



# The Owl

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

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## South America, Standard Oil (New Jersey)

by Cassidy Meurer, Image Manager, ASC  
and Xander Jarvis, Student Assistant, ASC

This fall, following the successful migration to our new [digital collections](#) platform, Archives & Special Collections (ASC) uploaded our first new digital images since 2020! It consists of 4,560 photographs taken by Nelson Morris, John Vachon, and John Collier, Jr. of Standard Oil (New Jersey) operations throughout the 1940s and 50s in the South American countries of Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, and Aruba. This collection brings the total number of SONJ photographs online to 14,332, making it our largest digital collection!

While Roy Stryker was hired by Standard Oil to direct a photographic project that would help to turn the public's negative opinion of the oil company around, Stryker himself was more invested in replicating the documentary elements of his prior photography project, the Farm Security Administration. His goal was to develop a photographic history of every way oil touches lives around the world and believed a minimum of 25,000 photographs would be needed to create this thorough record. Stryker and his team of photographers amassed over 60,000 prints, negatives, and transparencies from 1943-1956. This massive amount of imagery was constantly reviewed and curated by Stryker, and his favorites were printed and compiled into 182 albums separated by region and topic. These albums provide us in ASC guidelines for digitizing this collection; we're prioritizing the curatorial decisions made by Stryker. To break it down even further, we've decided to approach digitization by region, focusing on Europe, Asia, and now South America.



[Quitting time, Aruba, 1944. Nelson Morris SONJ\\_04934](#)

Creating a digital collection requires two things: digital images and metadata associated with those images. As Imaging Manager within ASC, it's my job to create digital surrogates of photo-



[Street in Cuzco, Peru, 1955. John Collier, Jr. SONJ\\_83175](#)



[Voters examining list of polling places, Bogotá, Colombia, 1946. John Collier, Jr. SONJ\\_41930](#)

graphic materials in our collections. The South American region of SONJ was my first scanning project on the job in January 2020, and I managed to get through 2,500 photographs before the COVID-19 lockdown.

I couldn't have asked for a more rewarding first project. Each negative that passed under my scanner slowly accumulated into a composite picture, detailing life in the Cordillera mountains of Colombia, ancient mining towns of Peru, and refineries and worker settlements in Venezuela. I could feel the documentary weight of this project build as I worked, and I excitedly anticipated the moment these images become accessible to everyone, not just myself as the scanning technician. Previously, this history was only available if one could be present in the ASC Research Room to page through a SONJ album; now it's discoverable anywhere, including the countries depicted in the photographs. I finished scanning this collection in Fall of 2021 and turned to the next task: metadata creation.

Lucky for us, Stryker and his team provided basic metadata (caption, photographer, date, location, and image number) within the SONJ albums, which gave us a head start on preparing this collection for upload. We hired student Xander Jarvis in 2022 to help us with creating metadata for this collection. Xander wrote about his experience for *The Owl*:

“Entering metadata for each image required combining the information Stryker laid out for each image with searchable terms that make the collection easier to sort through. This process requires

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intimately examining each photograph to understand its content. Often, the description that Stryker provided adds context to the image or draws your attention to parts of the photograph that otherwise may not have been the main focus. Because of this, it was important for me to take into account both my own reading of each image as well as the intended meanings that Stryker had in mind while curating the collection. An unexpectedly moving dimension of the project arose while combing through the images to label each named person. The documentary nature of this photographic set meant that the photographers would often follow the lives of families in great detail, documenting their home, school, and work lives. In the process of grouping together series of individual families, it felt as though I were reaching back into time to witness the ups and downs of everyday life for these families.”

We hope you get a chance to explore the wonderful photographs and stories within the [South America SONJ digital collection](#)!



*Sra. Saavedra with her children on the porch of their home in workers' village, Peru, 1952. John Collier, Jr. SONJ\_71078*



*Residences in Cabimas, Western Venezuela, 1944. SONJ\_01172.*



# Library and Department News

## ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

### *Digital Collections update*

After successfully relaunching the University of Louisville Libraries Digital Collections on its new platform, Samvera Hyku, in August 2023, the Digital Collections team (Rachel Howard and Emma Beck) began processing new content for inclusion in the site at <https://digital.library.louisville.edu>.

The new additions are:

4,560 images taken in South America in the 1940s-1950s for the Standard Oil (New Jersey) documentary photography project ([https://digital.library.louisville.edu/?f%5Bregion\\_sim%5D%5B%5D=South+America&locale=en](https://digital.library.louisville.edu/?f%5Bregion_sim%5D%5B%5D=South+America&locale=en)). Student worker Xander Jarvis created metadata for this series, which was scanned by Cassidy Meurer (*Editors' note: See the feature*).

548 records comprising 722 images from the Caufield & Shook collection. These had been scanned earlier for customer orders or student projects, and Amy Purcell and volunteer Mary Margaret Bell created metadata. They can be accessed in the order of most recently uploaded, at [https://digital.library.louisville.edu/collections/ulpa\\_cs](https://digital.library.louisville.edu/collections/ulpa_cs).

The *Louisville Cardinal* newspaper is being (re)added to Digital Collections in batches by volume (which correspond to academic year). Look for the growing collection at [https://digital.library.louisville.edu/collections/ulua\\_cardinal](https://digital.library.louisville.edu/collections/ulua_cardinal). We hope to have completed most if not all of the 2,500 issues before winter break.

### ***Celebrating LGBTQ+ History Month***

This October, Archives & Special Collections celebrated LGBTQ+ History Month by taking part in the Pride Resource Fairs on both the Belknap and Health Sciences Campuses. To prepare, the team selected relevant materials from the Williams-Nichols collection to display, as well as imagery to recreate for bookmark and button giveaways. Decisions around what to show were made in deep collaboration with the collection's creator David Williams, local activists Dawn Wilson and Ken Herndon, and the LGBT Center director Byron Terry. These exciting partnerships allowed for the ASC team to create two unique table displays, as well as to recreate a set of 17 unique button designs from the 1980s and 1990s to showcase different aspects of queer life - such as health justice, community-building, and self-love.



*Delinda and Chad at the HSC Pride Resource Fair.*



Colleen and her glamorous pony friend at the Pride Resource Fair.

The physical creation of these giveaways would not have been possible without the ingenuity and help of ASC team members (specifically Colleen Eubank who saved the button-maker) and the students at the Cultural & Equity Center!

Over the course of two days of tabling, the ASC team had the opportunity to engage a whole network of community members who were unaware of the Williams-Nichols collections and other LGBTQ+ materials in ASC. These conversations planted the seeds for continued outreach with LGBTQ+ historical items, as seen in the team's October participation in Banned Books Week and upcoming exhibit on the Fairness Campaign.



## **EKSTROM LIBRARY** **Research Assistance & Instruction** **Department**

### ***STEM Scholars Series: Engaging STEM Researchers***

This Fall, Tessa Withorn, Science Librarian, facilitated [5 workshops for the new STEM Scholars Series](#) that had a total of 55 attendees and 131 registrants who received a link to the recorded sessions. The workshop «AI for Searching and Publishing» engaged researchers in interesting conversations about the capabilities of AI for research, particularly skepticism about whether AI could be used to develop expertise in a scholarly conversation. The concluding workshop, «5 Ways to Make Your Research Data More Manageable,» was also well received and will hopefully open the door to more library-sponsored programming for data services on both the Belknap and HSC campuses. If you are interested in viewing any of the recordings, feel free to reach out!

### ***New Publication***

One of Tessa Withorn's recent articles about Google's new AI experiment, "Google SGE: A new way to search, teach, and resist" appeared in *College & Research Libraries News*: <https://crln.acrl.org/index.php/crlnews/article/view/26113>





# Libraries Celebrate Open Access Week 2023

By Sarah Frankel

For the first time since 2019, the University Libraries celebrated International Open Access Week during October. The theme for 2023 was “Community Over Commercialization.” Tessa Withorn, Cecilia Durbin, and I collaborated on marketing materials including rack cards and yard signs which were placed in a few different areas on both Belknap campus and HSC. Tessa and I also set up a display table in the Ekstrom first floor lobby where we highlighted some of the most downloaded works from our faculty, staff, and students in ThinkIR.

Tessa and I tabled in the Belknap quad for “Ask Us About Open Access,” interacting with 32 people, most of whom were very eager to use the button maker to create an open access button! We also held a presentation for “Setting Up Your Researcher Profiles” on Teams that saw 22 registrants and 13 live participants. The documentary “Paywall” was screened in the Ekstrom first floor lobby a total of 4 times over the course of Open Access Week.



Cecilia Durbin and Cassidy Meuer shared about Open Access Week and *The Collective: A BI-POC ThinkIR Initiative* on the Libraries social media platforms, including the libraries blog (76 views), Facebook (reach 300), Instagram (136 views), Twitter/X (46 views), and LinkedIn (12 likes and 2 reposts).



**We would like to thank everyone who contributed and supported our efforts to raise awareness about open access at UofL. We look forward to working on next year’s programming and will be soliciting volunteers next summer.**

**Resources:**  
[International Open Access Week](#)  
[Home - Open Access - UofL Libraries at University of Louisville](#)

# NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHTS



## Alex Glynn

**Preferred nickname (if you have one):** Alex

**Pronouns:** he/him

**UofL position and department:** Research Literacy and Communications Instructor, Kornhauser Health Sciences Library

**Hometown:** London (England)

**Schools Attended:** University of Cambridge (UK), University of Chicago

**Hobbies/Activities:** music (piano, organ)

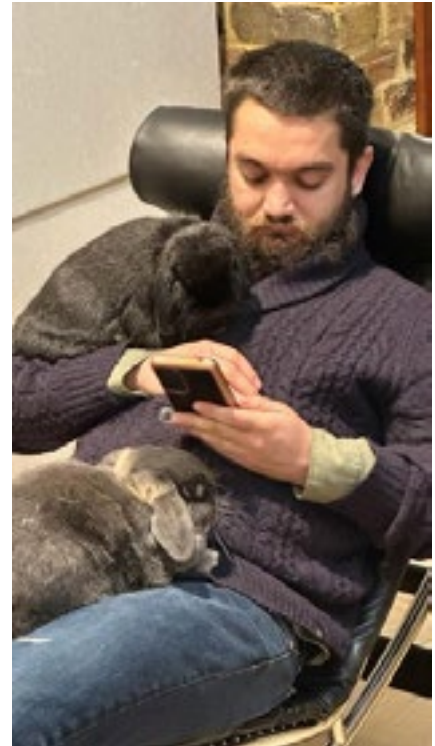
**Favorite Books:** *Paradise Lost*, *Moby-Dick*, *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*

**Favorite Movies:** *Dazed and Confused*, *Napoleon Dynamite*

**Favorite Food/recipe:** New England clam chowder

**Favorite Vacation Spot:** Lookout Mountain, Georgia

**Favorite Quotes:** "As to melons, especially sweet ones, they are entirely forbidden." Rhazes of Persia. *A Treatise on Smallpox and Measles*.



## John Merritt

**UofL position and dept:** IT Systems Analyst IV, Office of Library Technology.

**Family Members:** Joy (Spouse), 3 sons (ages 19, 16, 14), and 1 daughter (4).

**Hobbies/Activities:** Whatever my kids are into!

**Unusual previous positions:** I worked for an ecological research facility in the middle of 30,000 acres of pine trees.

**Favorite Books:** At or near the top has to be *The Lord of the Rings*, which I have read (and reread) to my children.

**Favorite Food/Recipe:** Popcorn; my latest, newly discovered "go to" recipe is dill pickle popcorn.

**Anything else you would like to tell us about yourself:** I usually try to avoid spotlights!







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THANK YOU

Cecilia Durbin  
Sarah Frankel  
Rachel Howard  
Xander Jarvis  
Chad Kamen  
Cassidy Meurer  
Tessa Withorn

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

Iroquois Park in winter, Louisville, Kentucky, 1934.