and your employer may match your gift. Donors may also designate the Library as a beneficiary of their wills, charitable trusts, and retirement plans.

Learn more: library.virginia.edu/support

QUESTIONS ABOUT GIVING TO THE LIBRARY?
Contact Sean Clarkson, Director of Development:
(434) 962-3509 or sean.clarkson@virginia.edu