



Exploring Special Collections

Syracuse University's eclectic holdings span the centuries and capture many a researcher's imagination —by Jay Cox

The visitors step off the elevator on the sixth floor of the Ernest Stevenson Bird Library, turn right, and pass through the framed-glass doors of the Department of Special Collections. After the visitors sign in, Curator Mark Weimer guides them to a large varnished wooden table in the von Ranke Reading Room, where a couple of slate-gray boxes and a baseball, darkened by age, rest. This is a sampling of the department's Stephen Crane Collection, comprising photographs, newspaper articles, handwritten pieces of prose and verse, and the baseball, which is more than a century old. During his brief stint at Syracuse in 1891, the American author, according to writing on the rawhide, played with this ball, which was donated by a former teammate. The visitors also read Crane's earliest known poem in which, at age 9, he amusingly stated his interest in receiving a dog for Christmas. "The University," Weimer says, "has had an interest in Crane for many years."

Weimer, who has been with the department since 1977 and supervises a 12-member staff, could tell many a story about Crane. But here Crane and his work are a mere drop in the bucket of personalities, manuscripts, correspondence, rare first-edition books, photographs, and other items, including an Oscar. In fact, Special Collections counts 110,000 volumes and 28,000 linear feet of holdings—that's 5.3 miles, or roughly the height of 175 Carrier Domes stacked upon each other (roofs inflated).

Walk with Weimer back among the department's climate-controlled closed stacks and the big picture becomes apparent: The adventurous seeker of knowledge might never escape from the Department of Special Collections. Tour the Hawkins Building, a few miles south of campus, where two-thirds of the collection is stashed, and thoughts of information overload pervade: Aisles and aisles of shelves, stacked three stories high in some areas, seemingly run forever. Hunting through the far reaches of

Hawkins requires more than a thirst for knowledge: In some instances, a miner's light perched on your head is essential.

The explorer—whether initially drawn by singular scholarly pursuit, curious hunch, or guided tour—could easily spin off onto a serendipitous path and spend several lifetimes soaking up the issues of the ages. Pick a topic, any topic, and odds are the Special Collections staff might, at the very least, provide a page of insight. Or, if the inquiry happens to be about the New York Central Railroad, supply enough information to fill a couple of boxcars, literally. “At times,” Weimer says, “it’s like being in grandma’s attic as a kid.”

Growing up in Syracuse, author John Williams '50, whose early writings are part of Special Collections, fondly remembers heading up the Hill to explore Carnegie Library, the grand old ancestor of today's University library system. In his student days at SU, Williams would further investigate the library, which, to him, remains “a very, very special place.” In today's world of “instant gratification through instant communication,” Williams still finds pleasure in doing research in a quiet, book-filled room. Although he's not sure what a researcher could learn from his early works, he says it doesn't matter. “I still think there's a very important psychological place in these research collections,” he says. “Being closer to your subject by looking at a manuscript or handwritten change in the typescript brings you closer.”

That, you might say, is the mission of Special Collections: making centuries of ideas and information accessible to visiting scholars, roaming researchers, faculty, staff, and students alike. This year, in fact, Weimer estimates there will be 2,500 research visits paid to the department. The responsibility of maintaining such offerings is no easy chore. On any given day the legwork that holds this fortress of knowledge together is evident: While researchers comb through material in the von Ranke Reading Room, staffers may be cataloging information in the back room, adding information to the department's World Wide Web site, or giving classes in the William Safire Room next door. Stop in the book conservation laboratory, and conservation librarian Peter Verheyen may be teaching students how to build drop-spine boxes, or performing surgery on a book several centuries old. “You're dealing with the history and technology of books,” Verheyen says.

Down in the basement is a prime example of what can happen to historic material: The Street & Smith Archive—perhaps the country's preeminent collection of mid-19th and mid-20th century pulp fiction—fades toward oblivion. Staffers are immersed in an intensive project of cataloging, microfilming, and pre-

serving what they can of the collection. (See related story, page 23.) Amid all of this and during a time of fiscal fortitude, new acquisitions still arrive and detective work and negotiations for more materials continue. To obtain new additions, the department often turns to donations, as well as funding from Syracuse University Library Associates, whose publication, the *Courier*, reflects the benefits of scholars' concerted digging and research. “In almost any collection,” Weimer says, “finding something that's historically interesting out of a lot of material that has not been seen before is a favorite experience.”

An Endless Mix of Topics

Where to begin? In this mass of material, a researcher can trace the written word back to one of its earliest versions. Look, for instance, at the cuneiform tablet from 1700 B.C. when wedge-shaped characters were the mode of communication. There are scrolls fashioned from papyrus, lavishly decorated illuminated manuscripts, more than 130 volumes of books with fore-edge paintings, and, as Weimer discovered once while mounting an exhibit on the department's 18th-century holdings, a book published from every year of that century. “I thought for sure there would be a year or two in there where we simply had no book,” he says.

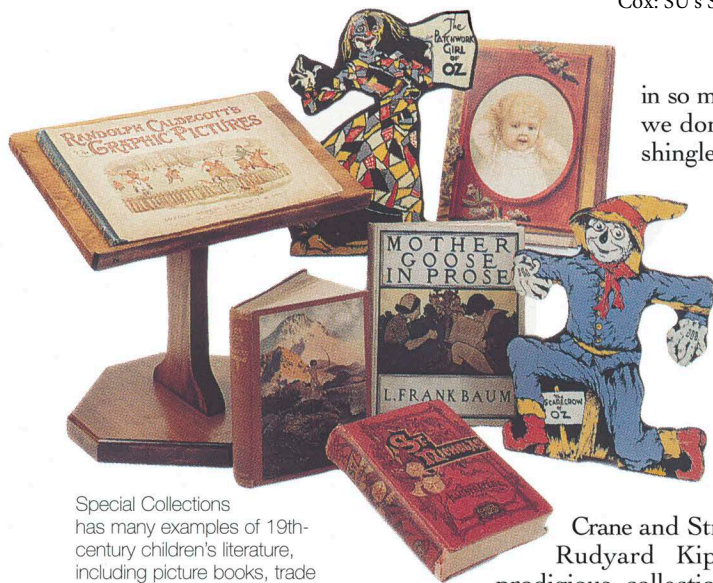
Among the manuscripts, a seemingly endless stream of subjects flows forth: American fiction and poetry, children's literature, English literature, French literature, publishing and printing, music, journalism, African American literature, science fiction, sculpture, art, adult education, industrial design, illustration, cartoons, politics, religion, the Civil War, women's studies, business, architecture, church records, New York State. The range is astounding, a paper trail that can weave from William Blake, Beat poets, and *Wizard of Oz* creator L. Frank Baum, to correspondence from presidents and baseball commissioners, and scripts from the old Daniel Boone TV show. “It's the waterfront,” Weimer says. “In many ways, our strength is also a weakness. We have such wonderful collections

Photos by David Rivette courtesy of the Department of Special Collections and the Division of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions



Illuminated manuscripts are handwritten and hand-decorated on vellum. The example above is from the 16th-century *Book of Hours*.

Facing page: Detail of a fore-edge painting from the 19th-century *Book of Ballads*.



Special Collections has many examples of 19th-century children's literature, including picture books, trade signs, and L. Frank Baum's *Wizard of Oz* materials.

in so many fields that we don't hang out a shingle in one area."

If shingles were to be hung, however, several prominent collections are in line to have their names emblazoned on the placard. There's

Crane and Street & Smith; Rudyard Kipling, whose prodigious collection at SU includes more than 700 letters, his typewriter, and a broken pipe; Margaret Bourke-White, the world-famous photographer whose pictures, words, voice, and camera equipment can be found; Grove Press, a prominent and often controversial 20th-century publisher; and the works of two very well-known doctors—Nobel Prize winner Albert Schweitzer and child-rearing expert and social activist Benjamin Spock.

The collection is, in fact, a veritable who's who and what was happening when, a place

where the thoughts of many movers and shakers from across the centuries have come to rest—and be pored over. "The breadth of the collection is what makes it fun," Weimer says. "On one hand you're working with architectural records from the 20th century, then jumping back and dealing with 16th-century books. It's a strength, but it's also a challenge."

Here, for instance, are two popular attractions from the 1800s:

- Highly sought-after papers of Garret Smith, an upstate New York reformer who embraced many of mid-19th century America's movements, ranging from abolition and temperance to women's suffrage. "People often use his papers to approach all of the people who wrote to him or were in contact with him," says Special Collections Librarian Carolyn Davis. "He seems to have known everybody who was important in those days—they all wrote to each other."

- Extensive records of the Oneida Community, a utopian group whose more than four decades of existence surpassed that of many other such societies. Its members worked toward achieving spiritual perfectionism in daily life and practiced communal marriage, an especially racy topic for those times. Nonetheless, the community was revered for its work ethic and industrial ingenuity, which led to success in the trap-making and silverware industries, among others.

Not to be overlooked, though, are words provided by such people as Lucy Ann Lewis Horton, an upstate New York resident whose diary provides tremendous insight into the daily life of a mid-1800s housewife, according to Davis. "The work she did just astounds me. Every once in awhile, she baked a bushel of doughnuts—imagine doing that on a wooden stove," Davis says. "She left us a really good picture of the time."

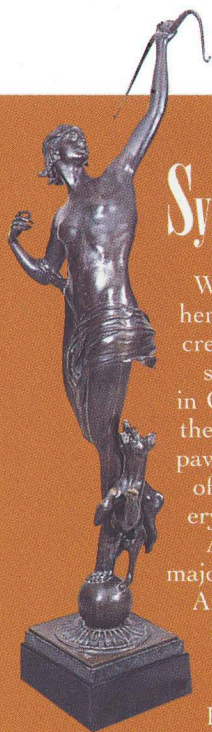
Symbolizing the hunt for knowledge

When American sculptor Anna Hyatt Huntington left her writings and artwork to the University, she also created a tradition. For years, Huntington's 1932 bronze statue of the Greek goddess Diana and her dog stood in Carnegie Library, and students seeking good luck on their examinations would rub the dog's now-polished paw. Today, Diana the huntress graces the second floor of Bird Library as a symbol of the pursuit and discovery of knowledge that the library offers.

Alan C. Dye, a senior communication design major in the College of Visual and Performing Arts, has also transformed Diana's image into a logo for the library, which appears on library web sites and other materials. "When I learned about how Diana used to be this great tradition,

I realized here was something people needed to know about," Dye says. "I thought it would be a wonderful way of representing the library and giving it some personality."

Library Preservation Administrator Martha Hanson, a member of the library development committee that worked with Dye, hopes the logo will instill a renewed sense of connection between Diana and the library. "We believe Diana's story mirrors the stories of those who use our library as their hunting ground for knowledge," Hanson says.



Treasure Trove

Such glimpses into bygone eras appear endless from the Special Collections vantage point. Weimer traces the origins of this effort of gathering important documents and books back to 1888. That's when the University created its own library by purchasing the library of German historian Leopold von



Ranke, whose 17th- and 18th-century holdings—19 tons worth—were shipped across the Atlantic to Syracuse. For many years, the Department of Special Collections—which came into being as the Lena R. Arents Rare Book Room—was housed in the Carnegie Building. As part of Chancellor William Pearson Tolley's plans for Bird Library, the collection was shifted to its present location in 1972.

As the University library system grew and evolved, so too did Special Collections. Tolley—whose personal donations make up much of the Kipling holdings—launched an aggressive acquisitions campaign in the late fifties and sixties. *Courier* editor Mary Beth Hinton recalls the story of how Tolley assigned a couple of staffers to build the collection. They, in turn, reportedly combed through a *Who's Who*, identified people whose collections they thought were worth pursuing, and then “drove all over the country in a station wagon,” Hinton says.

Tolley's foresight, Weimer says, was spectacular. “The University was looking at 20th-century collections, seeing that it wouldn't always be 1960 and time would go on,” he says. “Chancellor Tolley was very much a book and library person, so he gave tremendous support to the collection and building it. It's hard to measure, but we were certainly one of the 10 or 15 most actively engaged libraries in building collections during that decade.”

Evidence could be found in the department's off-campus storage site, the rather less-than-prestigious Continental Can building on Erie Boulevard. In 1991, however, the stored collection was transferred to the Hawkins Building.

Today, Hawkins also houses portions of the University Art Collection and University Archives, two sizable collections in their own right. The University Archives, which stores University-related items such as department

records, publications, photographs, dissertations, and sports videotapes, accounts for upward of 17,000 boxes of material, University Archivist Ed Galvin estimates. “We get interesting requests when somebody is writing a book or article on somebody who taught here or went here. We've also found a fair amount of interest in our audiovisual collection,” says Galvin, whose staff fielded 1,100 requests last year. “The statistics show we're really getting used, which is what we're here for.”

According to Curator David Prince, the Art Collection contains more than 40,000 pieces, ranging from Indian folk art and pre-

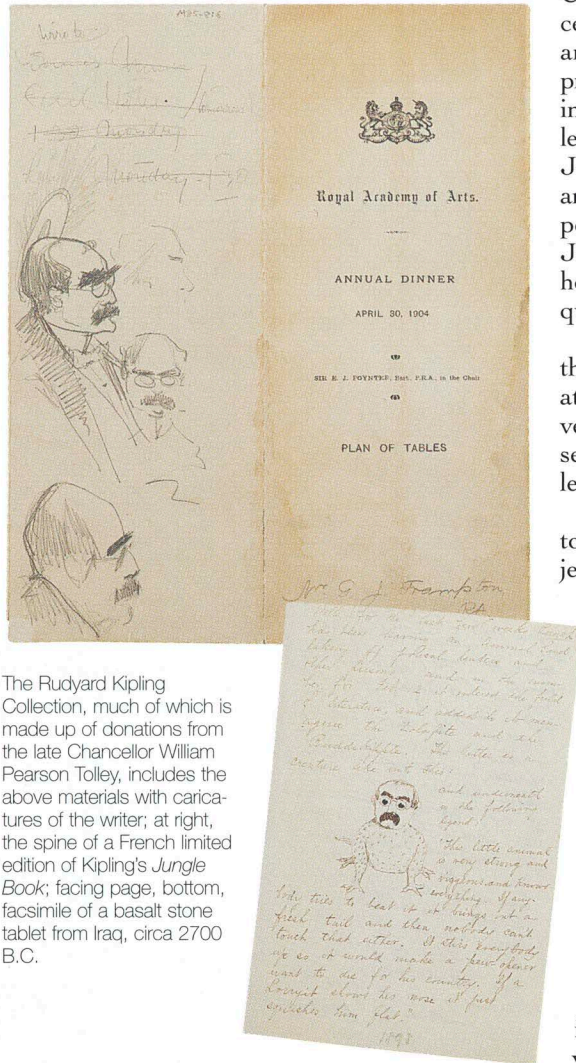
Colombian and Korean ceramics to sculpture, and a wide range of prints and photographs, including a large collection of 19th-century Japanese photographs and works of contemporary artists such as Jim Dine, Andy Warhol, and James Rosenquist.

Fifty-six artists have their papers and works at the University. Eleven of them are represented in major collections.

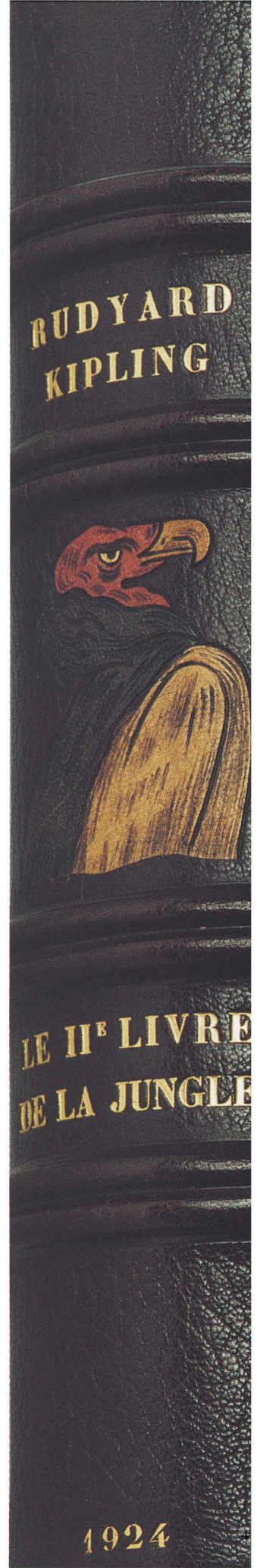
“Several administrators developed a project in the sixties to create a resource for scholarly learning and the arts, where they tried to convince artists of note to leave both their artwork and papers to the University so future scholars could have one central repository for their works and their papers,” Prince says.

An example of this is the works and writings produced by James Earle Fraser.

Fraser—known for his public sculpture and American West pieces, such as the “End of the Trail” sculpture—could be a researcher's jackpot. His unpublished memoirs rest in Special Collections, while many of his pieces—in various stages of development—are stored in the University Art Collection on campus. “From a student's point of view, you can trace the developmental process of a particular piece,” Prince says. “It's invaluable and shows the artist's



The Rudyard Kipling Collection, much of which is made up of donations from the late Chancellor William Pearson Tolley, includes the above materials with caricatures of the writer; at right, the spine of a French limited edition of Kipling's *Jungle Book*; facing page, bottom, facsimile of a basalt stone tablet from Iraq, circa 2700 B.C.



process from start to finish. It shows the challenge the artist faced and makes it more meaningful to the viewer."

Add to this mix the more than 300,000 recordings of the University's Belfer Audio Laboratory and Archive—which include interviews with Bourke-White, Schweitzer, and Spock—and researchers can further strengthen their grasp of a chosen historic figure. (See related story, page 24.) Obviously, such a combination can be a potent tool for learning. University exhibits often combine arts and letters, and classes can be introduced to scholarly works through unique presentations and research.

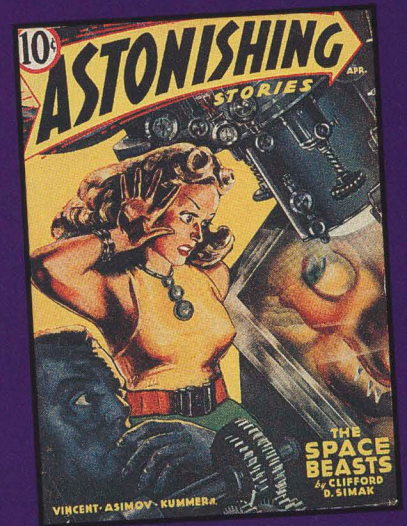
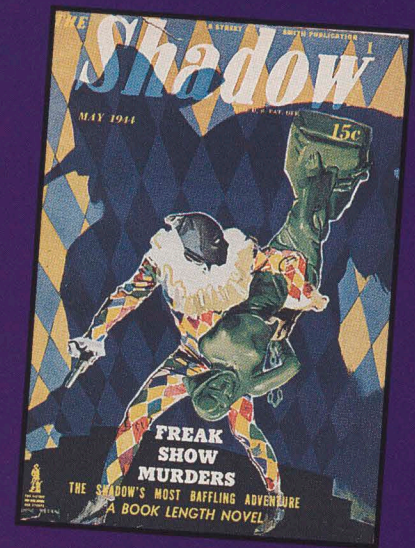
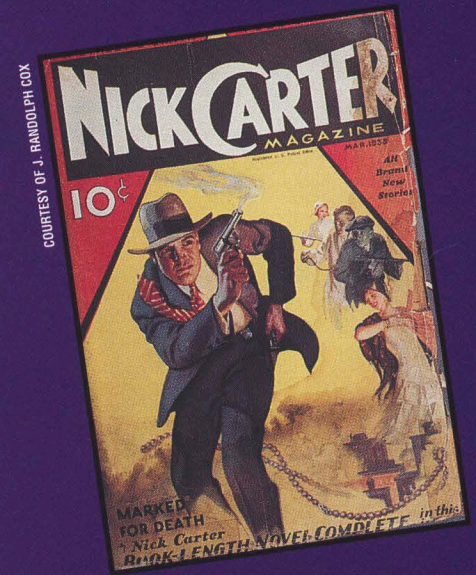
The Present Meets the Past

This fall, Edward Aiken, a professor of museum studies and director of the Joe and Emily Lowe Art Gallery, charged his advanced curatorship class with piecing together a Margaret Bourke-White photography exhibition, "Pattern and Repetition," which runs through January 21 at the Lowe Gallery. Aiken, who regularly organizes cooperative ventures that draw from both University and outside resources, says students encounter real-life curatorial problems, such as deciding on a particular photo that may have different exposures or croppings. "We're all working together to make something happen," he says. "Basically what we do is open the doors to our classroom and say, 'Welcome, come on in—learn, be delighted, be infuriated.' The great thing about this is students learn and get to work with original objects, and the public gains access to objects that it might not otherwise see."

Karen Burchin, a graduate student and professional photographer, is a longtime Bourke-White fan who is captivated by the class. "I've lectured about her to classes, but when you see the physical image in front of you instead of just talking about it, it's intense. I'm learning art history, plus a lot about her life, and I really identify with her," Burchin says.

And what does she think when Aiken combs through Bourke-White offerings at Special Collections? "I want to see as much as I can," she says. "You don't know what's going to be pulled out of the box next, but I want to be there when it comes out."

In the William Safire Room, undergraduate faces ignite with interest as they are introduced to the world of Special Collections. In less than two hours one day, Special Collections Librarian Terry Keenan takes students from a two-dimensional design class on a magical tour



Adventure abounds in the pulp magazines, serials, and dime novels of the Street & Smith Archive, which the Department of Special Collections is working to preserve.

At left: Cover detail from *The Gradual of Saints*, a 15th-century Spanish illuminated manuscript. The cover is made of wooden boards covered in parchment with brass clasps and leather.

RESCUING NICK CARTER AND COMPANY

Nick Carter has survived all sorts of adventures: *Murder on Skull Island*, *The Mystery of the Abandoned Gravel Pit*, and cases involving a Sinister Santa Claus, a Chemical Chicken, Wandering Macaroni, an Avenging Astrologer, and a Tattooed Cobra. Not to mention numerous encounters with corpses in various conditions—Wandering, Living, Restless, Kidnapped, Unlucky, Screaming, Whistling, and even one named Smith.

Carter, the quintessential hero, appeared in various formats—from story papers, pulp magazines, and dime novels to radio scripts—as a staple of Street & Smith publications. However, without a hand from the Department of Special Collections, his days might be numbered.

The department is now engaged in the intense task of preserving this collection of quirky American popular culture, which is the only existing archive of its kind from the mid-19th to mid-20th century. Syracuse's unique holding includes more than 400 linear feet of material that came from the company's own library, as well as its corporate records. Conde Nast, Street & Smith's parent company, donated the library archive to the University in 1969 and the corporate files in the early eighties.

Since highly acidic groundwood paper has about as much staying power as cellophane tape soaked in water, many of the publications brittle and deteriorated with age and, sadly, could be only a couple of page-turns away from the recycling bin. With this in mind, the department pursued and received a two-year, \$250,000 National Endowment for the Humanities grant, and went to work on the collection this past July. "The irony," says Martha Hanson, the library's preservation administrator and project director, "is just as research in this area is peaking, our collection is peaking in deterioration. Most of the material we can't save physically, but we will save the content. We're doing our best within the strategy of this grant to have these guys come home from microfilming wounded but alive."

During its time, Street & Smith, which was founded in 1855, was the country's largest and cagiest pulp fiction publisher. Not only do the publications provide a window into the culture back then, but the corporate records reveal the company's astute business dealings. Hanson once knew little about the pulp fiction genre, but was captured by the vivid graphic cover art, catchy titles, and characters, such as "Old Broadbrim, a gun-toting Quaker detective."

"They tried every imaginable subject in those days—it was everything, anything to make money," she says. "It was unbridled entrepreneurship and capitalism—the American Way in all its honesty."

The so-called "Fiction Factory," Hanson says, ran on strict editing, voluminous writing, imagination, and an indomitable spirit that had no qualms about buying out the competition. When storylines worked, they'd reappear. When they failed, they could be jettisoned in mid-sentence. Topics stretch from adventure, mystery, the Wild West, and sports to science, romance, children's stories, and health—with an eclectic heaping of numerous other attractions in between. Along with Nick Carter, there was Diamond Dick, the Yellow Kid, Buffalo Bill, the Shadow, and Doc Savage. There was *Romantic Range*, *Love Story Magazine*, *True Love*, *Live Girl*, *My Queen*, and *Do and Dare*

Weekly. "For whatever reason," says J. Randolph Cox, editor and publisher of *Dime Novel Round-Up*, "they had their finger on the pulse of the public. They knew what the public wanted and gave it to them."

The Minnesota resident has spent countless hours, including many at Syracuse, researching the genre, particularly Nick Carter, whom he first heard on the radio growing up in the forties. Cox's fascination with the "newsstand literature," evolved from boyhood interest to hobby to scholarly pursuit. "Their characters and publications fed the imaginations of generations of young people and adults," he says, "and probably could be credited with fostering and even maintaining some of the notions we have about the world through adventure stories and escape fiction."

The publishing house paid its writers quite well and also pursued the top writers of the day, such as Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie. Theodore Dreiser was an editor there, and Upton Sinclair and Jack London churned out stories.

And then there's Pearle E. Botsford. She supported her family during the Depression years by cranking out pulp fiction romance for such magazines as *Love Story* and *Romantic Range* under a handful of pseudonyms, according to Laurie McKesson, who traced her great-aunt's career through the Syracuse collections and wrote a master's thesis based on the research. McKesson—who believes the romance pulps have been overlooked in the scholarly commotion over the more popular attractions—uncovered upward of 130 of Botsford's stories and, through corporate payment records, discovered her great aunt made a "helluva lot of money" between 1928 and 1940. "She had connections and a following and published hundreds and hundreds of stories," McKesson says. "It was elusive fiction that was written to be consumed and dropped. It was just a taste of something to help you hold on. But what it reveals about the culture—not only the material culture, the fashions and the cars, but the attitudes about women and men, race, communism—it's all in there."

Such revelations, of course, are why Special Collections is under the gun to get close to a million pages of the archive microfilmed in the grant's time frame. Already, 24 boxes of radio scripts and 42 boxes of corporate records have been sent out for microfilming. The material is also being cataloged, and conservation treatments are being applied, for instance, to preserve the front and back covers of more than 1,500 dime novels. Among the corporate files, unknown materials pop up periodically, Hanson says, ranging from engraver plates and photographs to editors' surly comments. Project supervisor Janice Pfaff says preparing the goods for shipping and microfilming has its difficulties. "We have to figure out how much will fit on each roll of film, what reduction rate you want," she says. "The idea is to reduce it as little as possible, because if you do it too much, you lose clarity."

As Cox and Hanson both attest, the corporate records certainly have a future among scholars. "That's an area where researchers are going to go berserk," Hanson says, "because this is stuff they've never, ever seen before unless they came to Syracuse, sat themselves down, and did the work."

The History of Captured Sound

The University's Belfer Audio Laboratory and Archive is one of the premier places in the country to explore the history and evolution of recorded sound.

The archive was founded in 1963 under the guidance of Walter L. Welch, a pioneering historian of the phonograph, after the University obtained a collection of 150,000 sound recordings from a New York City record shop. Today, as the largest university sound archive in the United States, Belfer has more than 300,000 recordings, including North America's largest private institution collection of wax and celluloid cylinders (22,000), and a vast holding of classical and popular performances from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1982, the facility moved into its present location next to Bird Library into the first building in the world created specifically for the preservation of sound recordings. "Sound recordings are perfectly viable documents of our history and culture," says Susan Stinson, archive curator.

Belfer counts as many as 1,000 visitors a year who tune into a sound-swaying array of voices and music. You can listen to Robert Frost read poetry, newsman Mike Wallace interview celebrities and politicians, or Margaret Bourke-White, Benjamin Spock, and Albert Schweitzer talk about their lives. There are University events, including School of Music concerts since about 1960; radio broadcasts; and the works of renowned film composers like Franz Waxman and Miklos Rozsa, whose papers are part of Special Collections. "My favorite thing to hear is the voice of a well-known person," Stinson says. "You get a whole new idea about what some famous people were like. It's an incredible addition to whatever we know about them."

The recordings range in for-

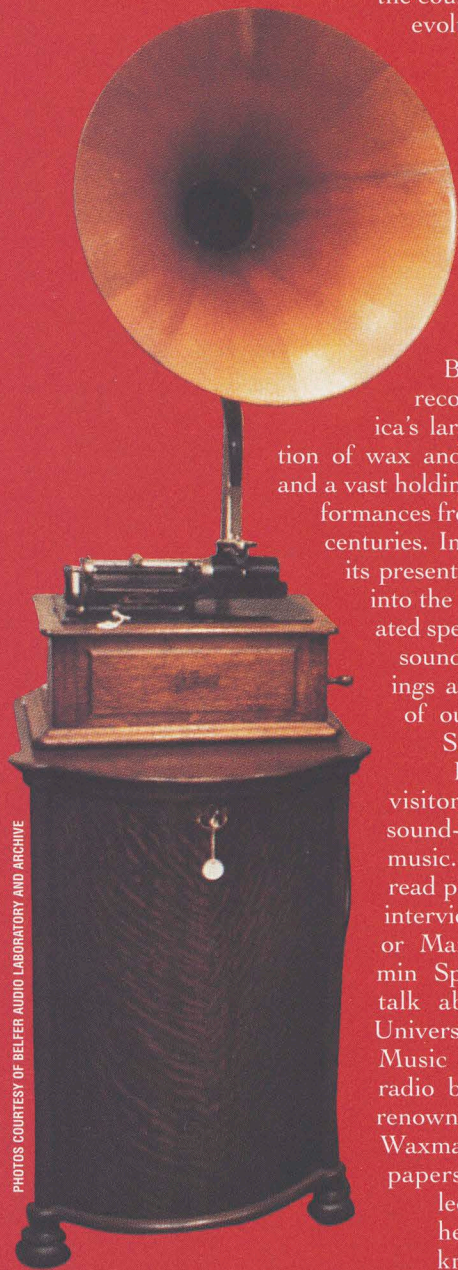
mat from the sound-grabbing grooves of wax and celluloid cylinders, to shellac discs like 78s, vinyl LPs, 45s, and magnetic tapes. Each format, Stinson notes, poses its own particular preservation challenge. "As far as permanence goes, nothing is permanent," she says. "There isn't a format in the world that's going to last forever."

Belfer also features a display of equipment that traces the technology of captured sound waves from Thomas Edison's 1877 tin-foil phonograph and the first cylinder machines to an Orthophonic Victrola credenza model from the twenties. There's even an ancestor to the jukebox—the Regina Hexaphone, which directs users to "insert nickel and crank six times."

Ironically, Stinson points out, the whole business grew out of the wax cylinder player's failure to catch on with companies in search of a suitable dictation machine. "They decided to record music, put these machines in salons, rent the headphones—which essentially look like a stethoscope—for a nickel, and listen to the latest tunes," she says. "Then it became a consumer item, although a very expensive one, and evolved slowly into a personal entertainment commodity."

The building also houses a recording studio (complete with serious soundproofing and a floating floor) and two control rooms, which allow music-industry students to work with top-quality digital recording and playback equipment. Music students aren't the only ones who benefit from the resources. College of Engineering and Computer Science students and faculty are developing a laser playback system for cylinder recordings. Professor William Penn says the ongoing project involves several disciplines, including physics, acoustics, optics, and electronics. "This year the problem we're trying to solve is how to keep the laser beam in the middle of the groove to track it properly," he says. Repeated use with standard equipment eventually wears down the cylinders' vertical grooves. The frictionless method, however, will ultimately aid in the cylinders' preservation. "This mechanism will provide non-destructible play," says Penn, whose project members aim to develop a practical product that will be of use to Belfer.

"This place," Stinson says, "is unique for SU to have."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BELFER AUDIO LABORATORY AND ARCHIVE

Among the items archived at the Belfer Audio Laboratory is this 1910 Edison Triumph one-cylinder phonograph.

of the history of the written word and the book as an art form. "The students can touch a page from the Gutenberg Bible—and one day tell their grandchildren they touched the first book ever printed with movable type," Keenan says. "It gives a certain reality to history that you can't get from a textbook or lecture. I feel strongly about the book as a major player in history. It's a piece of technology that reflects how history and the human experience began to be lived."

Keenan turns the clock back nearly 5,000 years to the model of a basalt stone tablet with pictographs, then moves ahead to the Mesopotamian cuneiform tablet of 1700 B.C. Soon he's discussing the origins of paper: The fibers of papyrus were laid out, beaten flat, and then

put together in scrolls. Next comes parchment and vellum. Keenan then unveils several illuminated manuscripts, including one with "medieval doodles" and the *Hours of the Virgin* from the early 15th century, heavily adorned with gold and lapis lazuli. "The illustrations are used to create a narrative. Medieval artists loved to not only embellish and decorate, but to narrate," Keenan says. "These illuminated manuscripts represent the height of the book when written by hand."

Time spins forward through block printing, into movable type and mass production. On it meanders through revolutionary thought—*Dialogo di Galileo Galilei Linceo* (1632), which was ordered burned by papal decree in 1633, and Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species* (1859). Keenan also introduces the class to one of the country's largest collections of fore-edge painting. He spreads the edge of the pages opposite the binding of Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* (1850) and, voilà, a scene of early 19th-century Dublin appears. Reverse the spread of this double fore-edge and a second painting appears.

And don't forget that first edition of William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* (1789)—complete with the father of the Romantic movement's own engravings, printing, and hand-paintings—because fewer than two dozen exist in the world. "He was able to create something that was absolutely bewildering to people at the time," Keenan says, "but revolutionary."

"This is brilliant; terrific information," says Professor Mary Stewart, whose two-dimensional design class undoubtedly picked up a few tips for its own book designs.

"This will set us up for everything we're doing the rest of the semester in various forms."

On another day, a section of a first-year colonial history class gathers in the Safire Room. Julien Vernet, a history doctoral student who works with Special Collections, has a wealth of items spread on the table: a Civil War soldier's letter to his parents, a Virginia electoral ballot for Jefferson Davis, a collec-

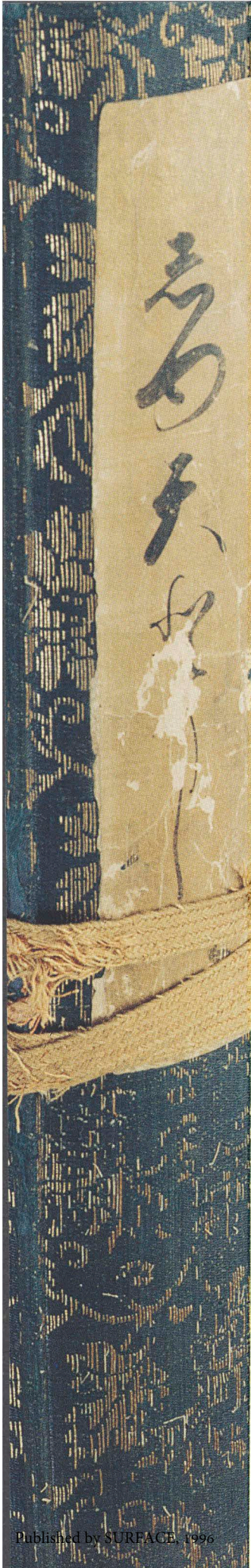


An array of equipment, images, sound recordings, and other materials of famed photographer Margaret Bourke-White are held in SU's Special Collections.

At right: Detail from the cover of *Stories from the Bible* by Johann Georgen, 17th century.



At right, the cover of William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* (1789), and *Hours of the Virgin*, a 15th-century illuminated manuscript. At left, one of three volumes of *Shutendooji Emaki*, a handwritten and illuminated manuscript (circa 1665). Each scroll of the popular illustrated novel is 18 inches tall and 75 feet long with 25 paintings.



tion of campaign buttons, and a Mohawk Bible among them. The students' interest is apparent—one appears mesmerized by the letter of Lt. Col. John Bogert. "I have just come from the picket line and brought in two Charleston papers which I succeeded in getting from Johnny Reb, and Colonel Gurney told me I might have one of them myself if I wanted it and I thought perhaps you might like to see a paper fresh from the Confederacy so I have sent it to you. There is not much news in it, but it is something of a curiosity," writes Bogert from Coles Island, South Carolina, on December 8, 1863. In a P.S., he adds: "I will send also with this a paper heart in an envelope which one of the Rebs gave me. He said it came from his girl. He wanted to give me something and he gave me that to remember him by."

"When you can see the actual writing of someone from that time period, it's fascinating, because you're getting a picture from someone who was there. It's not something you're reading out of a textbook," Vernet says. "This really gets the students thinking about the material as they work. Hopefully, they'll learn to use Special Collections as they go along."

First-year student Casey Cressman is particularly impressed with the Mohawk Bible, a rare example with direct translation between English and Mohawk, side by side. "I think I even figured out a couple of words looking at it," she says. "I could live off this stuff."

That, of course, is the point—to introduce students to the materials and let them know they're accessible. "We want to expose students early in their careers," Weimer says, "put this place on their road map, so if they're later asked to do some original research, maybe we can help them out."

Tracking Tales of Crane

When Thomas A. Gullason, a retired English professor from the University of Rhode Island, does research in one of his scholarly specialties—Stephen Crane—he often turns to SU's Special Collections. For decades, Gullason has tracked the mysteries that still swirl around Crane, including the whereabouts of a controversial lost manuscript called *The Flowers of Asphalt*.

The short-story specialist and author of five books, including the *Norton Critical Edition of Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, began his relationship with Special Collections back in the early fifties. As a doctoral candidate at the University of Wisconsin, he traveled to Syracuse to do research on Crane. Then-curator Lester Wells arranged for Gullason to interview two of Crane's old companions—Mansfield French, who played on the SU baseball team with Crane, and artist Corwin Knapp Linson.

"It was a great thrill,"

Gullason says. "One thing I learned from French was what Crane did besides play sports, because he loved to play baseball, as you know. French told me Crane first turned to the sports page,



then turned to foreign affairs; he was up on all the international conflicts of the day.”

Gullason also cites the Melvin Schoberlin Collection of letters and documents to support the claims of several of Crane’s classmates, who reported that Crane began writing *Maggie* while in Syracuse. “That’s an important find because critics for years were convinced that Crane wrote *Maggie* when he was in New York trying to become a journalist,” Gullason says.

Weimer was instrumental in helping the University obtain the Schoberlin Collection. After all, it was Weimer and a colleague who, through their own gumshoeing, located Schoberlin’s widow and the papers in Hawaii. “Sure enough, in her basement she had what we’d only seen references to—this collection of unpublished letters of Stephen Crane and a lot of letters of Cora Crane, his wife,” Weimer says. “It was probably the largest collection in private hands that existed at that time.”



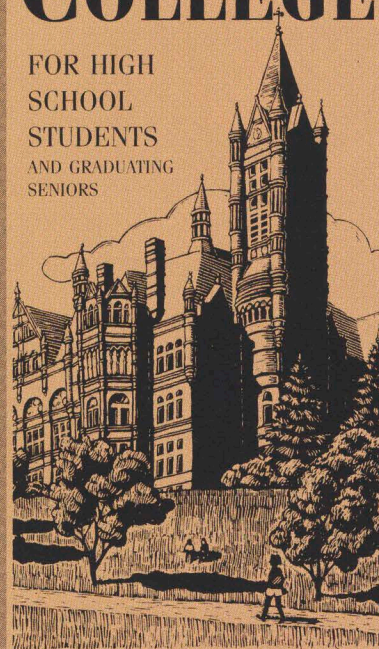
During his student days at SU, author Stephen Crane (front row, center) was a member of the University’s baseball team. The Crane Collection also includes a baseball (left) donated by Crane’s teammate Mansfield French. The ball was used in a game against Hobart College, Geneva, New York, in which Crane played. SU lost, 6-5.

As Weimer introduces the visitors to some of the Crane holdings, he shares another Crane story. Looking east out of the reading room, he points toward the College of Nursing, perched on an Ostrom Avenue hill, and mentions a longtime rumor: Crane reportedly stuffed some unacceptable early draft pages of *Maggie* in the attic walls up there. “It’s like panning for gold,” Gullason says. “You pan and pan and you might wind up with very little, nothing, or a huge find. But you have to go through the ritual.”

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