

FOLIOS

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James T. Babb was university librarian at Yale from 1945–1965, and of him it was said, "Other librarians collect books; Jim Babb collects collectors." Like many witticisms, this one contains a good deal of wisdom in a couple of pithy phrases. The fact is, as Professor George Ray tells Special Collections Librarian Vaughan Stanley in an interview in this issue, libraries grow and flourish not simply through the purchase of books and other materials, but by the support of their friends and, sometimes, by the kindness of strangers. Throughout the history of W&L, its library has grown through monetary gifts and by the generosity of collectors, from John Rogers, who in 1801 presented to Washington Academy a number of books amounting to 30 or 40 volumes,¹ to Dr. William N. Mercer of New Orleans, who donated more than a thousand books to the college during the presidency of Robert E. Lee, to Roger H. Mudd '50, whose Southern novelists collection came to W&L in 2006. You will find in this issue many continuing examples of such generosity, not the least of which is Professor Ray's gift of his splendid collection of theatre programs.

We forget sometimes, too, that academic libraries collect not merely as an exercise, but to further the work of our faculty and students in teaching, research and learning. As I read Professor Roger B. Jeans's article, "A Historian's Lifeline", I was struck again by the importance of the library to the scholar and teacher, and not simply the library as a place of collections. Professor Jeans makes it clear that for him, the library staff has made a tremendous difference: "Without the library collection and the wonderful people who staff the library, it would have been well nigh impossible to 'do' Asian history in an isolated small college." And the collections benefit, too, from the knowledge of our faculty in helping us develop them. Why did Professor Ray attend all those plays? Well, he enjoyed theatre of course, but beyond that "I was professionally obliged to keep up with the staging of Shakespeare's plays in particular. When I

¹Kondayan, Betty Ruth. *A Historical Sketch of the Library of Washington and Lee University, from the Beginnings in 1776 through 1937*, Lexington, Va., Washington and Lee University, 1980, p. 12.

— Mission Statement —

The Friends of the Library supports the academic mission of Washington and Lee University through activities which strengthen the Library's collections and services, promote greater awareness of the Library's needs and resources,

encourage monetary or in-kind contributions to the Library, foster closer community and Library relations and stimulate the intellectual life of the community.

(Continued from pg. 1)

took student groups to England during the Spring Term for many years to study stage history, we would typically see at least twenty plays, a dozen of which would be Shakespeare revivals." The Library's collections and staff support our faculty and students as they go about their daily business, and in due course, the wheel comes 'round and our faculty and alumni make gifts that enrich the Library, to the benefit of generations yet to come — a wonderful, bibliophilic "circle of life."

As a Friend of the Library, you too become part of this circle, and although our organization is a young one, it has already assisted the Library in a number of important ways. Fittingly, the generosity of the Friends spans the centuries. You've under-

written the conservation of early books in Special Collections, acquired the Papers of George Washington in digital form, and purchased an additional laptop computer to be checked out to students from the Circulation Desk. In your generous fashion, you've demonstrated that support for libraries grows and adapts just as the Library does, to suit the information and learning needs of the time.

By the time you read this, our Friends membership, which stands today at 247, may have broken through and reached 250. This is an outstanding milestone for an organization that is not yet three years old! For your support, your enthusiasm and your continuing interest in our mission, we are truly grateful.

Merrily E. Taylor
University Librarian

Friends Web Site

Have you checked out the Web site? It's <http://library.wlu.edu/about/friends/friends.asp>.

Keep current with upcoming events, get help with your latest research project and read the latest newsletter online (soon to be added). You may also leave comments for us as they occur to you, rather than having to remember to contact us later!

End-of-Year Planning

If you joined the Friends prior to January 2007, we hope you are having such a wonderful time as a member that you will be overjoyed to renew your membership. Many of you have already renewed this year, and we really appreciate it! Renewal notices will go out by the end of October so you can keep us in your end-of-year charitable planning.

Speaking of end-of-year planning . . . how's that for a segue? Remember, if you join or renew at the Sponsor level (anything over \$99), you are entitled to five bookplates that you may have placed in honor/memory/celebration of anyone you designate. Perfect gifts for those hard-to-shop-for friends and family!

Annual Report

During fiscal year 2006/07, the Friends grew from 166 members to 229. As of this writing, we have 247 members.

Between July 1, 2006, and June 30, 2007, almost \$25,000 was contributed to the Friends in the form of

dues and donations. We ended the fiscal year with \$26,899.

Friends' primary expenditures are for stationery, printing and postage.

During the year, the Friends paid to have several 19th-century bound copies of the Board of Trustees Minutes restored. The Friends purchased an information kiosk for the main lobby of Leyburn and an additional laptop computer for student check-out.

Perhaps most notable, they financed the purchase of the digital version of *The Papers of George Washington*, a project of the University of Virginia and the Mount Vernon Ladies Association. W&L is now one of only three universities in the country that has this collection.

Upcoming Events

Oct. 21 — 27

National Friends of Libraries Week

Oct. 25, 3 — 7 p.m.

FOL Book Sale Preview

Friends ONLY, *Leyburn Library*

Oct. 26 — 29

Annual Book Sale, *Leyburn Library*

Nov. 1, 1 — 4 p.m.

Tech Fair, *Leyburn Library*

May 3, 2008

Next FOL speaker, tbd

Playbill Collection Interview

Vaughan Stanley, Special Collections Librarian of Leyburn Library (VS), recently sat down with Professor Emeritus of English George Ray (GR) to talk about Professor Ray's gift of nearly 800 theater programs and playbills to Special Collections.

VS: Thank you very much for your gift. Would you give our readers some idea of its contents?

GR: I'd be glad to. The collection runs from the late Victorian period and comes down to the present. It is strongest, as you might suspect, in British and American drama, but the collection runs the gamut, from revivals of classical plays to modern musicals and more popular fare.

VS: Do most of the programs come from your own play-going experience?

GR: Yes, with some exceptions. My wife, Pree, was a theater major in college, so some of her programs dating back to the '50s are included. Other family members, friends and former students aware of my archival bent have also kindly contributed quite a few. Then, too, I have unearthed nuggets in antiquarian bookstores on both sides of the Atlantic. Cecil Court in London's West End remains a gold mine, albeit a pricey one, for anyone collecting theater ephemera. I have yet to buy anything on eBay, but nowadays many collectors do.

VS: You mentioned the West End. Are the programs largely of plays you saw in England or of ones here in North America?

GR: Well, Vaughan, I don't know for sure, but my guess is roughly 50/50. Many of the programs are of Broadway and off-Broadway shows, but a sizable number also reflect many treks to the repertory companies at the Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Ontario, and the Shaw Festival at Niagara-on-the-Lake. Many of the major American regional theaters are represented as well. In Britain, we concentrated on the Royal Shakespeare Company productions at Stratford-upon-Avon and London, the National Theatre in London, and, since the late '90s, the reconstructed Globe Theatre on the South Bank.

VS: Many of the programs do appear to be of Shakespeare's plays and other dramatists from the Elizabethan period.

GR: Yes, probably 200 or so because, of course, I was professionally obliged to keep up with the staging of Shakespeare's plays in particular. When I took student groups to England during the Spring Term for many years to study stage history, we would typically see at least 20 plays, a dozen of which would be Shakespeare revivals. I operated on the Willie Sutton principle: Willie continued to rob banks because, as he famously said, "that's where the money is." We "robbed" London's North and South Banks because that's where more Shakespeare is done than anywhere else in the world.

VS: Your programs will fill many gaps in our burgeoning collection of some 5,000 playbills and programs. How will these programs be of use to theater historians besides providing a listing of the players and their parts?

GR: The rehearsal and performance pictures in the programs provide valuable clues to the director's approach to the production. Many of them also contain my notes on staging innovations in addition to contemporary reviews of the productions. The RSC programs in particular include stills from previous landmark productions of interest to researchers. They are also useful sources for recovering aspects of the *mise en scene*, such as the costumes, sets, blocking and body language. For stage historians, a picture is truly worth a thousand words.

Vaughan Stanley, Special Collections librarian thanks Professor Emeritus George W. Ray, III for his recent donation of theater programs.



(over)



VS: I see you have a folder of programs signed by such luminaries as Peggy Ashcroft, Maggie Smith and John Cleese. How did you acquire these?

GR: How much time do we have? Each one of these 70 autographs has a story behind it. The impetus for this portion of the collection was provided by Tom Connors '84, a professor of medieval history at a mid-western university and a serious autograph collector in his own right. Back in 1984, when Tom was a member of my Spring Term seminar in England, he persuaded the rest of us to hang out at the stage doors of the playhouses after the performances in hopes the star actors would appear and sign our programs. Well, his stage-door-Johnny approach worked every time. Once we had established our bona fides, the actors were quite happy to chat at some length. For instance, after nine acts and five grueling hours on stage in O'Neill's *Strange Interlude*, Glenda Jackson still had enough energy to talk shop with her newest American fans. Peter O'Toole and John Thaw (of *Inspector Morse* fame) spoke with us after a performance of Shaw's *Pygmalion*, and Vanessa Redgrave, Dame Wendy Hiller and the late Christopher Reeve all were generous with their time after they had appeared in *The Aspern Papers* at the Haymarket Theatre Royal. On other occasions, I was fortunate enough to get an entire cast to sign my program!

VS: What prompted you to donate your collection to Washington and Lee?

GR: Vaughan, this was a classic no-brainer. Not long after I joined the faculty in the mid-'60s, I discovered that we already possessed the nucleus of a performing arts collection, the gift of Carter Newman Bealer '22. Once I appreciated the magnitude of Bealer's collection, I decided to honor his legacy by adding as much breadth and depth as I could to his core collection over time and to encourage other theater buffs to consider doing the same. To date, thanks to recent gifts from Henry Strouss '61 and the aforementioned Tom Connors '84, as well as ones from former colleagues Severn Duvall and Annette John, we now have a substantial archive of photographs, playbills, programs, and letters from actors, producers and playwrights covering a span well over two centuries. I should also say that some years ago I came across fascinating letters from Thornton Wilder and Archibald MacLeish in Dr. James Leyburn's papers attesting to Dean Leyburn's lifelong interest in, and support of, the performing arts. So for all sorts of reasons, W&L's Library is the proper repository for my memorabilia—and will continue to be. Any library needs all the friends (and Friends!) it can find, and Leyburn Library is no exception.

– Special Donations –

Fred Farrar Does It Again!

In late August, Fred Farrar '41 brought another amazing donation from his dwindling collection. This time he brought a 19-volume set of James Boswell's papers, set number 23 of only 500 sets published. He donated a 25-volume set of *The Lakeside Classics*, reprinted by the Lakeside Press in Chicago from 1979–2000. And last but not least, he donated facsimile pages from early printed books in the British Museum.



Fred Farrar and Vaughn Stanley looking over some Classics.



Kiosk donation made possible by Friends of the Library.

Lou Plummer Makes a Timely Donation

In the last year, Lou Plummer '40 donated a very valuable copy of *Beowulf* to Special Collections. This volume is number 918 out of a 1932 printing of 950. The verse translation is by William Ellery Leonard, and it has lithographs by Rockwell Kent.

New Lee Letter

Special Collections acquired a very personal 1868 letter from Robert E. Lee to Caroline Stuart, his wife's cousin. In this prized, four-page acquisition, Lee talks about family, his favorite topic. Vaughan Stanley, Special Collections Librarian, says, "Lee came alive in letters of this kind and is much more revealing than in the business letters he wrote as Washington College president."



Words from the Chair

As we approach the end of our third year of existence, all I can say is WOW! Many university Friends groups that have been in existence much longer would be thrilled to have even 100 members. And we have almost 250! Your interest is testament to your recognition of the service of such a group, the need for such a group and your faithful support of W&L. We thank you.

Bob Huntley

Second Annual Tech Fair

What is the best computer for me? Do I really need/want an iPod? I can't get my computer to . . .

If you have technological questions, come to the second annual Tech Fair Nov. 1, 1–4 p.m. in Leyburn and get answers. Friends members are the only non-campus invitees.

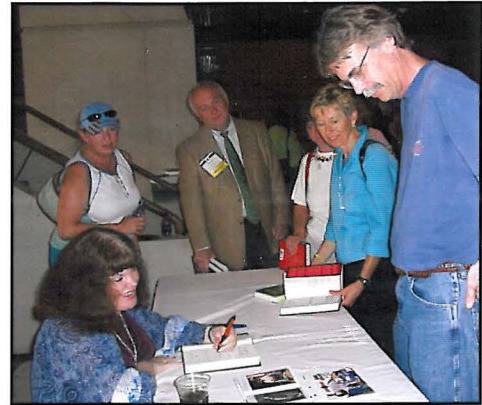
Sharyn McCrumb Delights Friends of the Library and Others!

During Homecoming weekend, best-selling author Sharyn McCrumb gave a humorous and enlightening talk on "Grassroots Saints and Honky Tonk Heroes". The audience of almost 100 loved it! Her award winning novels celebrating the history and folklore of Appalachia have received scholarly acclaim and ranked on the New York Times Best-Seller list.

A private reception for the author and members of the Friends preceded her talk. She graciously signed books after her over-an-hour talk.

"My books are like Appalachian quilts," says Sharyn McCrumb. "I take brightly colored scraps of legends, ballads, fragments of rural life, and local tragedy, and I piece them together into a complex whole that tells not only a story, but also a deeper truth about the culture of the mountain South." The audience ranged in age from 16 to 80 and everyone came away with a smile. If you haven't encountered her books yet, it's a great time to start.

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Sharyn McCrumb is a graduate of University of North Carolina and has an M.A. in English from Virginia Tech.

The Friends next speaker will be during Reunion Weekend, May 3, 2008.

A Historian's Lifeline

Roger B. Jeans, Professor of History Emeritus

While "lifeline" is perhaps too strong a word for what the Library has meant to me for more than three decades, I welcomed the chance to write when asked. While the Library's holdings on Chinese and Japanese history are excellent, it has been the people who have made all the difference over the years. Of what other institution could I say the staff has invariably responded to my appeals for help? They have ordered books, journals and films; placed materials on reserve; requested items through inter-library loan; and answered esoteric reference questions having to do with some obscure nook of East Asian history.

While teaching, I considered a brief stop at the Library a daily must. There, I was sure to find a welcome from the staff and a stimulating book or magazine article. Thanks to the good work over many years of Annette John and Laura Turner, when my successor in the Department of History arrived, he was pleasantly surprised by the library's East Asian history and literature holdings.

Although the students always came first—the glory of Washington and Lee as an institution of higher learning—while teaching, my fascination with Chinese and Japanese history spurred me to devote summers and leave periods to research and

writing. Without the Library collection and the wonderful people who staff the library, it would have been nigh impossible to do Asian history in an isolated small college. The computer revolution has vastly reduced that isolation. Thanks to the unstinting patience and assistance of Ruth Floyd, Sue Olive and Ed Kibler, I was able to search the Web for materials and contact archives for assistance from the peace and quiet of my office.

When retirement arrived in June 2006, the Library staff (John Tombarge and Karin O'Callaghan) again leapt into the breach and let me have a tiny study next to the East Asian history collection. Here, for the last 15 months, I have been working on a manuscript about a Japanese intelligence agent active in the United States in 1941.

Whenever I need materials through inter-library loan, the unflaggingly cheerful and helpful Elizabeth Teaff sends off yet another request. Dick Grefe always has the answer when I approach him with yet another imponderable reference query.

Each and every day, when I take the elevator down to the bowels of the library to the space my colleagues refer to as "the bunker," I feel gratitude to the library for granting me this study (now filled with boxes of books and documents). And not least of all, my wife is grateful to the library, for as wives have said to their retired husbands for years, "Retirement is not for lunch!"

