Adventures in Collecting:
Twelve Centuries of Manuscripts and Rare Books
at Dartmouth College

When Kathy Hart, the Hood's Curator of Academic Programming, first approached us with the idea of a library exhibition in an art museum, I was more than pleasantly surprised. While the Hood and the library have maintained a working relationship that is closer and more fruitful than at most academic institutions, I was aware of the commitment - the effort - that the Hood was offering to make in extending this invitation. So, I am most grateful to Kathy for this opportunity to exhibit some of the many treasures of Rauner Library. I am also grateful to her colleagues at the Hood for the efforts and support they have provided. In particular, I thank Juliette Bianco, who tolerated more than one of my tantrums, and Kellen Haak, Evelyn Marcus, and Nick Nobili. Derrick Cartwright is fortunate to have associates of this caliber. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the generous support of the Bernard R. Siskind 1955 Fund in mounting the exhibition.

One of the most sensible bits of advice on public speaking was given by Lewis Carroll in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland where he wrote:

"Where shall I begin, please your Majesty," he asked. "Begin at the beginning," the King said, gravely, "and go on till you come to the end; then stop."

And that is what I propose to do this afternoon; taking, however, the academic's prerogative of various leisurely digressions along the way.

We in the library have always maintained that the library itself is older than the college, a claim that - while it can be proven - gains us little beyond the hoary seniority of a few years. It was in 1764 that books were sent by George Whitefield, the British Methodist divine, to Eleazar Wheelock for the use of the college - to - be. Later gifts, particularly from Theodore Atkinson and the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, insured that a library would flourish in the wilderness along with the college. It was as a result of these generous acts that Jeremy Belknap could write, in 1774, that "The Library is kept at Mr. Woodward's. It is not large, but there are some very good books in it." The Mr. Woodward to whom Belknap refers, is Bezaliel Woodward, considered the first librarian of the college. He was in charge of the nearly 400 volumes in the library, most of which were theological in nature and most of which are yet housed in the Woodward Room in Baker Library.

The college library remained in Woodward's house, or in the home of second president John Wheelock, often co - mingled with the president's own books, until Dartmouth Hall
was constructed and the library removed to that building in 1791. The library remained there until Reed Hall was built in 1840 and the eastern half of the second floor of the new structure became the library. Wilson Hall was the first building constructed as a library and the collections were moved there in 1885. The interior
with the entire staff and the circulation desk

with Librarian of the College Bisbee in attendance. By collections, it must be understood, I mean not only the college library but also the libraries of the United Fraternity and the Society of Social Friends, both of whose libraries were considerably more robust and useful than the college library during most of the 19th century. I will not rehearse the litany of fees and charges - steep though they were - assessed each student for use of the collections, nor the hours of
operation - one or two a week - nor the loan rules - borrow one, return one. I will suggest, however, that the library has become rather more liberal in the intervening centuries in its vision of collections, hours, and loan rules.

In the twentieth century, there were rapid changes in the size and shape of the library as well as in means of access. Baker Library was constructed in 1928, other libraries followed so that by the end of the century, there were eleven libraries on the campus and in adjacent Lebanon. One of the newest is Rauner Library in Webster Hall, the treasures of which are the subject of this presentation and the exhibition. Rauner Library,
renovated and opened in 1998, holds approximately 126,000 rare books, a half million photographs, and over 6.5 million manuscripts in its special collections.

If Eleazar Wheelock is rightly considered the founder of the college library, then Isaiah Thomas must be considered the refounder of the library after the terrible depredation of the college/university controversy. In 1815 and 1816, the president of the college John Wheelock and some of the trustees - reacting to a change in the political climate in the state capital - moved to amend the charter of the college and add trustees who would agree with their political inclinations. Other members of the college disputed the change in the charter and appealed to the judiciary for relief. Daniel Webster, Class of 1801,

argued the case through the courts to the US Supreme Court where he stated, perhaps, that "it is a small college, sir, but there are those of us who love it." Whether or not Webster actually said this is not germane, nor is it important that Trustees v Woodward set case law for contracts that is still cited. What is important is that the college library was literally caught in the middle of the fracas and was very nearly destroyed by the competing forces.

In an effort to rebuild the institution in 1820, college officers visited many individuals throughout New England to raise funds. When Isaiah Thomas was approached, he declined to give money and instead offered books. Thomas was a patriot, a rebel, a printer, a publisher, an
historian of the book, and a huckster. His printing establishment in Worcester, Massachusetts, was one of the finest in America. His presentation of 360 titles, most of which he had himself printed or published, formed the core of the college library as it was being reconstructed. The vast majority of these books remain a part of the library’s collections.

It would appear that in each century of the college's history, there is one figure who stands out as critical to the development of the library and, in particular, to the development of the special collections. In the 18th century, it was certainly Eleazar Wheelock; in the 19th it was Isaiah Thomas; and in the 20th it must surely have been Harold Goddard Rugg.

A graduate of the Class of 1906, Mr. Rugg immediately after graduation became library assistant and secretary in Wilson Hall and continued to serve in the library until his retirement in 1953 as Associate Librarian of the College. Along the way, he taught a course in the history and art of the book, and developed special collections of international repute. It was he, for example, who felt strongly that if a student needed to see a cuneiform tablet, or a Tibetan prayer block, or a medieval manuscript, or a Hebrew scroll, or hieroglyphics on papyrus, that student ought to be able to walk into special collections and expect to see and handle suchlike items. As a result, there are very few forms of writing or printing for which we do not have examples.

Mr. Rugg also was responsible for many of the foci of special collections. The history of the book that is founded in the Presses and the Illustrated Books collections, the history of the White Mountains, the New Hampshire imprints collection, the collections of the printed and manuscript work of alumni, the college history collection - all of these owe their origins to Mr. Rugg. And it is also to Mr. Rugg that we owe the the attitude in the library toward access. He felt, rightly so,
that if the library owned an object, no matter how rare and how precious, it was owned so that it could be used by students. This was in his day a radical approach to rare books and manuscripts. In other institutions, such materials were locked away and were certainly not for the use of students. Fortunately for Dartmouth, Mr. Rugg's position prevailed here and rare books and manuscripts were - and still are - readily available to anyone who has an interest. This accessibility of materials continued after Mr. Rugg's retirement and made the library singular in its approach amongst academic libraries for several decades longer. While Dartmouth made it a practice to welcome undergraduates into its rare book reading rooms, others did not - and did not open wide their doors until the last decade of the century.

What to collect in a special collections library is sometimes decided by major gifts; sometimes driven by curatorial knowledge of the curriculum and close association with faculty; sometimes determined by the ability of the curator to foresee future needs; and sometimes dictated by dumb luck. One of the best descriptions of the boundaries of collecting and the potential for making long-term decisions with only short-term information can be found in Margaret Atwood's poem "Girl Without Hands" where she writes:

"Distance surrounds you, marked out by the ends of your arms when they are stretched to their fullest. You can go no farther than this, you think, walking forward, pushing the distance in front of you . . ."

Atwood has captured both the chance and the challenge of developing collections in a very short passage. This is reinforced in the poem "Heading Out" by Philip Booth, Class of 1947,
where he begins:

"Beyond here there's no map. How you get there is where you'll arrive;"

and concludes:

"Slowly as it may otherwise tell you, whatever it comes to you're bound to know."

This poem is from his volume Selves and later reprinted in Lifelines.

Philip Booth, as you might suspect, is an important focus of our collecting interests.

A gift of a major and significant group of materials will often help define a collection. Such was the gift of Edward Sine, Class of 1951, whose collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth century British illustrated books
and the original ink, watercolor, and pencil illustrations gave new shape and focus to our holdings. The six thousand books and three thousand original works of art in the collection are a comprehensive gathering of materials on the history of illustration for that period. When bequeathed to the Library in 1993, the collection was treated as the two millionth acquisition, with appropriate celebrations, and distinctly modified the focus of our illustrated book collection. This collection had, for decades, revolved around our interest in the history of the book in America. With Ed Sine's magnificent gift, we now can boast of one of the finest collections of British illustrated books as well.

Geography, of course, plays an important role in determining collection development. The White Mountains of New Hampshire have generated great enthusiasm in artists, writers, tourists, and entrepreneurs for several centuries. It is natural for the College, which owns a number of grants in the White Mountains, to have an interest, and it is also natural that the Library would have a lively interest in an area that is so attractive to so many people. One of the first non-native inhabitants of the mountains was the Crawford family. Lucy Crawford became the first chronicler
of the history of the region and her book stands as one of the finest early examples of regional/local history in the nineteenth century. To give an example of the depth of collecting in the White Mountains, we hold not only the first edition of the book, but also

the manuscript, and the
printing blocks used to illustrate the book. These scenes depict the before and after of a major disaster.

As a tourist attraction, the White Mountains was exceedingly popular in the nineteenth century
when special trains left Boston and New York City bound for the cooler climate afforded by the
the mountains in the summer as well as the lure of grand tourist hotels. The newspaper Among
the Clouds was published in the mountains for the tourist trade on a regular basis during the season. We cannot
leave these mountains without acknowledging the splendid and significant work of the late
Walter W. Wright who, as Special Collections Librarian during the decade of the 1970s,
developed the White Mountains Collection to international stature.

One of the great strengths of any special collections is the inter - relationship between existing
collections and the concept of building on strength. An excellent example of this is the sprawling
collection of materials by and about members of the Cornish Colony. Located in the Cornish -
Plainfield vicinity and originally a summer escape from urban heat, this group of writers, artists,
and activists were a driving force in American culture at the end of the nineteenth and well into
the twentieth century. While the Cornish Colony was more a state of mind that a specific
geographic venue, the women and men of the colony spent longer and longer periods of time in
residence in the Connecticut River Valley until a permanent core group of individuals and
families populated the colony.

The inhabitants of the colony at one time or another included artist Lucia Fairchild Fuller and her
husband Henry; poet and dramatist Percy MacKaye and to a lesser extent his brother Benton, the
creator of the Appalachian Trail; artist Maxfield Parrish and his father Stephen, an equally well -
known painter; the sculptor Augustus Saint - Gaudens; Louise Cox; Francis Duncan Manning;
Herbert Adams; suffragist Juliette Rublee and her diplomat - husband George; and the novelist
Winston Churchill, about whom more anon. The papers of each of these individuals are at Dartmouth in the Rauner Special Collections. Individually, they are of great interest. As a record of a group of cultural giants living and working in the same area, the collection is unparalleled.

Lest it be thought that collection development - the acquisition of important individual pieces or collections - can be accomplished quickly or easily, one example will suffice. The Library began negotiating with Maxfield Parrish shortly after World War II for his papers. After his death in 1966, we negotiated with his son Max, Junior. After his death, we finally signed - in 1986 - the deed of gift and other legal documents that gave us the collection. Thus it took nearly forty years of discussion with Parrish and his family before the collection was acquired. Although this is perhaps the most time-consuming of discussions we have had with donors, it is not the only example of involved collection development that we could recount. One of the more fascinating aspects of working with special collections is to see the act of creation, the process by which an author takes blank paper and pencil and drafts a poem, a novel, a play. Although no longer in vogue, the historical novels of Kenneth Roberts were once best sellers. In title after title, Roberts wrote in fiction of the early history of North America and the United States. Striving for accuracy, Roberts amassed a collection of printed histories and source material of great research value and used these resources to craft historical fiction in minutely accurate detail. Pouring over maps, for
example, to insure that his novel Boon Island, which has been recently republished in a new edition, was geographically accurate and then

revising and rewriting galley proofs heavily. The result was prize-winning fiction.
Both Roberts' remarkable library of Americana and his papers are a part of the Rauner Library's holdings.

One of the most heralded of all Dartmouth alumni, Robert Frost, Class of 1896n - still listed as a NON - graduate, spent less that a term as an undergraduate at Dartmouth; leaving for Thanksgiving never to return as a student. As a young poet recently back from England
with two books of poetry published, Frost lived in northern New Hampshire and continued to write. As his fame grew, he returned often to Dartmouth to lecture, here in the Treasure Room that served for decades as the special collections reading room. In 1961, blinded by the sun, Frost attempted to read a poem at John F. Kennedy's inauguration. Because the poem had been recently written and not yet committed to memory, it was an impossible task and Frost returned to the familiar "The Gift Outright" that he could recite from memory rather than the longer poem he had written specifically for the president.
It was Frost himself who fostered the idea that his poems came to him fully formed as he walked in the woods or worked in the fields. While this is a charming addition to the Frost mythic canon, it is far from reality. He labored long and hard at his craft. The seminal ideas for some of the poems can be found in his early notebooks while these poems in final form are only to be found in later notebooks. One of my favorites is "How Hard It Is to Keep From Being King When It's In You and In the Situation," more for the descriptive title - longer than a haiku of Matsuo Basho - than for the poetic content. The poem, here seen in draft form, is a dialog between a prince and his mentor. It changed draft for draft as Frost became more concerned with the comical yet dangerously undemocratic antics of Senator Joseph McCarthy. This notebook is one of 44 owned by Dartmouth and one of only 48 in existence. We can modestly state that, while most institutions claiming to have major Frost collections count their manuscript materials piece - by - piece, we count ours by the linear foot.

Often when we think of library treasures, early manuscripts are what come to mind. Dartmouth's early treasures are some of the oldest and some of the most beautiful to be found anywhere in the Americas and are the direct result of the generosity of a small group of donors. Chief among the donors of early manuscripts that show the development of palaeography - handwriting styles - and codicology - the development of the book format - is Mark Lansburgh, Class of 1949. Mark is an art historian, collector, and expert in palaeography and his gifts to the library over the years exemplify his interests.
One of the earliest manuscripts we hold is a Liber glossarum leaf, written in Aachen, most probably in the Carolingian court scriptorium, around the year 800, about 1200 years ago. This leaf is a single page of much larger manuscript glossary, the precursor of today's dictionary. It gives a word, its definition, and a use of the word in context. The recto and verso contain the words from refugavit to reges, that is r - e - f to r - e - g on two pages so we can imagine how large the complete manuscript must have been. This manuscript also has a provenance - a history
that is very distinguished. In the bottom center of the recto is the distinctive Phillipps number, indicating the manuscript was once owned by the greatest accumulator of early manuscripts ever, Sir Thomas Phillipps.

A second Lansburgh gift in the exhibition is a leaf from a Beneventan antiphonal written about the year 900. The area around Benevento, Italy, retained its peculiar liturgy, musical notation, and palaeography long after Roman custom and uniformity overtook much of the rest of Italy. The leaf exhibits the distinctive Beneventan style in its text and music.
for Psalm 50, Misrere mei deus. Thought to be one of the earliest musical manuscripts in a repository in the Western Hemisphere, the text and music were sung on a national television news broadcast by Professor William Summer's medieval music class some years ago.

The gifts to Dartmouth of Allerton Hickmott, Class of 1917, and his wife Madelyn, have been manifold. Of particular importance is Mr. Hickmott's gift of his Shakespeare collection, a gathering of first and early printings of Shakespeare and the sources used by the author for inspiration in writing his plays and poetry. One of the earliest of the history plays was Titus Andronicus, written around the year 1592 but not published as a quarto until 1611. The Hickmott copy, one of eleven known to exist, has a most distinguished provenance, being the J. T. Adams - Juel - Jensen - Hickmott copy. It is not, however, one of Shakespeare's greatest plays and not even a distinguished provenance nor a distinguished actor like Anthony Hopkins can make it one.

Not to be outdone in any sense, Madelyn Hickmott began collecting miniature books, some of which are here seen in the capable hands of Stan Brown, Curator of Rare Books, as well as medieval manuscripts. The book of hours was a standard set of texts used for private devotion and included a calendar at the beginning of the book that lists saints days and feast days. Lavishly
illuminated books of hours were signs of great wealth and were in direct conflict with the church's teachings on poverty. This calendar page, from a mid-fifteenth century French book of hours, gives a sense of what else is to be found in this opulent manuscript.

A second book of hours given by Mrs. Hickmott is even more stunning. This manuscript was created in about the year 1495 in the Florentine
workshop of Attavante di Attavante. Later distinguished as a portrait painter, Attavante specialized in very small books of hours such as our volume which has eight double-page miniatures, parts of which were painted with a single-haired brush. The David miniature, the capital D, and the text page all show spectacular design and execution.
The history of the book has always held the interest of students and scholars at Dartmouth. The Graphic Arts Workshop of the 1930s to 1960s has evolved into the Book Arts Workshop. The intensive Book Arts Summer Workshop, now in its 12th year, has an international reputation as a printing course with an academic twist. Using hand presses, cold type, and instructors who are practicing printers, including Mark Lansburgh, Class of 1949, the donor of the press in the background, and Rocky Stinehour, Class of 1950, of the Stinehour Press, the workshops teach the rudiments of
fine printing to Dartmouth students and to many others. This practice continues the strong tradition of the history of book at Dartmouth, as much as owning a Johnson's dictionary with its delightful definition of lexicographer or an Audubon's Birds of America. The Audubon, one of the most impressive pieces of book design and execution
ever, is recognized as a milestone in the history of printing. Our copy, however, is incomplete. The original publication of the work was by subscription and each subscriber was sent a suite of plates as they were printed and hand colored. The subscriber to our set, Daniel Webster, was a genius as an attorney and as a national leader, but could not handle his personal finances. He never paid Audubon for any of the plates sent to him and a frustrated author and artist simply stopped sending Webster any plates after number 300.

There are also times when circumstances bring together two individuals - and two collections - that we could not have more neatly planned or created had we tried. An example of this is the work of the two Winston Churchills: The one a

now almost - unknown American novelist and the
other a giant in the pantheon of the twentieth century. As a novelist and member of the Cornish Colony, Winston Churchill the American was at the height of his creative abilities at the beginning of the twentieth century. He was the author of a series of best-selling novels and would shortly become involved in progressive politics both in New Hampshire and nationally. Across the ocean was a young, brash war correspondent - recently a subaltern in the Hussars - who was just beginning a writing career that brought him in direct conflict with his American counterpart. As both used first and last names only on the title pages of published works, there was confusion among editors and booksellers. This was resolved by a gentlemen's agreement that the younger Winston Churchill, now remembered as one of the greatest war leaders ever known,

would always use his middle initial "S" or his middle name "Spencer" whenever publishing a column, an essay, or a book.

Four decades after Mr. Churchill and Mr. Churchill agreed to the appropriate nomenclature, a Dartmouth alumnus, Frederick Forsch, Class of 1937, began collecting the British author and statesman's work. This collection, which included Churchill's then-classified
1911 memorandum on potential conflict in Europe, brought together a rich body of both published and unpublished materials. Mr. Forsch presented the collection to the Library in 1992 with additional gifts from his estate in 1998. When Sir Winston's daughter, Lady Soames, visited the collection several years ago, she noted that there were titles present in our collection that she was aware of but had never seen before.

One of the most well-known of our collections, in fact the one with the strongest international reputation, is the Stefansson Collection on Polar Exploration. Begun as the private research library of Arctic explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson and acquired by the library in 1951, the collection supports research and scholarship on a variety of subjects relating to the polar regions.
himself participated in three major expeditions to the Canadian north from 1906 to 1918, and, on the third expedition remained in the Arctic for five straight years. This he was able to do simply because he lived with and learned from the Inuit peoples. The map gives some impression of his travels during this time, the areas explored, and the lands mapped. In amongst his papers, there are photographs
of Inuit peoples, the ill-fated

Photography had, of course, been used in the Arctic for many years, even during the period of wet-plate photography when the latter process was sometimes accomplished at minus 40 degrees. William Bradford's Arctic Regions, published in 1873, is one of the finest examples of
early polar photography,

a sumptuous oversized book with stunning images of icebergs and ships.

These eerily beautiful images romanticize the polar regions while the reality is often very different.

The Lady Franklin Bay Expedition, roughly ten years after Bradford's photographic book, is an
excellent example of the other extreme

of the polar regions. The expedition, under the aegis of the International Polar Year program, traveled to Lady Franklin Bay on Ellesmere Island and there nearly froze and starved to death. Problems with discipline on the expedition caused the commander to order the execution of a crewman for stealing food, the only man known to be executed on a polar expedition. A week later, the survivors were rescued. David Brainard's diary and A. W. Greely's execution order attest to the terrible conditions under which the expedition foundered.

At the very opposite end of the world, the exploration of Antarctica also was a perilous endeavor. The Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1914 to 1917, led by Ernest Shackleton, was a triumph of will against overwhelming odds. When many of the men were marooned on Elephant Island, Shackleton heroically sailed off in the James Caird, a tiny open boat, to South Georgia Island to obtain help. The diary

![Image of note page]
of one of the men of the expedition, Thomas Orde - Lees, recounts this near disaster and heroic end, and was carefully marked up by Orde - Lees to assist Shackleton in the writing of his narrative of the expedition.

I think one of the most obvious differences between a library's vision of 'treasures' and an art museum's vision of 'treasures' is often that we in the library do not always give much thought to the physical beauty - and in many cases, the lack thereof - of some of our most valued materials. To be sure, an object

such as the Wentworth Bowl, created by Boston silversmith Daniel Henchman in 1771 and given by Governor John Wentworth and unnamed friends to President Eleazar Wheelock and his successors, is beautiful. It is one of the finest pieces of colonial American silver in existence. The bowl, or monteith, with its removable rim, represents the office of the president of Dartmouth and is symbolically handed over at the inauguration of each president.

Not quite as beautiful is the ink-on-printed-form tracing of the wind speed chart from
Mount Washington Observatory taken on April 12 1934. Mount Washington is reputed to have the worst recorded weather in the world and records have been kept daily for nearly seventy years by such men as Bob Monahan - note the horizontal icicles. The wind speed chart records a speed of 231 miles per hour at the point at which the equipment broke.

The schematic by George Stibitz for his proposed decimal digital adder is a milestone in the development of computer hardware. Again, not necessarily a beautiful drawing, but of great importance. The decimal digital adder required a new and spectacularly simple switch to make it
work. This binary switching device, which you can see is rather large and cumbersome, is a simple on/off relay. The development of this binary relay was critical to the improvement of the size and speed of computation devices and thus the modern computer.

One of the ur-texts in the history of computer language is the first draft of Beginners' All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code, or BASIC, created at Dartmouth by Thomas Kurtz and John Kemeny, both then in the mathematics department. Kemeny, of course, went on to be the thirteenth president of Dartmouth. The rather badly reproduced manual revolutionized computer language, making it much easier to learn and to use, and permitting many more individuals to learn to write programs. This seminal document is, again, not beautiful, but vital and rich in the history of the modern era.

Not since Gutenberg and the first use of moveable type in the West has there been as rapid a change books, libraries, and publishing as there has been in the last several years. E-books, books on disk, self-publishing, publishing on the World Wide Web, electronic access to information - all of these are changing the way that libraries, librarians, and patrons view and use information. These changes have led some to raise concerns over the fate of the book as an object and, to a greater extent, the fate of special collections libraries. I believe that, contrary to some concerns being voiced, this evolution in books, printing, and publishing, is a splendid opportunity for special collections libraries to grow and flourish. As printed collections age, more and more books will be considered "rare" and will be moved to the special collections. If we take a liberal definition of "manuscript" and consider punch cards, computer output, and disks as manuscripts - as I believe they are - then these collections, too, will continue to grow.
The same holds true for scanned images and digital photographs; these will soon find a place among salt prints and daguerreotypes.

Rather than seeing a fateful end to special collections, I envision a time in the not too distant future when - physically - the largest library on campus will be the special collections library. I am reminded in all of this of Constantine Cavafy's wonderful poem "Waiting for the Barbarians," when he begins:

"What are we waiting for, assembled in the forum? The barbarians are due here today."

And, after the barbarians fail to show up to sack Rome, the poem concludes:

"And now, what's going to happen to us without barbarians? They were, those people, a kind of solution."

Let me finish by suggesting that adventures in collecting are, in fact, the result of the hard work of a very dedicated library staff. Good collecting - and good collections - require time and talent to locate, to acquire, to process, and to catalog. Without high quality public service to complement it, collecting is a useless exercise. All of these attributes come together in the staff of Rauner Special Collections Library. They are, without question, the best there is. I am very proud to have them as colleagues.

Philip N. Cronenwett
Special Collections Librarian

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