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A Taste of Recent Acquisitions

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A Taste of Recent Acquisitions

Abstract

Contextual essay about items in the exhibition of recent acquisitions at the Penn Libraries, Fall 2013.

Keywords

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Disciplines

History

Comments

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01
Tuesday
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A Taste of Recent Acquisitions

POSTED BY MITCH FRAAS IN POSTS

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Every day the **Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts** at the Penn Libraries acquires new and exciting material from around the globe. To help bring these items to the attention of a wide audience, Rare Book and Manuscript Library Director David McKnight and a team of curators and exhibit specialists have put together a fantastic exhibit **showcasing some of their acquisitions over the past five years**. For the next three months these items will be on display in the Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center on the sixth and first floors. Some of these collections and materials have been highlighted here on the blog in the past, including the **Fez collection of Lithographs** and the **Asylum for Orphan Girls Records**. To encourage people to take a closer look at the exhibit I thought I would do a quick rundown of some of my other favorites now on display.



— Tent Revival Banner by Clarence Larkin: Harrisburg, Pa., 1926.

Upon entering the exhibit it's hard to miss the item above which hangs on the back wall of the Goldstein gallery. An original 1926 tent revival banner measuring more than 10 feet across and four feet high, it was produced by Clarence Larkin, a baptist minister and former professional draftsman with a knack for integrating his millennialist theology with his design background. This particular banner, used in Harrisburg, Pa., depicts Larkin's vision of salvation history and provides a sense of how visual and oratorical cultures

□ WELCOME

Welcome to Unique at Penn, part of the family of University of Pennsylvania Libraries blogs. Every week this space will feature descriptions and contextualization of items from the collections of the University of Pennsylvania Libraries. The site focuses on those materials held by Penn which are in some sense "unique" - drawn from both our special and circulating collections, whether a one-of-a-kind medieval manuscript or a twentieth-century popular novel with generations of student notes penciled inside.

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combined in the world of the tent revival.



— Pierre Duval, *Les tables de geographie, reduites en un jeu de cartes* (Paris, 1669). [Penn Call# GV1485 .D88 1669](#)

Another favorite from the exhibition is this wonderful seventeenth-century uncut sheet of 52 playing cards with each suit representing a different continent (Europe: hearts, Asia: diamonds, Africa: spades, and the Americas: clubs). The cards contain facts about locations on the continent as well as portraits of leaders and other figures. Below are several uncut cards from clubs including the three (Florida), five (New Mexico), and Queen ["D" for *Dame*] (Virginia). The idea of Elizabeth I representing the "Queen" of the Americas is particularly striking, especially for a game produced in France.



The Penn Libraries have a strong collecting interest in the history of reading and the book. The new acquisitions gallery is full of

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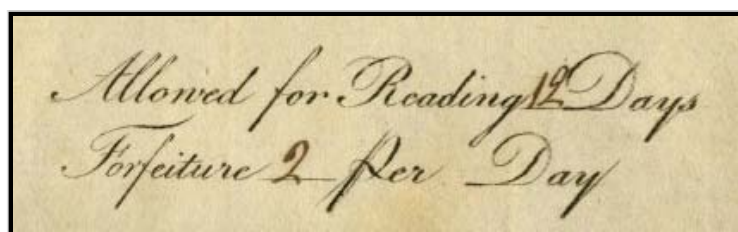
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great items in this vein but one of my favorites is this collection of circulating library labels. The bookplates and labels on the left come from circulating

libraries in Reading, Liverpool, Manchester, and Dover, and are just a small sample of a striking collection of 219 such labels acquired by Penn in 2011 with the assistance of the [Allan G. Chester and Florence K. Chester fund](#). Circulating libraries sprang up in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to serve a growing populace of avid readers and these labels help document the spread of the libraries and their clientele. Some of the labels include detailed rules for borrowing and provide warnings against "tearing out Leaves, Prints, &c."



— Label from the Pitt Street Library in Liverpool (c.1800).

As is the case with book labels, the most interesting aspect of a book might not be its textual content but its material form. Perhaps my favorite example of this amongst the new acquisitions on display is a copy of an eighteenth-century printing of a classic of canon law



— *Examen Juris Canonici Juxta V libros decretalium* (Vienna: Georg

1935-2008 May 6, 2014

■ The Joseph G. Rosengarten collection April 30, 2014

■ Old Friends Reunited April 24, 2014

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(right). What sets this volume apart of course is the contemporary recessed compartment provided for a pair of spectacles! This item came to Penn recently as part of the fascinating Dr. Daniel and Eleanor Albert Medical Ephemera Collection which has a special focus on ophthalmology and the human eye.

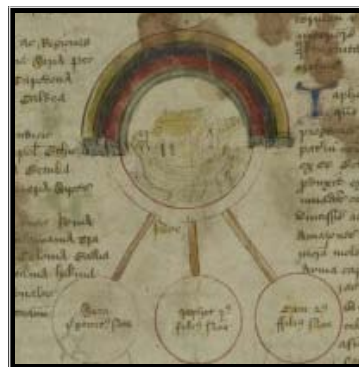


— Marble Quarry in West Rutland, Vermont (c. 1910s-20s)

The photograph on the right is one of many items from one of the most substantial new acquisitions here at Penn, the **records of the Vermont Marble Company**. This collection contains hundreds of linear feet of documents, drawings, photographs, and other records from the 1870s to the 1970s. On display in the gallery are pay records and company store ledgers from the 1870s,

advertisements for marble and its uses, and mesmerizing photographs of quarrying work as shown here. The Vermont Marble Company supplied stone to countless building projects across the world with a special focus on monumental architecture. The National Gallery of Art, Lincoln Memorial, and United Nations Building, among others, all used marble provided by the company.

Finally, no visit to the new acquisitions exhibit would be complete without seeing the colorful and physically impressive 15th-century Genealogical Chronicle of the Kings of England purchased by the Penn Libraries in 2007. The roll is 37 feet long in its entirety and provides a detailed if often fanciful genealogy of the English kings leading back to Adam and Eve. If you can't make it to Penn to see the roll in

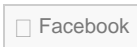


— Detail of Noah's Ark from membrane one of **Penn Ms. Roll 1066**.

person, scholars here at the [Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies \(SIMS\)](#) have made it available online in several different formats. A full facsimile of the manuscript is available both [with](#) and [without](#) annotation describing each illustration and name on the roll. In addition, SIMS has filmed a [video guide](#) to the manuscript that helps explain it in more detail.

Ed. Note: This post would not be possible without the assistance of Andrea Gottschalk and her team of exhibit specialists who mounted the exhibit and provided many of the images used here.

Come visit the exhibition which is on display in the Goldstein Family Gallery (sixth floor) (closes December 13th) and the Kamin Gallery (first floor) (closes January 24) Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center 3420 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA Goldstein Gallery hours: Monday-Friday, 10am-5pm; Wednesday, 10am-8pm (after 6pm email rbml@pobox.upenn.edu for guest pass) Kamin Gallery hours: Monday-Friday, 9am-6pm



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About Mitch Fraas

[Mitch Fraas](#) is the Scholar in Residence at the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts at the University of Pennsylvania Libraries. He is also the interim director of the Penn digital humanities forum. At Penn, Mitch works on a variety of projects cutting across general and special collections, with a special focus on digital humanities. He holds doctoral and master's degrees in history from Duke University and earned his bachelor's degree at Boston College. His doctoral dissertation examined the legal culture of British India in the 17th and 18th centuries, arguing for the existence of a unified early modern British imperial legal culture whether in Philadelphia, Bombay, or London.

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THOUGHTS ON "A TASTE OF RECENT ACQUISITIONS"

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Suzanna Barucco *said:*

October 30, 2013 at 2:01 pm

Thank you for this post—the first I’ve read from the Penn Libraries Blog (via Penn News Today). The wider university community should know more about the Library’s collection and acquisitions.

REPLY



Mark Mandel *said:*

October 30, 2013 at 3:40 pm

Fascinating! I’ll make a point of seeing this exhibit.

Regarding Elizabeth I as the “Queen” of the Americas: I was struck by the region that the creator of the deck chose for her to represent. On the other cards shown, Florida (□3) “is of 3 types” and New Mexico (□5) “has 5 regions”. Elizabeth was known as “the virgin queen”, so it’s hardly surprising for her to represent Virginia.

REPLY



Mitch Fraas *said:*

October 30, 2013 at 4:09 pm

Thanks so much – it’s a fantastic exhibit. Mark – I had also puzzled over the breakdowns of regions on the cards too. What surprised me about Elizabeth wasn’t so much placing her with Virginia but that a 17thc. French card maker would have elevated an English monarch to the status of Queen of the Americas. Would have expected a bit more nationalism there!

REPLY



Catharine Findiesen Hays *said:*

October 30, 2013 at 11:30 pm

As a born and raised Vermonter, I knew Vermont Marble as a proud part of our state’s economy and legacy throughout the US and the world, I was happy to learn of this acquisition and hope that the rich history of this American cultural treasure is brought to life in its new home.

REPLY

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