Love at (Almost) First Sight (SCRC Behind the Scenes)

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I remember the moment when I knew I wanted to work here forever.

It was shortly after I first started here in a part-time student position while I pursued my MS in Library & Information Science. I knew I wanted to work in a special collections department, but I hadn’t yet decided that I wanted to work in this special collections department. I was going through our Leopold von Ranke Papers when I came across this letter:

Honestly, it looked a lot like the hundreds of other letters I had already seen in the collection from Leopold to his wife, Clara. But then I turned the page:
…a leaf? I wondered. I turned back to the text and took another look at that little note in the lower left corner:

He enclosed two leaves. Okay, so one didn’t make it, but here I was, looking at a leaf well over a hundred years old. Someone had cared enough about that leaf to keep it long enough for it to find its way to Syracuse University Library in 1888 when von Ranke’s personal library became the foundation of the University’s library, and then it had happily thrived in our library and then in our department so I could find it in the 21st century! How cool is that?

Well. Some time later I was lucky enough to turn my part-time student job into a full-time staff position. I’ve seen many exciting things during my time here — including 14th-century books of hours, a papyrus fragment, cuneiform tablets, an Academy Award, and so much more — but sometimes I stop and think fondly of that little leaf that started it all, in the collection that started it all for this library.

Tags: leopold von ranke

2 Responses to “Love at (Almost) First Sight”

1. Michele Combs Says:
November 16th, 2011 at 10:12 am

Funny how the little things can have the most impact…

2. Amy McDonald Says:
November 17th, 2011 at 6:42 am

That’s so sweet! I work at Duke, and a co-worker and I once found an edelweiss flower pressed into a 17th century volume on herbal remedies, so we know just how you feel!
Darling Father,

My best regards for your kind letters.

I am writing to tell you everything about us. We are very happy and contented. We have made some new acquaintances, such as the Arnauds, who are very kind and welcoming. We have also met some very nice people who we have become very friendly with. We are all very busy with our work and studies, but we are enjoying ourselves very much.

Yesterday, we went out for a walk in the beautiful countryside. We saw some lovely views and heard the sounds of nature. It was a perfect day and we spent the entire afternoon outside.

Please give my regards to all in the family. I miss you all very much.

Take care and write soon.

With love,

Yours sincerely,
ta. two days from the shire
berg of principio. the angel
grind my
magnificent presents.