



A Newsletter for Employees of the University of Louisville Libraries
Vol. 27, No. 4 ♣ Summer, 2011

The Owl

"The Owl of Minerva takes flight only as the dusk begins to fall." —Hegel

SUMMER READERS' PICKS 2011

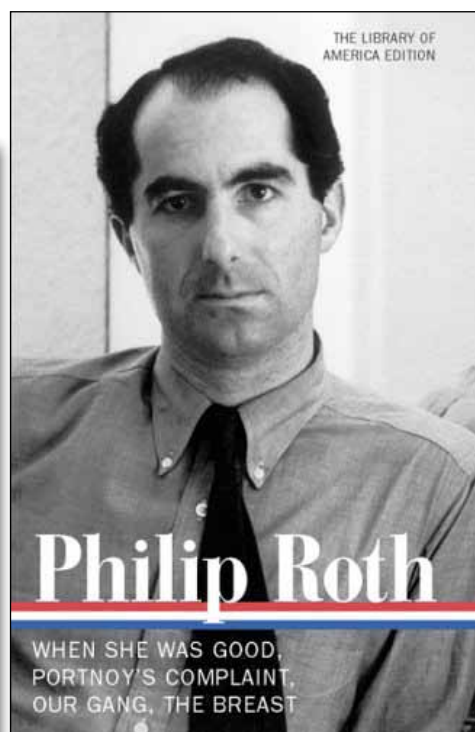
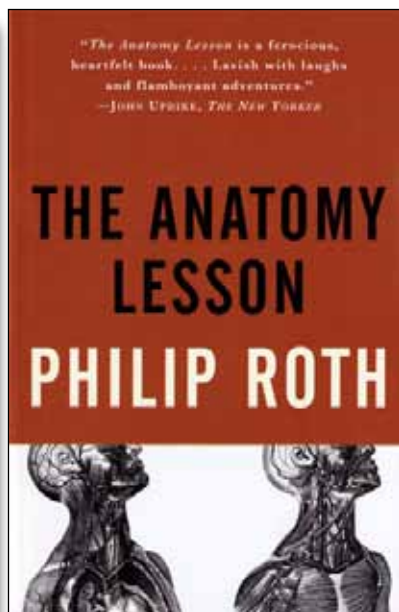
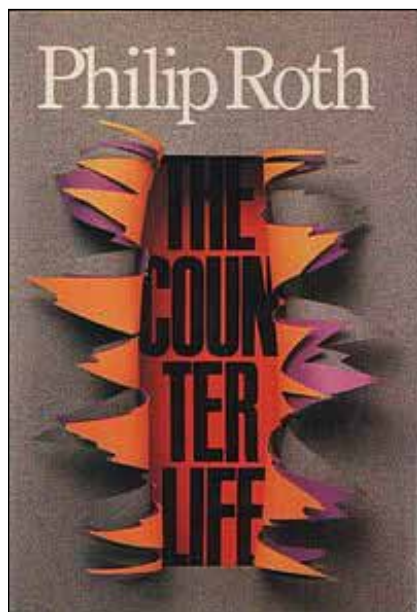


Written and compiled by Christopher Poché, Ekstrom Library

The spring semester was the semester that wouldn't quit. Along with my usual duties, there was always Something Big to do—a special project or an unexpected demand, each with its own looming deadline. This hectic work life wreaked havoc on my reading life. I was too scatterbrained to really settle on a good book or just too tired to want to read one. I started but did not finish several books and began to despair of ever reading a good book again. I finally got back in the saddle, as it were, by going back to an old favorite: Philip Roth.

I still remember vividly my first introduction to Roth. It was the end of my junior year of college, and a friend and I were taking stock of another year of hard work. We talked about our favorite and least favorite classes and professors and about authors and books we liked and didn't like. My friend told me about a book she had read in a literature course: Roth's 1986 novel *The Counterlife* (Ekstrom PS3568.O855 C6 1986). She handed me her copy and said, "Here, I hated it, but it seems like the kind of thing you would like." Sometimes I look back on this and feel a little insulted. There is an implicit judgment on the quality of my taste in literature, a judgment that is seemingly reinforced by all the snarky comments she wrote in the margins of her copy. But mostly I am grateful because Roth has become one of my favorite authors.

I remember very few specifics about this novel now. But I do remember how affected I was by the notion of a "counterlife." In the novel, the main character, Nathan Zuckerman (a writer and stand-in for Roth himself)



imagines different counterlives for himself and for his brother, Henry. These counterlives are created on the basis of specific choices that the characters make. For example, Henry, after being diagnosed with heart disease, must choose between a high-risk surgery and a drug therapy that will have impotence as a side effect. In one chapter, he chooses the surgery and dies; in the next, he chooses the drug therapy and lives. Each of the two chapters is written as if the other did not exist. The rest of the book is like this so that the reader cannot maintain a stable sense of what is “real” within this fictive universe. The reader must constantly reorient oneself to the characters and the plot and to rethink what Roth is up to. Finally, it becomes clear that Roth is just creating fictions and can do whatever he likes with them. But what makes this really fascinating is how the arbitrariness of these fictions serves to show how crucial our choices are in the creation of our personal identities.


As a young man with the typically impressionable and malleable sense of identity befitting an undergraduate, I found the starkness of these counterlives, and the radical freedom they implied, fascinating and henceforward thought of all of my major decisions in these terms. When confronted with a choice, I would take stock of the option that seemed most natural and most typically “me” and then imagine a totally different one. Most humorously, I remember planning my course selections (I was a history major with growing interests in literature and philosophy) for the following semester and imagining a counterlife in which I took nothing but science courses. I didn’t take the science courses, but the thought was exciting, and it reinforced the purpose of the choices I did make. And it was fun to see the horrified responses of my humanities friends when I suggested the possibility of my counterlife as a scientist.

The Counterlife is the fifth book to feature Nathan Zuckerman. I have recently embarked on reading the trilogy that introduces Zuckerman. Personal identity is a theme throughout the trilogy that Roth rehearses in various ways, one of the most obvious being the many parallels that Roth draws between himself and Zuckerman. In the first novel, *The Ghost Writer* (Ekstrom PS3568.O855 G48 1979), Zuckerman is a young writer who has published a few short stories but has not really made his mark yet. He has, however, written one story that embarrasses his family by being loosely based on an episode in their lives, and that angers the Jewish community at large by portraying Jews in a negative fashion. Roth experienced similar troubles in his early career with the publication of his short story “Conversion of the Jews,” collected in *Goodbye, Columbus*. Both Zuckerman and Roth find that their creative identities as writers are ultimately incompatible with their familial and cultural identities.

In the second novel of the trilogy, *Zuckerman Unbound* (Ekstrom PS3568.O855 Z453 1981), Zuckerman is adjusting to the success and notoriety he has earned with his sexually frank novel *Carnovsky*, which is clearly an analogue for Roth’s controversial 1969 novel *Portnoy’s Complaint*, which itself has been viewed as a thinly veiled autobiographical novel. Zuckerman has to defend himself against his dismayed family and an angered public by arguing for the difference between fact and fiction and author and character, distinctions that Roth continually and intentionally blurs.

I have just started the third novel, *The Anatomy Lesson* (Ekstrom PS3568.O855 .A8 1983), in which Zuckerman’s sense of self has become decidedly tenuous as the result of a mysterious illness that has rendered him incapable of writing. Contrary to my usual impatience with the idea of rereading books, I am looking forward to getting through the trilogy and its short epilogue, *The Prague Orgy*, in order to read *The Counterlife* again. I have lived the majority of my adult life since reading it the first time, all the while reading a lot of Roth novels. It will be a very different Christopher Poché who will read it the second time around. I wonder what he will think.

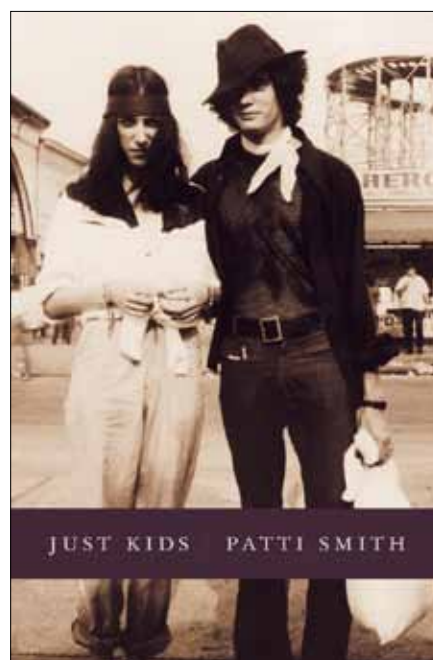
This is the first readers’ picks column since Ekstrom Library has started offering Kindles through the Media Resources department. I have noted whenever our readers’ selections are available on Kindles. One of my counterlives is as a

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not-reluctant user of new technologies, and I read my first book on a Kindle earlier this year—Patti Smith’s *Just Kids*. I will let Trish tell you about that book and let Clinton tell you about the Kindle lending program (see Media Resources, page 15). I’ll just say that I enjoyed the Kindle reading experience. The Kindle is light and easy to use. As I usually have two cats sleeping on me when I read, this is a good thing. The display screen is pleasing to the eye and features black print on a light grey background. The print and its contrast with the background is crisp and clear without being stark, quite unlike traditional black print on a white paper background, which apparently is the worst design for human eyes. I read that somewhere in a journal of art and design, presented, of course, with black print on a white background.

Trish Blair, Ekstrom Library

I am not a big reader. I know I work at a library, blah blah blah . . . I hear it all the time. Unfortunately, my attention span is about the size of a gnat. But sometimes there is something that truly catches my attention, and then I can’t let it go. And when I heard about this book on NPR I had to read it: Patti Smith’s *Just Kids* (Ekstrom Kindles and Browsing ML420 .S672 S65 2010). In her touching and lovely memoir, she chronicles her relationship with artist Robert Mapplethorpe, as friends, each other’s muses, and soul mates. The growth and constant evolution of their relationship is as poignant and loving as any bond you will find. It embodies what it is like to find that one person who pushes you, and you they, to become what you *can* be rather than what is expected. The book begins telling Patti’s story until she meets the mysterious and handsome Robert. At that point the story intertwines and becomes their story and it was their story until his death in 1989. The book describes the points of their lives that creation and life mingle to become art. I grew up right outside Cincinnati and my best friend’s mother worked at a bank downtown in the same building as the Contemporary Art Museum. We would visit her, have lunch and see the various exhibits. In the spring of 1990 we were a part of what now is an infamous event in Cincinnati history, Robert Mapplethorpe’s *The Perfect Moment* exhibit. The effects of the show became the nation’s first criminal trial of an art museum over content of an exhibition. The show was moving and lovely, and yes there were a few seconds of “ewww,” but through those moments you still saw the beauty and genius that was Robert Mapplethorpe’s work. I went to the show twice, the second time with the express need to protest the censorship of the show. Reading about the inspiration and creation of that group of works made me remember how the show forced me think about what type of person I wanted to be as a nineteen-year old student at a Catholic college. Smith’s writing style is beautiful, raw, and poetic. Learning the back story of their lifelong love made the exhibit come rushing back to the forefront of my mind and caused me to consider how I still think about those pieces and the power that they still have over me.

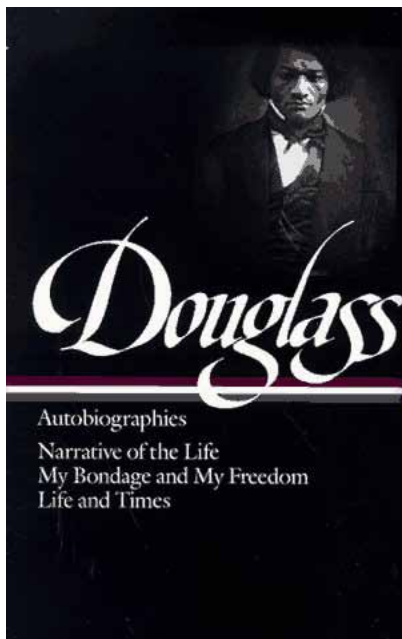


Scott Campbell, Law Library

When deciding what book to read next, I often go for what looks like an easy read, usually a mystery or a sci-fi pot-boiler. But as a former English major, my conscience often pricks me over the gaps in my education. When friends are making jokes about *The Great Gatsby* video game, I remain silent for fear that they will discover my shameful secret: I have never read the book. There are a number of classics that I have always meant to get around to (or worse, started but never finished). But they are, well, old, and there is always some new bestseller that looks easier to read and more enjoyable.

To remedy this situation, I made a New Year’s resolution: at least every other book I read this year had to be a “classic.” I did this not only to catch up on books I have not read, but also to find out if there were any books that, despite being a classic, were still enjoyable reads. In college, reading a lot of these books seemed more like work than a pastime. I wanted to read books that were still as enjoyable to read now as they were when they first came out.

I am happy to say that I found three books that unqualifiedly met that criterion. Despite an occasional lapse into overly florid language, the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (collected in the Library of America volume, *Autobiographies*—Ekstrom African American Collection and Stacks E449.D749 1994b) is as gripping today as it



probably was when it first came out. Douglass is a figure I have always taken for granted, but reading his autobiography reminded me what a towering figure he was. He does a great job describing the horrors of slavery, but his story of teaching himself to read, escaping from slavery, and gathering the courage to become an abolitionist speaker is truly inspiring. Martin Luther King and Malcolm X are rightly remembered for the way they changed American society, but I think Douglass was every bit their equal and should be better remembered than he is.

I bought a copy of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (Ekstrom PS1317.A1 1996) by Mark Twain when I was in college, but after I got it home I decided it looked rather hokey and eventually gave it away. Maybe it is just as well—I may not have appreciated it as much then as I do now. The plot is very similar to Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper*: a baby that is 1/32 black is switched with a white baby shortly after birth in slavery-era Missouri. Like *Huckleberry Finn*, it is a scathing look at how society's view towards race and class molds personality. (And like *Huckleberry Finn*, it uses the N-word pretty liberally, which may turn off some readers.) Twain's caustic wit is in full force, and coupled with an intriguing plot, it makes for a great read. I cannot understand why this book is not better known.

The other great read was Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (Ekstrom Kindles and Stacks PR5486.A1 1956). Since the book is so well-known, there is probably not too much I can say about it that would be new to anyone. I do have to say that I am not sure if it works as a children's book anymore. My wife tried reading it to my son a few years ago, and he was bored stiff by it. But I think it still holds up as a great adventure book for adults. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Stevenson's *Kidnapped* (Ekstrom Stacks PR5486.K5 1989). It starts out exciting enough as the hero is shanghaied and gets involved with a mutiny. But once he gets stranded in the wilds of Scotland, it becomes a boring 200-page chase scene that can only be of interest to fans of Scottish history.

Three of the books I read utterly failed as entertainment and struck me as good examples of why so many people avoid classics. For the life of me, I cannot understand why *Gulliver's Travels* (Ekstrom Kindles and Stacks PR3724.G7 1996) is still read. It is truly one of the most tedious books I have read in a long time. The image of a giant Gulliver among the tiny Lilliputians is justly famous, but the incidents of that voyage and a couple of the others are all part of a satirical attack on various politicians and churchmen of Swift's time, most of whom are totally forgotten today. The last quarter of the book is an exception to this: in it Gulliver travels to the land of the Houyhnhnms, a horse-like creature whose perfection contrasts with the human-like Yahoos. In this section Swift satirized humanity and society as a whole. I actually found this part to be very witty and entertaining, but after suffering through the previous 180 pages, it was too little too late.

I probably should not say anything bad about Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (Ekstrom PS1071.L5 2004b) since I only read the first fifteen pages. But those fifteen pages were so Victorian, and the four lead characters so wholesome, that the idea of reading 400 pages more was just too daunting. (I have already been severely chastised by Robin Harris and one of our student workers for not finishing the book, so clearly there are people out there who like the book. But I do not think I will ever be one of them.)

I feel a little bad bashing *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*, by Alice Hegan Rice (Ekstrom PS3535.I2145 M7 1928), since it probably is not an actual classic. It is just an old book. It was written in 1902 by a Louisville society woman and it ended up becoming a national bestseller. You can still see references to it here and there throughout town. Coming to it over a hundred years later, it is hard to see what the fuss was about. The plot is wafer-thin, the characters worse than one-dimensional, and the humor so dated that it is practically non-existent. On the other hand, it is really short. I read it in less than an hour-and-a-half, so there is that.

The other three books I have read so far are all fairly well-known, so I probably do not need to say much about them. I liked them all pretty well, but not so much that I would strongly recommend them. I have a goal of reading all of



Left: W.C. Fields and ZaSu Pitts in the 1934 film of *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*. Other film versions were made in 1914, 1919, and 1942, attesting to the popularity of the story. Special Collections has an archive of books and papers by Alice Hegan Rice, many of which are now on exhibit in the display cases outside Rare Books. Hagen is also the subject of a recent biography by Mary Boewe, *Beyond the Cabbage Patch*, published by Louisville's Butler Books.

I Wish I'd Been There: Twenty Historians Bring to Life the Dramatic Events That Changed America, edited by Byron Hollinshead (Ekstrom E179 .I15 2006).

An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942-1943 (Ekstrom D766.82.A82 2002) and *The Day of Battle: The War in Sicily and Italy, 1943-1944* (Ekstrom D763.I8 A85 2007), by Rick Atkinson.

I thought this was going to be another fiction/poetry year, but I have developed an interest in history. The first two titles listed are on my reading shelf right now. Ellis won a Pulitzer for *Founding Brothers*. The second two are part of a trilogy not yet finished. Atkinson won a Pulitzer for *An Army at Dawn*. All hail to Half-Priced Books for making this list possible!

Gail Gilbert, Art Library

Cutting for Stone, by Abraham Verghese (Ekstrom Kindles and Browsing PS3622.E744 C87 2009). This is the best book I've read in a long time and I plan to read it again, something I don't often do. Here's a brief synopsis from *Publishers Weekly* via Amazon: "...a magnificent, sweeping novel that moves from India to Ethiopia to an inner-city hospital in New York City over decades and generations. Sister Mary Joseph Praise, a devout young nun, leaves the

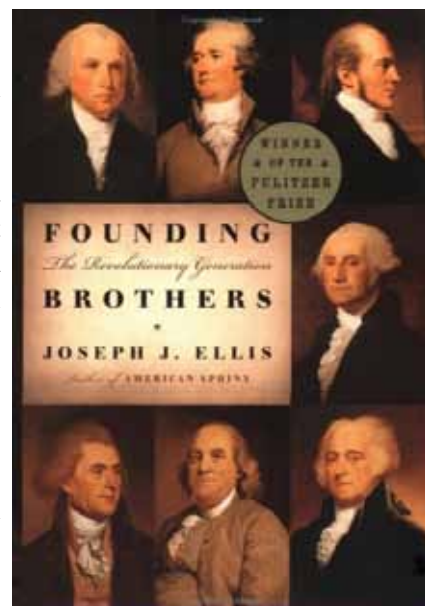
Dickens' novels. I have read most of them already, so now I am scraping the bottom of the barrel. *Dombey and Son* (Ekstrom PR4559.A1 2001) is not one of Dickens' best books, but I still enjoyed it a lot. But if I had to recommend a Dickens novel, I would have to go with *Bleak House* (Ekstrom PR4556.A1 1996b) or *Hard Times* (Ekstrom PR4561.A1 1966) first. I found the character of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (Ekstrom PR4167.J3 2003b) a little too meek for my taste and I could not understand what she saw in Rochester, but Brontë's writing was vivid enough to keep me reading, even if

I did not like what was happening. And I enjoyed *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin (Ekstrom PS1294. C63 A6 2000) very much, despite its also having a lead character I did not particularly care for. There was also the added bonus of watching *Treme* about a month later, which had an episode with lots of references to the novel. It was kind of cool knowing what they were talking about. (If you have not seen *Treme* yet, you really should. I hear it is part of the SGA video collection.)

I have taken to this project a little more than I expected to. I have liked most of the books I have read--so much so that the "every other book" part has pretty much dropped off. I spent the first half of the year reading pre-20th century books. I am going to devote the rest of the year to 20th century classics, which I am expecting to enjoy even more. I am particularly looking forward to the three books that gave me this idea: *The Great Gatsby*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, and *On the Road*. Here's hoping they live up to their hype.

Mark Dickson, Music Library

Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation, by Joseph J. Ellis (Ekstrom E302.5.E45 2000).

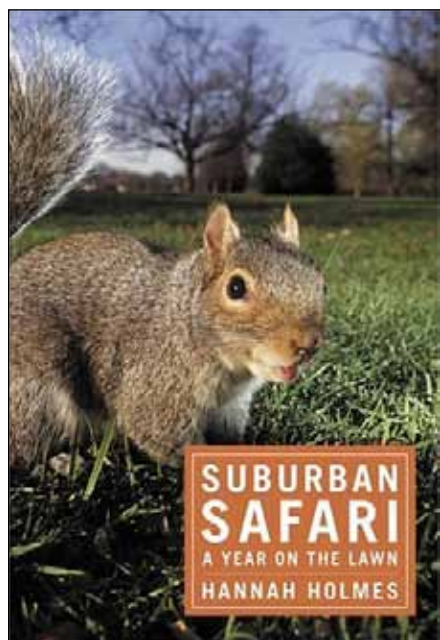


south Indian state of Kerala in 1947 for a missionary post in Yemen. During the arduous sea voyage, she saves the life of an English doctor bound for Ethiopia, Thomas Stone, who becomes a key player in her destiny when they meet up again at Missing Hospital in Addis Ababa. Seven years later, Sister Praise dies birthing twin boys: Shiva and Marion, the latter narrating his own and his brothers long, dramatic, biblical story set against the backdrop of political turmoil in Ethiopia, the life of the hospital compound in which they grow up and the love story of their adopted parents, both doctors at Missing. The boys become doctors as well and Verghese's weaving of the practice of medicine into the narrative is fascinating even as the story bobs and weaves with the power and coincidences of the best 19th-century novel."

Anna Marie Johnson, Ekstrom Library

Suburban Safari: A Year on the Lawn, by Hannah Holmes (Ekstrom QL181. H65 2005).

Thanks to this book, I now have a much greater appreciation for my own



backyard. Holmes takes a very in-depth look at her own Maine yard, drawing on experts and a wide variety of scholarly literature that she translates

effectively into layman's terms, covering botany, biology, zoology, geology, history, and more. She has inspired me to feed the wild birds in my own yard and to try and plant native vegetation when I can, although I can't go as far as her slightly too intense relationship with a chipmunk.

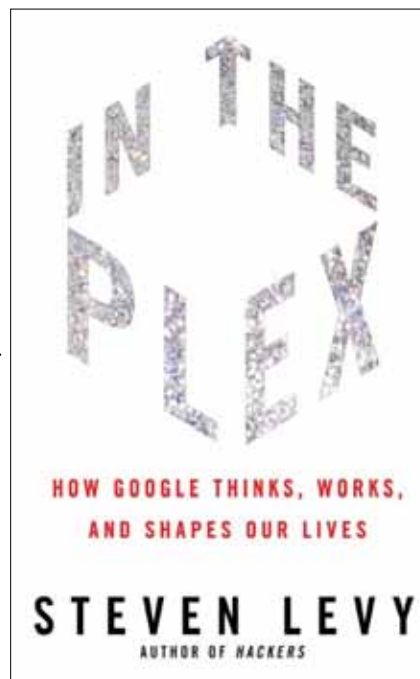
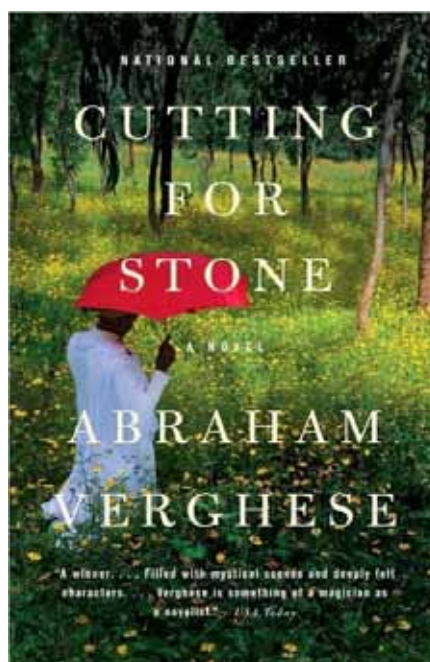
In the Plex: How Google Thinks, Works, and Shapes Our Lives, by Steven Levy, (Ekstrom Browsing HD9696.8.U64 G6657 2011). Levy came to Louisville back in May, but I missed his talk and so decided to read his book. Anyone who knows my picks knows that I read widely, but company history??? That is so seriously not me! And yet, I was fascinated by this book. It traces the history of Google from an apartment at Stanford to the global, multi-billion dollar company with something like 24,000 employees that it is today. By now, relatively few people think Google is still "only" a search company, but the ambitious reach that

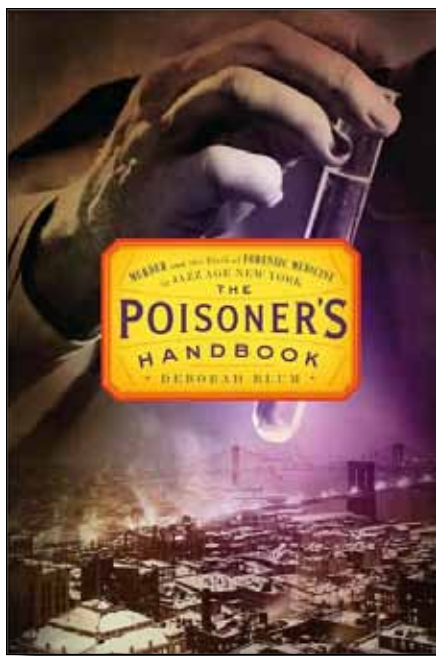
it has is probably not fully grasped by most. Trying to wrap my brain around the scale and scope of their endeavors was enlightening, and I agree with the person Levy quotes at the end of the book saying that Google is essentially an artificial intelligence company.

For those who enjoy children's books, I'd also recommend the series of books (at least six by my count) that began with *How to Train Your Dragon*, by Cressida Cowell. Although the movie was quite good, in my opinion, the books are, of course, much, much better. In the vein of all really good children's literature, the mean kids are, well, meaner, and the books are much more clever than the movie ever could be. The adventures of Hiccup, his stalwart companion Fishlegs, and enemies Snotface Snotlout and Alvin the Treacherous are now common topics of conversation in my house.

Kathie Johnson, University Archives

The Poisoner's Handbook: Murder and the Birth of Forensic Medicine in Jazz Age New York, by Deborah Blum (Ekstrom Browsing HV6555.U62





N373 2010), is not what you might expect when you see the short title. The subtitle provides a much clearer idea of what the book is actually about. The author, a Pulitzer Prize-winning science writer, examines the beginnings of forensic medicine in New York City and the physicians and scientists who were pioneers in the field but until now have remained mostly unknown.

Up until the 20th century, poisoning was considered the easiest way to commit a murder without being caught. There were few tools available to detect toxic materials in a corpse. At this time, New York City had a coroner's office, but it was filled by the elective process, and those elected were usually party hacks who knew little about truly examining a body for evidence. That changed with the appointment of pathologist Charles Norris, M.D., as chief medical examiner in 1918. Norris believed that the city needed to hire doctors and scientists to assist in criminal investigations. Even though it paid less than research or private and hospital practice, and a less-than-enthusiastic mayor immediately cut the office's budget, Norris persevered, using his own money to buy needed equipment and donating the use of his personal automobile to his work. Norris recruited forensic chemist, Alexander Gettler, to head up the new toxicology laboratory, and he too carried an extremely heavy workload and paid a much-needed lab

assistant out of his own pocket. Almost single-handedly these two men created the field of forensic science as it is known today.

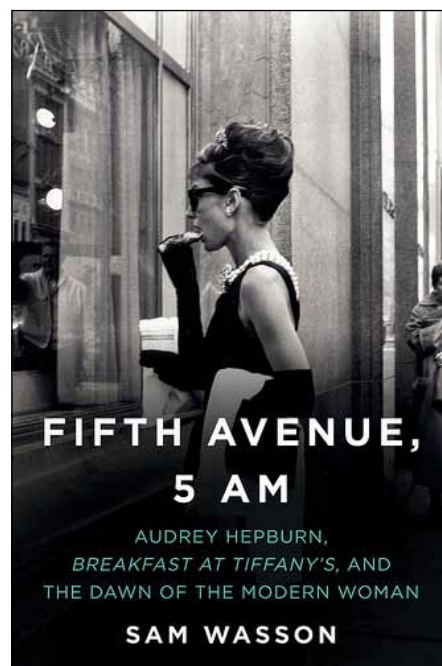
Blum arranged the book chapters by the type of poison, with each concentrating on particular substance, beginning with chloroform and ending with thallium, usually illustrated by a court case in which Norris, Gettler, or both provided evidence. Sometimes they testified for the prosecution, sometimes for the defense, their main interest being the truth, a real scientific truth. The cases in which the court did not accept their testimony as reliable haunted them for the rest of their lives. Blum writes in a readable style, meant for the lay person, not the scientific academician, but even so, she includes a lot of scientific information, including chemical compounds and symptoms experienced by the victims of these substances. Woven within the narrative is a brief history of New York City, especially in regards to Prohibition.

Those who love murder mysteries will get a kick out of this nonfictional account of the beginnings of forensic science less than 100 years ago. This is an interesting read and is as much fun as it is educational—a perfect combination!

Fifth Avenue, 5 AM: Audrey Hepburn, Breakfast at Tiffany's, and the Dawn of the Modern Woman, by Sam Wasson (Ekstrom Browsing PN1997.B7228 W37 2010). This is a wonderful read for anyone who is interested in New York City, Audrey Hepburn, George Peppard, Truman Capote, Blake Edwards, Henry Mancini, Johnny Mercer, or a behind-the-scenes look at the movie business. The author skillfully interweaves the history of the making of the movie *Breakfast at Tiffany's* with the cultural impact it had upon Americans and biographical information about many of the people involved. Thus it is much more than a book about a movie or the people in it. It was a quick and easy read, sometimes sad, sometimes funny, but very satisfying to the end.

Ben King, Ekstrom Library

I enjoyed *Chrysler's Turbine Car: The Rise and Fall of Detroit's Coolest Creation*, by Steve Kehton (Ekstrom Browsing TL215.C55 L47 2010). These cars were called Ghias. The book describes the engine as sounding like a jet idling and making a "whooshing" noise upon acceleration. Chrysler wanted real-world opinions of what people thought of the cars, so the company gave





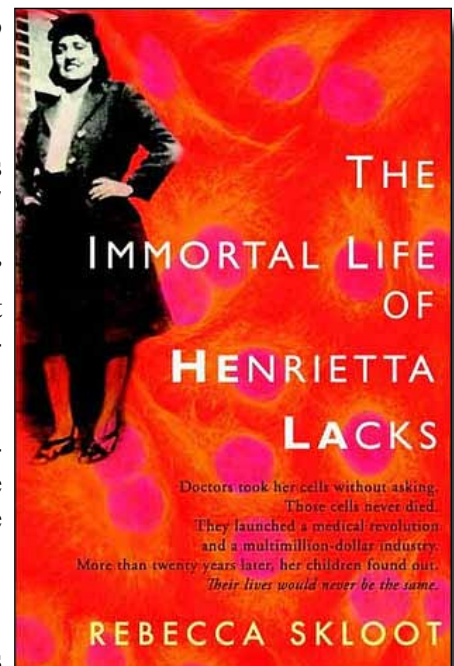
50 of them to private citizens to keep for three months. Then the car would be returned to Chrysler to be checked out and loaned to someone else for three months. Chrysler said most of these cars were returned to them in really clean condition, attributing this to people feeling special for being selected to drive one. The only expense the drivers were out was for the fuel. These cars would run on gasoline, kerosene, peanut oil, and supposedly even perfume. According to the book, they would run on anything that would burn and create heat. Most of the people who drove the cars liked them and were sorry to give them up after three months. One drawback was rather sluggish acceleration from a dead stop, although once in motion they would accelerate very quickly. One driver told of being challenged by a car of young hoodlums to a race. They got on the highway and, at about 40 miles an hour, the hoodlum signaled that the race was on. The turbine-powered car easily out-accelerated the piston engine car. Another time one of the drivers was in a gas station and pulled over to the pump to put kerosene in the car. The attendants in the station came running out and asked him what he was doing and said that would not work. The driver had to explain that it was a turbine engine and would run on kerosene. People complimented the car's smooth ride. According to the book, the ride was more like gliding along. The cars started the same in all kinds of weather. Starts were not affected by cold. Another unique thing was that these cars delivered instant heat in cold weather. However, they had no air conditioning. Rolling down the windows *was* the air conditioning. Interestingly, Chrysler did not make much out of the fact that these cars would run on alternate fuels. Gasoline was so inexpensive in 1964 that Chrysler did not advertise heavily about alternate fuels. They made the engine through to the "seventh generation" and each turbine was supposed to be improved over the last one. Chrysler eventually destroyed all but nine of the cars. The book says grown men at Chrysler cried the day they took the cars to the junk yard to be destroyed. Two surviving Ghias are in the hands of private citizens, one being Jay Leno, who wrote the introduction to the book.

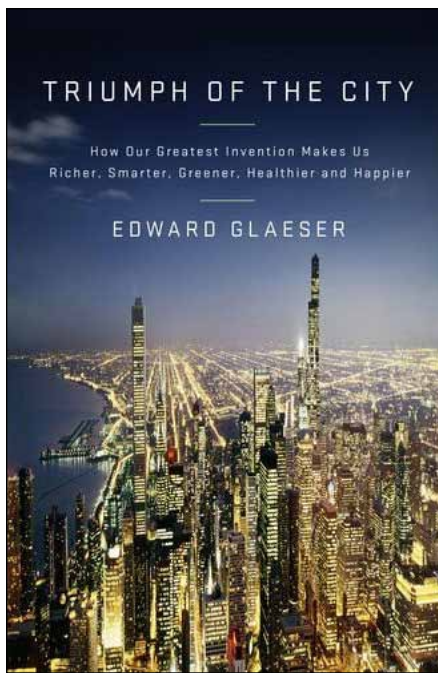
Emily Symonds, Ekstrom Library

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, by Rebecca Skloot (Ekstrom Kindles and Browsing RC265.6.L24 S55 2010 and Kornhauser Library W20.55.E7 S55 2010). A fascinating mix of science, ethics, family history, and race. Before her death from cancer in 1951, Henrietta Lacks' cells were "donated" to science and created an immortal cell line for scientific research. Skloot combines medical history with the personal history of the Lacks family, especially Henrietta's children.

Before You Suffocate Your Own Fool Self, by Danielle Evans (Ekstrom Browsing PS3605.V3648 B44 2010). Debut collection of short stories about race and family in the U.S. told from the perspective of African-American teenage girls and young women.

The Black Minutes, by Martin Solares (Ekstrom Browsing PQ7298.429.O43 M5613 2010). Part mystery, part detective novel, *The Black Minutes* takes



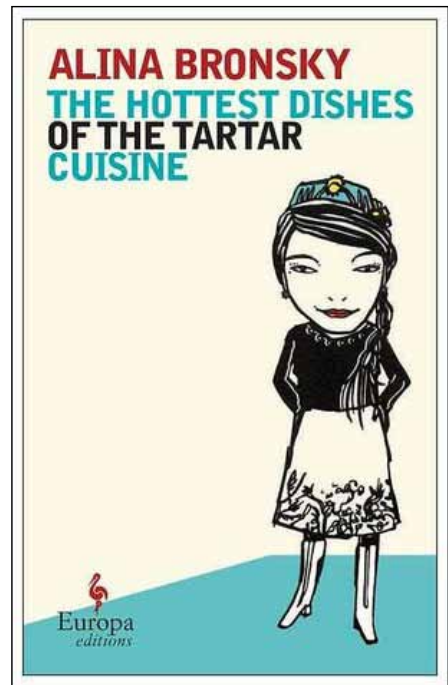


place in Mexico and is told from the point-of-view of multiple characters in the 1970s and present day following the murder of a young journalist.

Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier, by Edward Glaeser (Ekstrom HT361.G53 2011). As a downtown dweller, I'm looking forward to reading this book about the economic and environmental benefits of city living.

The Hottest Dishes of the Tartar Cuisine, by Alina Bronsky (Ekstrom Browsing PT2702.R658 S3313 2011). Translated from German by Tim Mohr, this is a dark comedy told from the point-of-view of a woman raising her adult daughter and granddaughter in communist Russia. It's published by

Europa Editions which also brought out Muriel Barbery's successful *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* a few years ago.



From the Dean of Libraries . . .

By Bob Fox, Dean, University of Louisville Libraries

Summer greetings! While many folks look at summer as a time to wind down, the activity level often picks up in some areas. Closing out budgets, conferences, and meetings are keeping us busy in the administrative offices, but a key focus lately has been the start of a new strategic planning process. If you've attended one of the recent Information Exchanges, you've heard about this, but I want to give some background information here and explain the process. The existing strategic plan for the University Libraries only extends through 2012. It does not match the time frame of the University's 2020 plan and it does not provide a scorecard, which is a method to express who is responsible for meeting a goal and how to know if you have met a goal. The ACC recently worked with a facilitator to develop some broad themes that will help the process get started. These themes are:

- Engage and learn more about our users, our community and their evolving needs.
- Provide thoughtfully chosen and curated resources.
- Create inviting, flexible and engaging physical spaces.
- Expand employee skills, competencies and approaches.
- Market, brand and promote library resources and expertise.
- Become an entrepreneurial organization.

Over the summer, you will have an opportunity to meet with facilitators to discuss how you and your area can help the libraries in developing and meeting strategic plan goals and objectives. To insure that everyone has an opportunity to participate, there will be two open forums towards the end of summer as well as an online web form that allows anonymous entries. Information from these sessions will be used to draft the specific goals and objectives of the new strategic plan. We hope to share this draft with various user groups for their input as well and have a plan in place during Fall semester. This plan will then be used to strategically allocate financial and personnel resources. I hope everyone will participate in this important process.

Library and Department News

Art Library

Artists books on display in Belknap Gallery, Schneider Hall

Artists books from the Art Library's collections are on exhibit in the main gallery in Schneider Hall. Artists books are works of art in book form whose structure, materials and unity of elements contribute to the works' overall meaning. You'll want to stop by to see these stunning creations.

Some of the books look traditional. Others push the envelope with structures ranging from accordion, tunnel and flag books to ones that can't be opened and others that can be accessed in multiple ways. The materials used range from handmade paper, copper and goatskin to Tyvek, plexiglass and bullet casings.



Left: Mary Jane Henley, *Words of Wonder, Faces of Wonder*.

Right: Deborah Bryan, *I Just Couldn't Get Into It*.

The exhibit runs from June 27th through August 7, 2011. There are also exhibits in the other two Schneider Hall galleries, Joe McGee's "Image of Time: The Sphinx" and Sara Northerner's "Phenomenological Essence of Image." The reception for all three exhibits will be on July 14th from 4:30 to 6:30.

Ekstrom Library

Dean's Office

Personnel News

Rae Helton has resigned her position as Coordinator of the Learning Commons effective July 15, 2011 in order to take on a new role in the University. Rae's new position will be Special Assistant for Educational Attainment, working with the office of the Provost and the Vice President for Community Engagement as the university's representative to the 55K Degrees Initiative (<http://www.55000degrees.com/>). The goal of the initiative is to increase by 55,000 the number of individuals in Metro Louisville with post-secondary degrees by the year 2020. Rae will be providing leadership and guidance on increasing the number of college degrees attained by African Americans by 15,000.

Effective July 18, 2011, **Geoffrey Patton** has accepted the position of Systems Programmer III with the Office of Library Technology, reporting to Weiling Liu.

The Libraries French intern this year in conjunction with the Sister Cities Program is **Harry Rajaofetra**. An introductory tour with Harry is planned for Tuesday, July 5, 2011. He will report to his department assignment(s) if time allows the afternoon of July 5th or to his assigned department on Wednesday morning July 6th. His last day of work will be Thursday, July 28, 2011. Harry's educational background is in Marketing and Communications. He speaks English, Spanish, and (of course) French and has traveled extensively. Welcome, Harry!

Reference

We congratulate our newest member, **Sue Finley**, on teaching her first information literacy session to "Marketing 360, Professional Selling" after being on the job just two months, and also for her contribution to the Libraries in

working so hard to get the Howard Steamboat Museum Digital Collection ready for public consumption!

Latisha Reynolds was recently appointed as incoming convener of the Residency Interest Group of ACRL and attended the ALA annual meeting in New Orleans in that capacity.

Fannie Cox will be interim head of the Reference Department during Anna Marie Johnson's parental leave. Latisha Reynolds will fill in as interim coordinator of Information Literacy. A HUGE thank you to both of them!

In May, **Mike Wilson** hosted a crowd of about 40 chemistry professors and graduate students in the Chao Auditorium to learn more about *Reaxys*, an important chemical information resource.

One of our longtime student assistants, **Ben Bowman**, graduated in May with a B.S. in Biology and Psychology. Another longtime student, **Shane Scott**, recently received a Graduate Teaching Assistantship in Sociology at UofL for the fall semester. Congratulations, Ben and Shane!

We welcome our newest student assistant, **Bethany Riley**, to Reference! Bethany is a psychology major and hails from northern Kentucky.

Fannie Cox was appointed Committee Member of the ALCTS Coutts Award for Innovation in Electronic Resources Management. (ALCTS is the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services, a division of ALA.) She was re-appointed, Committee Member of RUSA-The MARS: Emerging Technologies in Reference Section of RUSA, which represents the interests of those concerned with attaining the highest possible quality in planning, developing, managing, teaching, or conducting all forms of computer-based reference information services in libraries. (RUSA, the Reference and User Services Association, is also a division of ALA.) Fannie was also appointed Co-chair of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA), 8th National Conference of African American Librarians, which will be held in Covington, Kentucky in 2013, and she serves as the BCALA representative to ALA's Diversity Council, 2009-2011.

Special Collections

George McWhorter wrote an article for *The Journal of the Arthur Rackham Society* #44, and in the next issue there was a letter to the editor from the previous president of the society saying how much she enjoyed George's article and her fond memories of visiting the Burroughs Collection.

Advanced Placement Summer Institute visit

Special Collections welcomed 120 educators from across the nation who were participating in the College Board-endorsed Advanced Placement Summer Institute (APSI) June 20-24, 2011 on UofL's Belknap Campus. Experienced and beginning AP instructors in Chemistry, Calculus, English, and U.S. History each spent an hour examining rare books, manuscripts, and historic photographs selected for their disciplines. In addition to presentations from Special Collections' staff, the educators also discussed how to integrate primary sources into their curricula — and a number have since returned for more time with the texts.

Down in Doradilla

Rare Books and LGBT Services will celebrate the publication of *Down in Doradilla*, David Williams' first novel. There will be a reception and book signing on July 19 from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. outside Rare Books. David will do a reading at 5:00. David Williams established Rare Books' Williams-Nichols archive.

Law Library

Out with the old and in with the new

During the month of May, the floor space in the Law Library's work area received a facelift. Few tears were shed as the tattered rust-colored carpet that had adorned the floors for nearly 30 years was replaced with shiny new

linoleum. In June, **Nancy Baker** was relocated to her own private cubicle, and matching tile was laid near the public entrance of the lobby area by the circulation desk. Pictures of the Law Library's recent tile installation are on its Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.39474689022.50670.39470654022>. Scroll to bottom and see last images in the Library Facilities album.

UARC

Kathie's Travels

Kathie Johnson (along with husband Ron) had a great time in St. Paul, Minnesota, at the Midwest Archives Conference (MAC), April 27-May 1. St. Paul is Kathie's home town, so this trip meant a visit with her two brothers who still live there, as well as having dinner with an old high school friend (who lives in Oregon) whom she hadn't seen in 43 years. Walking around downtown St. Paul, which has changed drastically in the last 40 years, was fun, as was having a room on the 16th floor of the hotel with a clear view of the Mississippi River and her old neighborhood in the distance. The MAC sessions were good, especially the ones on "Diversity in Archives," "Collaborating with Faculty," and "Teaching with Primary Sources." The best part was winning one of the door prizes, a signed copy of the book (which she was coveting) by keynote speaker Dr. Mark Neuzil, *Views on the Mississippi*, and a \$250 gift certificate to Gaylord Supplies!



Go Red for Women!

Kathie Johnson has joined the Go Red for Women Committee of the Kentucky chapter of the American Heart Association. This group plans all of the Go Red for Women's Heart Health events in the area. She is an almost nine-year survivor of cardiovascular disease and recognizes that if she were one generation older, when there was no option of open heart surgery, she wouldn't be here today. The annual fund-raising luncheon was May 19 at the International Convention Center downtown and the attendance was between 600 and 700 people. What a thrill to see so many people committed to helping this cause!

Welcome, Heather

UARC is happy to welcome **Heather Fox** into our midst for a short time. Heather was hired by the JB Speed Art Museum to arrange and describe their records, which will be housed at UARC. The work is being done here rather than at the museum, so we work with Heather every day.

National History Day

Kathie Johnson enjoyed serving as a judge for Kentucky's National History Day District 3 Competition, March 26 at the Frazier International History Museum. She was paired with Tom Mackey from the UofL History department to judge the Senior Papers. It was an enlightening experience, as the topics chosen by the students were varied in subject matter, time period and style.

Heather Fox and Amy Purcell also participated in National History Day. They judged the documentary category for both middle and high school students. The documentary topics included Jackie Robinson, the Iranian Revolution and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Productions were limited to ten minutes and students were required to be interviewed after the screening of their film. When asked what source they would have consulted if they had unlimited resources (including time travel) many of them answered they would like to have interviewed their subject. The most memorable submission was formatted like a newscast and included interviews with adults recounting their memories of the Cuban Missile Crisis, homemade graphics of missiles crossing a map, and the student onscreen as an investigative reporter wearing what appeared to be a hall monitor belt.



Late-Breaking News!

• Anna Marie Johnson had her baby!
• Lars Edwin Lee Brummett was born
• July 2, at 2:30 a.m. He weighed 8
• lbs, 10 oz and measured 21 inches
• long. Anna Marie and Lars are both
• doing fine. Congratulations to Anna
• Marie, Bret, Madeline, and Henry!!

Rachel Howard's new baby boy!

• **Elias (Eli) Nolan Howard Wright**, 7 lb. 13
• oz., 20.5 inches, was born on June 16 without
• a doctor present and almost without any nurses
• either. He did wait for the neighbors to return
• from vacation for emergency babysitting
• services, and for the full moon/barometric
• pressure combo that also greeted his big sister
• 2½ years ago. That's Josie and her new baby
• brother at right.

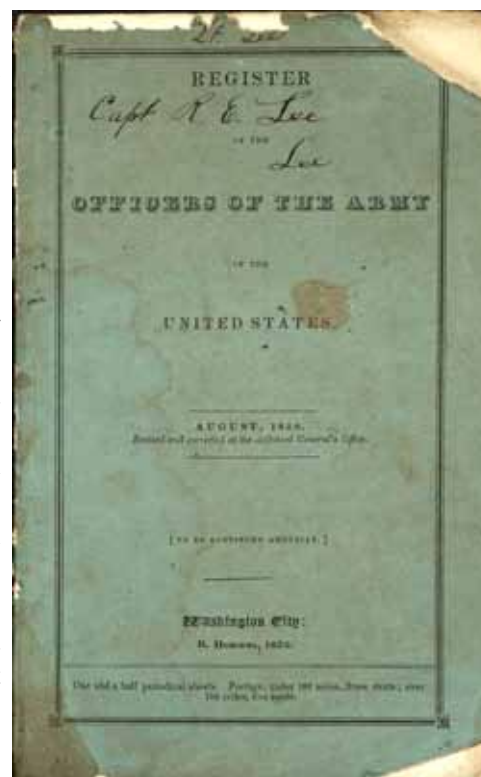


By Rachel Howard, Digital Initiatives Librarian

Back in 2009, just as Kentuckiana and Illinois were recuperating from efforts to commemorate the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth, the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL), of which the University of Louisville is a member, began holding conference calls to discuss ways to commemorate the 2011 sesquicentennial of the start of the American Civil War. Carrie Daniels served as UofL's representative to this group, which quickly determined that highlighting members' digital collections from the Civil War era would be appropriate, then slowly went about defining what was meant by the Civil War era (starting in 1850 rather than at the start of the war in 1861 and including materials relating to the history and culture of the American South during that time period, not necessarily directly relating to the war) and developing a shared Web portal to provide access to the member-selected materials (<http://www.american-south.org>).

Coming up with relevant content from UofL for the project posed a bit of a challenge, since our collecting strengths tend to lie more in 20th century historical materials; the Kentucky Historical Society in Frankfort and the Filson Historical Society right here in Louisville specialize more in earlier Kentucky history. We identified a few maps, pamphlets, and pieces of sheet music, but pulling them together into a digital collection would have been awkward, with date being the only unifying element rather than library unit, format, or donor, as our collections are typically organized. (You can already find Civil War era maps in our [Kentucky Maps](#) digital collection, medical school catalogs from that era in the [Kornhauser Health Sciences Library History Collections](#), and sheet music from the Music Library is in the process of being scanned and cataloged.) Fortunately, Bill Carner remembered a 1986 donation of a collection of photographs of Civil War military officers, and so the [General Orlando M. Poe Collection](#) was proposed for inclusion in both the Digital Collections and the ASERL portal.

Orlando Metcalfe Poe (1832-1895) was born in Ohio and graduated near the top of his class at the United States Military Academy in West



Above: Stereograph view of Orville Elias Babcock sitting on a stump and Orlando M. Poe standing. Right: Poe's Register.

Point, New York, in 1856. After graduation, Poe joined the United States Corps of Topographical Engineers in Michigan, which in peacetime involved surveying and charting the nation's rivers and lakes. When war broke out in 1861, Poe's duties included surveying positions of the armies, sketching routes of the Confederate Army, and preparing maps of battlefields. He was selected by Union Army General William Sherman to be his chief engineer, overseeing the burning of Atlanta and Sherman's March to the Sea.

Amy Purcell took the lead in tracking down information about the images and about Poe himself. In the process, she discovered that Rare Books held additional materials relating to Poe, including an [account book](#) of expenses and a list of "[delinquencies and demerits](#)" he incurred while a cadet at West Point in the 1850s and a mysterious "[Register of the Officers of the Army of the United States](#)," dated 1836 (when Poe was a mere four years old) and inscribed "Capt. R. E. Lee." We have no idea how Poe came to possess this document, or whether or not it truly belonged to the young Robert E. Lee, but we are pleased to make it available as part of the digital collection, and hope that in providing greater access to it, we will learn more about its provenance.

Library Exhibits

Ekstrom Library

Media Resources, Ekstrom Library

West Wing First Floor Display Cases

Louisville and the Peace Corps

Celebrating 50 Years of Louisvillians Serving the World

Summer 2011

Special Collections

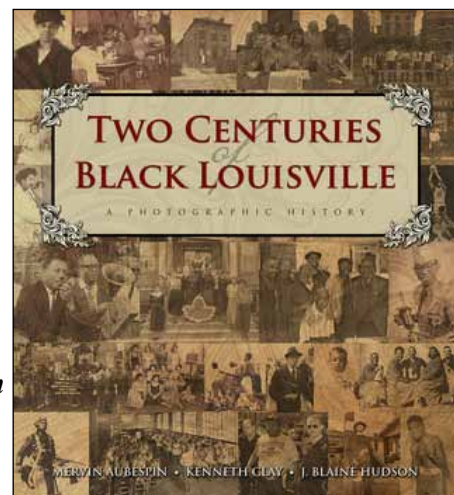
Photographic Archives Gallery

Photographs from Two Centuries of Black Louisville

By Mervin Aubespín, Kenneth Clay and J. Blaine Hudson

June 24 - September 9, 2011

Authors' reception July 21, Photographic Archives, Lower Level, 4-6pm



Rare Books

Kain Gallery

Highlights of the Bullitt Collection

Rare mathematics and astronomy

July 2011

Lobby Cases

Alice Hegan Rice

Summer 2011

Music Library

First Floor

Works of Louis Andriessen

The 2011 Winner of the Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition

Through July 2011





Ekstrom Library Kindles

Article and Photo by Clinton McKay, Student Assistant



Ashley Triplett, Media Department Student Assistant

Ekstrom Library began loaning Amazon Kindles during the Spring Semester of 2011 with an immediately positive response from the UofL community. Kindles have been most popular among graduate students, faculty, and staff, but are also available to undergraduate students. When the program started, the waiting list for the original eight Kindles quickly shot up to thirty and then forty patrons, eventually reaching about eighty at its maximum; with the addition of twelve new Kindles, however, patrons on the waiting list were able to get their devices faster and faster. Currently there is no waiting list for the devices, so if you've been considering purchasing a Kindle for yourself and would like to try one out before you buy one—or if you have just been curious about the phenomenon—feel free to stop by the Media desk and pick one up. If you're interested in seeing the eBook selection Amazon offers, consider downloading Kindle for Mac, Kindle for PC, or the smart phone Kindle software, which allow you to read Kindle purchases as well as free out-of-copyright titles on devices you already own. (All of these programs can be downloaded for free from Amazon's Kindle website.) Ekstrom Library's Kindles circulate for two weeks with no renewals and we ask that no content be added or removed from them. Kornhauser Library on the Medical campus also loans Kindles.

For more information on Kindles and on our program (including a complete list of the available books, a troubleshooting how-to guide, frequently asked questions, and a copy of the loan agreement), visit <http://louisville.libguides.com/Kindles>. A complete list of the books available on each Kindle can also be found by searching Minerva for "Kindle" and viewing the long view of the record. A Minerva search for any book on the Kindle will also list all of the Kindles in addition to hard copies available on the shelves at Ekstrom, so students who really need to read Chelsea Handler's *Are You There, Vodka? It's Me, Chelsea* or Tina Fey's *Bossypants* for class now have eighteen new ways of doing so.

Each Kindle has about 120 eBooks, including *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver (a childhood resident of Kentucky), *The Selected Poems of Wendell Berry* (a life-long Kentuckian farmer, poet, and novelist), *Me Talk Pretty One Day*, a collection of essays by humorist author David Sedaris (whose partner's family lives in Louisville), and a selection of classics like Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien. Titles were chosen based on popularity, and care was taken to represent several genres (Non-Fiction, Contemporary Fiction, Classic Fiction, Poetry, Suspense/Thriller, and Science Fiction/Fantasy).

The Media department decided to collect input from patrons on their experience with the Kindle program as well as book suggestions. If you would like to give us feedback about the program, feel free to direct your comments to <http://louisville.edu/library/forms-1/kindle/>. The University of Louisville was among the first to offer Kindles at its libraries: Kindle checkout programs are still uncommon at university libraries, but they are growing in popularity. Your suggestions and utilization of this program will help us to remain at the forefront of the eBook movement.

NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Name: Hannah Brooks

UofL position and department: Library Technician, Media Resources, Ekstrom Library

Hometown: Hudsonville, MI

Schools Attended: I just graduated in May with my B.A. in religion from Centre College.

Hobbies/Activities: Backpacking, hiking, cycling, reading, cooking/baking

Favorite Food: Greek food (particularly the lamb gyro from the Grape Leaf)

Favorite Vacation Spot: Northern Michigan state parks, right along the shore of Lake Michigan.

Name: Matthew Ertz

Preferred Nickname: Matt

UofL position and dept: Library Specialist; Technical Services, Anderson Music Library

Hometown: Chicago, IL

Schools Attended: B.M. - Univ. of Iowa (Trombone performance - Composition) ; M.M. - Univ. of Oregon (Music Composition) ; M.L.S. - Indiana University (Music Librarianship).

Significant Other/Family Members: My wife Matilda and our daughter Esmé (10 mos.)

Unusual previous positions: Line cook, Taxi driver

Hobbies/Activities: Collecting comic books, Star Wars stuff and contemporary music.

Favorite Food: Lately it has been Indian food.

Favorite Quote: "I hate quotations, just tell me what you know!" —Ralph Waldo Emerson



Name: Elizabeth E. Reilly

Preferred nickname: Most of my friends call me Reilly

UofL position and dept: Curator, Photographic Archives, Special Collections, Ekstrom Library

Hometown: Tenafly, New Jersey

Schools Attended: B.A. in Art/Photography from University of California, Santa Cruz and M.A. in Photographic Preservation and Collections Management from Ryerson University

Zodiac sign: Aries

Hobbies/Activities: Hunting and collecting 19th century card photographs and mid-century modern furniture & housewares

Favorite Books: *Devil in the White City* by Erik Larson, nearly

any book from the Continuum 33 1/3 series, and most aging rock stars' autobiographies

Favorite Movies: *Goodfellas*, *Sixteen Candles*, *The Big Lebowski*, *Bullitt*, *Half Nelson*, *The Shining*

Favorite Food: NY-style pizza, lime sherbet

Favorite Vacation Spot: Montauk, NY

Favorite Quote: "They don't make things like they used to."

Anything else you would like to tell us about yourself: Kentucky is the seventh state I've lived in and Louisville is my tenth city.

THANK YOU HAPPENINGS



A big thank you to **Rachel Howard** for scanning VERY large engravings for a researcher from University of Missouri, Columbia. He needed scans from two oversized rare books, *Collection of engravings from ancient vases mostly of pure Greek workmanship discovered in sepulchres in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies but chiefly in the neighbourhood of Naples during the course of the years MDCCLXXXIX and MDCCLXXXX now in the possession of Sir Wm. Hamilton ... with remarks on each vase by the collector*, published in Naples in 1791 and *Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman antiquities : from the cabinet of the Honble. Wm. Hamilton*, published in Naples in 1766. —**Gail Gilbert**

Thank you to **Terri Holtze** for always making changes to the Art Library's Plone pages so quickly. —**Gail Gilbert**

I would like to thank **Alice Abbott-Moore, Delinda Buie, Elizabeth Reilly, Rob Detmering, Toccara Porter, Latisha Reynolds, Raymond Slaughter, Matt Goldberg, Kelly Buckman, Carrie Daniels, Rachel Howard, and Claudene Sproles** for their assistance with numerous tours of Ekstrom this summer. —**Josh Whitacre**

I would like to thank my new student worker, **Clinton McKay**. He is awesome and is quickly learning about OLT. Clinton has provided great assistance to me during the year end/summer session. Thank you, Clinton! —**Sheila Birkla**

A big thank you to the faculty and staff who have done such a nice job of telling the rest of us what they do in their area in the first three Library 101 sessions: **Media/Learning Commons, Reference, Web Management, Office of Libraries Technology, Distance Learning, Special Collections, University Archives, and the Exhibits Committee**. It's been fascinating and even though I've been here 15 years, I have learned many things that I did not know. Thank you also to **Josh Whitacre, Raymond Slaughter and his dock crew, Karen Nalley, Andy Clark, and Ania Rodriguez, and Dean Fox** for the assistance with the set-up and the food that have made these sessions more social and fun! —**Anna Marie Johnson**

Thank You

Delinda Buie

Bob Fox

Heather Fox

Gail Gilbert

Rachel Howard

Anna Marie Johnson

Kathie Johnson

Melissa Loring

Clinton McKay

Christopher Poiché

Jessie Roth

Virginia Smith

... for contributing to this issue of *The Owl*