Parker Curatorship Created

Thanks to a gift of $1.5 million from the estate of the late George Parker (1929–2004), a new Curatorship has been created to strengthen one of the JCB’s historic interests, early American cartography. Susan Danforth has been named the first George S. Parker II Curator of Maps, a most appropriate selection, recognizing not only Mr. Parker’s love of maps but also the renown that Susan has achieved as a cartographic authority during her tenure here.

Mr. Parker was born in 1929, and spent most of his life in Wisconsin, where he directed the affairs of the Parker Pen Company, and developed a world-class collection of early maps of the Great Lakes region. As a collector, he was naturally drawn to the JCB, which he first encountered as an undergraduate at Brown University. He was a generous supporter of both the Library and his alma mater, and participated deeply in the affairs of both. In addition to serving on the JCB Board of Governors, he made possible the publication of several JCB books, including *The Mapping of the Great Lakes in the Seventeenth Century*, which appeared in 1989 and featured 22 maps from the Parker Collection. His gift will enhance every facet of JCB operations, from the way that Fellows do research to the ability of the JCB to stay competitive in a rare map marketplace that becomes more expensive every year.

Susan Danforth came to the JCB in 1975, and trained under the legendary Jeannette Black,
who achieved great distinction at the jcb during a career that stretched from 1937 to 1979, and included her appointment as the first Curator of Maps in 1958. A most worthy successor, Susan has prepared more than a dozen jcb publications, ranging from “The Great Subject, ‘La Grande Bibliothèque’ and the jcb” (a catalogue of an exhibit prepared for the 1982 Associates Meeting), to A Matter of Taste, just published. Throughout her time at the jcb she has written on a wide variety of cartographic topics, and is an expert on early depictions of Narragansett Bay.

**Director’s Note**

I have no doubt that the full range of jcb enterprise will be difficult to get at in this brief newsletter, but I hope that all of these articles, on topics new and old, will convey the richness of a great library in the full bloom of activity.

The last issue of In JCB highlighted the successful completion of our new residence for scholars at 79 Charlesfield Street, and that turned out to be a success of the first magnitude. Especially in 2008, when we attracted the most Fellows and visiting scholars in jcb history—43!—the house has proven to be a welcoming home away from home, and a comfortable setting for informal academic events in its own right.

Even as new initiatives have been launched, and large traveling exhibitions dispatched (the year of Champlain still has a few months left!) the core functions of the Library remain unchanged. We continue to serve as an essential research institution for scholars of all backgrounds, and to support the study of the past in other tangible ways. Three jcb-related publications have seen the light of day this year. Last winter, Patrimonio Ediciones of Madrid released a stunning facsimile edition of the Agnese Atlas, one of the great treasures held here (acquired by John Nicholas Brown in 1893). The gift of Charles V to his heir, Philip II, the atlas shows the known world at a time (circa 1539–1548) when Spanish monarchs claimed a large share of it. A volume of essays edited by Lester Langley and David Bushnell, Simon de Bolívar: Life and Legacy of the Liberator was published by Rowan and Littlefield. And A Matter of Taste, a lovely account of John Carter Brown’s collecting habits, was issued in May.

In the months ahead, we are looking forward to celebrating the publication of at least three more books by friends of the jcb. On September 24, Dian Kriz will discuss Slavery, Sugar and the Culture of Refinement: Picturing the British West Indies, 1700–1840 at an informal lunch. On October 7, we will celebrate the publication of Nicolás Wey Gómez’s The Tropics of Empire: Why Columbus Sailed South to the Indies.

On October 15, we will host the launch party for David Hackett Fischer’s Champlain’s Dream.

The Library also supports academic inquiry in a variety of other ways. Several beautiful exhibits were curated on our premises, including one on Portugal and the Renaissance that was organized by Jorge Flores, and another on “Atlantic Materia Medica: Healers, Plants and Fevers in the Circuits of Empire” curated by Ken Ward and Cogut Fellow Adrian Lopez Denis. Last March, we co-sponsored a conference on “Empires and Science,” held at Brown, that welcomed several former Fellows back to Providence. As noted elsewhere, we launched a summer program, with the help of the Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History, designed to integrate the Age of Exploration into the teaching of U.S. history in schools. And throughout the year, we welcome all manner of distinguished visitors and delegations, from rare book collectors to heads of universities and even the occasional head of state.

While it is not always customary to turn from the past to the future in these pages, it is worth mentioning that we are undertaking a broad review of the Library’s approach to information technology. Every day it becomes
clearer—even to those of us working on distant centuries—that the digital revolution is profound and permanent, presenting great opportunities as well as challenges. Our contribution to the World Digital Library is one of several ways that we are deepening our virtual presence—in this case, through a partnership with the Library of Congress and the great libraries of the world. We are in a constant conversation, as all rare book libraries are at the moment, about how much of our priceless collection we should make available online. And we always try to improve the JCB website, knowing that a number of new technologies will have undoubtedly emerged between the time this is written and its publication. Sometimes it feels as if the digital era is as revolutionary as the Age of Exploration itself. Accordingly, we are confronting it with the same mixture of confidence and caution that characterized the earliest explorers—at least the ones who made it back safely to tell the tale.
—Ted Widmer

Samuel de Champlain, or What’s in a Name?

2008 marks the 400th anniversary of the founding of Quebec by Samuel de Champlain, and the JCB has launched a series of exhibitions drawing from our deep holdings. The first, Hostile Intimacy: A century and a half of conflict between New France and New England, went on display in the MacMillan Reading Room in January 2008. In a selection of 70 manuscripts, printed books, maps, and prints, the exhibition highlighted the first years of the French presence along the St. Lawrence River. In fact, the exhibition began even before Champlain’s arrival in Canada with the manuscript, Brief discours, the beautifully drawn and colored account of the French explorer’s initial trip to the Americas—the Spanish Caribbean—in 1598–1600. Also on display were Champlain’s first published book about the peoples of Canada, Des sauvages (1603), and the first printed map to show his extensive explorations, which was issued in his Les voyages of 1613, the continuing account of the explorer’s North American

The only known image of Samuel de Champlain, in a characteristically dramatic pose, from the 1613 edition of Les voyages.
adventures. The exhibition continued the story as it explored the wary coexistence of Catholic New France and Protestant New England during a century and a half of their shared and often antagonistic history.

Well, the Curator may have been fond of the title, *Hostile Intimacy: A century and a half, etc. etc. etc.,* but even she had to admit that the post-colon wordiness was too much of a burden when the exhibition was brought to the Boston Public Library. That title wouldn’t even fit on the outside display banner. So when our exhibition opened there in the Cheverus Room in March 2008, it had a brand new title, *Champlain’s America: New England and New France,* and served as a centerpiece for Boston’s formal celebration of Francophonie, a toast to all the French-speaking peoples in the world. The Boston exhibition was supplemented by the generous loan of rare artifacts held by our sister institutions in Quebec, none of which had been seen in the United States before.

Extending that theme of international friendship, several items from the exhibition hit the road again at the beginning of July and traveled to Quebec City for the BIG celebration of Quebec’s 400th at the place where it all began. We were honored that *jcb* materials were chosen to be displayed in Quebec’s impressive Parliament building. The title this time? *Espace Champlain.*

But the story does not end there. Perhaps it makes sense that an exhibit in honor of an explorer has turned out to be peripatetic in its own right. The next stop will be at the Canadian Embassy in Washington D.C., where *Champlain’s Dream* opens on October 16th, 2008, this time taking its name from a new biography, just published by David Hackett Fischer. We hope to see you there. To celebrate the 400th anniversary, the Library has also published a facsimile of the magnificent 1613 map which, in addition to its extraordinary cartographic description of New France, is decorated with drawings of indigenous plants and peoples.

—Susan Danforth

The Age of Exploration

On July 20, 26 high school and elementary school teachers of American history found their way up College Hill and into the *jcb,* where a warm reception awaited them. They had come from large cities and tiny towns across the United States to attend our first-ever seminar on “The Age of Exploration.” The week-long course was one of several dozen sponsored nationwide by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, designed to improve the way history is taught to schoolchildren and teens. In our case, we ventured quite close to the edge of the conventional definition of American history, and spent much of the week discussing ways in which non-Anglophone traditions are often excluded from a narrative that still favors Jamestown and Plymouth. We also tried to reexamine basic assumptions about chronology and geography, reasserting the relevance of earlier centuries to a story that often begins too late, with fully-formed colonies in the New World, as if little had happened prior to 1607. The sessions were lively, and the teachers heard from a wide range of authorities, including *jcb* staff, independent scholars (Charles C. Mann and Tony Horwitz) and Professor John Hattendorf of the Naval War College, who greeted the teachers at the Redwood Library in Newport. The teachers made their own presentations at the end of the week, and judging from their exhilaration, we succeeded in making the New World new again.
World Digital Library

On August 13, Ted Widmer traveled to Washington to meet with the Librarian of Congress, Dr. James Billington, and sign an agreement promising that the JCB would donate the scans of ten priceless documents to the World Digital Library. The World Digital Library, proposed by Dr. Billington in 2005, is an ambitious international effort to make the world’s greatest cultural resources available online. It includes contributions from many of the national libraries of Europe and Asia. The project has received particular support from UNESCO, and the current US Ambassador to UNESCO, Louise Oliver (a former member of the JCB’s Board of Governors). Among the JCB treasures selected were the first illustrated Columbus Letter (Basel, 1493), the only copy known of the Dutch Vespucci Letter (Antwerp, 1508), the Stevens-Brown map, with its early use of the word “America” (circa 1507–1513), the first edition of the most frequently printed Nahuatl text (Mexico, 1611) and the Bay Psalm Book, the first book printed in the future United States (Cambridge, 1640).
Woodstock

On May 16, the JCB hosted a talk on “The People and the Constitution” by Professor Pauline Maier of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. That kicked off a two-day conference to celebrate the illustrious career of one of America’s great historians, Gordon Wood. Professor Wood retired from Brown University last spring but continues to chair the JCB’s Faculty Liaison Committee (and as such, sits as an ex officio member of the JCB’s Board of Governors). To celebrate his retirement, the JCB organized a series of workshops, attended by Gordon’s former graduate students, many of whom are now distinguished historians in their own right. Most had come a great distance to honor their mentor. Every step was taken in close consultation with Jack Greene, another illustrious historian in our midst (formerly at Johns Hopkins, but now retired in happy proximity to the JCB). Naturally, matters of substance were discussed, but there was also great camaraderie and levity—including the dawning awareness that there was no other name possible for an event taking stock of Gordon Wood’s remarkable career than... “Woodstock.” Accordingly, a poster hinting at the 1960s was designed and distributed, heralding “two days of history and remembrance.” A JCB map facsimile (New England, 1678), was also signed by all of the conference attendees, including Director and Librarian Emeritus Norman Fiering, and presented to Gordon. Unlike the original Woodstock, this event will be clearly remembered by all participants for a long time.
Wroth Awards

In May, at the beginning of the Annual Meeting of the JCB Associates, five members of the JCB staff were surprised to find themselves at the center of attention before a large and festive gathering in the MacMillan Reading Room. There they received a new award for long-term service, named after the legendary Lawrence C. Wroth, who presided over the Library for 34 years, from 1923 to 1957. The JCB collects many different kinds of rarities, and over the years it has attracted staff of exceptional loyalty. At present, there are five employees who have served the Library for thirty years or more: Richard Hurley, Susan Danforth, Lynne Harrell, Susan Newbury and Dennis Landis. All told, their tenure adds up to 160 years, which, if measured end to end, would take us back to 1848, nearly the beginning of the JCB itself. Susan Newbury and Dennis Landis showed up for work the same day, December 1, 1977, a very good day indeed. Each stalwart was presented with a unique illuminated manuscript, prepared by local artist Alba Corrado, testifying to his or her long-lasting contribution to this venerable institution.

The awarding of the first Wroth Awards was enhanced by the presence of L. Kinvin Wroth and his wife Deborah, who drove down from Vermont to participate. Kinvin cited the children’s book Eloise in his eloquent remarks over dinner that night, conveying a very youthful perspective on the JCB of the 1940s, when his father was Librarian. In 1944, when the Associates came into existence, Mr. Wroth gave out memberships to his children, perhaps, as his son speculated, to pad the numbers a bit. As a result, Kinvin Wroth has been an Associate for 64 years, another remarkable testament of loyalty.

New Fellowship Created

In November 2007, the Hodson Trust announced that it was creating an innovative new research fellowship with the gift of $1 million. The Hodson Trust-John Carter Brown Library Fellowship, to be administered by Washington College’s C.V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience, will allow scholars to spend several months doing concentrated research in the JCB’s holdings, then spend a similar period of intensive writing in a beautiful and tranquil setting on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. Ordinarily, our Fellowships are designed to foster research only—this one, by building in the time to write, should accelerate the production of articles and books, and cut down on the notorious amount of time it can take to produce an academic monograph. Adam Goodheart, the Hodson Trust-Griswold Director of the C.V. Starr Center, said, “it is invaluable for the Starr Center, as a young institution, to build a partnership with one of the oldest and most renowned institutions in its field.” The Hodson Trust was established by the family of Colonel Clarence Hodson, founder of the Beneficial Corporation, to support excellence in education, and since 1920, it has given more than $198.2 million toward this end.
Most Wanted

In 1974, then-Librarian Thomas R. Adams and the staff of the John Carter Brown Library compiled a “most wanted” list, published under the title Rare Americana: A Selection of One Hundred & One Books, Maps and Prints not in the John Carter Brown Library. In the introduction to that work, Adams wrote “The appearance of ‘Not in JCB’ in a bookseller's catalogue is often used to imply that a piece of Americana has unusual importance and is uncommonly scarce. The practice of using the Library’s collections as a yardstick is flattering, but it has created some confusion... ‘Not in JCB’ does not, therefore, necessarily mean that the piece is lacking from our collections.” But indeed, there are some titles that we do not own. These range from the Barcelona edition of the Columbus Letter of 1493 to the 23 volumes of Alexander von Humboldt’s Voyage aux Régions Equinoxiales du Nouveau Continent.

Some of the titles listed we will never own; 14 are bibliographic “ghosts” that once existed, yet today cannot be traced. In the 34 years since the publication of “the JCB 101,” as it is known, the Library has acquired seven of the titles included therein, two of them as gifts. In November of 2007, the Library acquired its eighth.

A Portuguese bookseller called us on 13 November 2007 to alert us to the fact that a very rare title would be coming up for auction the following day. The book, entitled Trattado Unico da Constituiçam Pestilencial de Pernambuco, was published in 1694 in Lisbon, Portugal, and provides the first description of an epidemic of Yellow Fever produced by a trained physician. A rapid flurry of emails and phone calls ensued while we determined our price point (and our budgetary situation) and we decided to bid. Word came in during the early hours of 15 November that we had won the item, and could add another annotation to the bibliography. Only 93 to go!

—Ken Ward

New Accessions: More for the Recipe File

One of the medical marvels identified in the New World was cinchona bark, valuable for the treatment of fevers. We recently acquired a medical narrative of several epidemics of a fever that occurred in Cremona, Italy, in the years 1737 to 1740, and in which cinchona bark was used as a cure. Paolo Valcarenghi, Continuatio epidemicarum Cremonensium constitutionum annorum 1737, 1738, 1739, 1740. aliis addenda. (Cremona: P. Ricchini, 1742) also includes other accounts of illnesses in which cinchona bark was used in treatment. Paolo Valcarenghi (d. 1780) was professor of medicine at the University of Pavia. Much more mysterious is the collection of herbs reported on in Gilles-Joseph Decourcelle, Elexir américain, ou le salut des dames: par rapport à leurs maladies particulières. (Châlons, Vitry, & à Paris, chez Saillant & Nyon, 1771). The work was based on the author's gynecological and obstetrical service with African women on Saint-Domingue (Haiti). He attributed his remedy to a combination of herbs used by the transplant women themselves.


—Dennis Landis
Down Colombia Way

The history of the book in Latin America is continually being rewritten as previously unknown imprints come to light. A case in point is the first press in Colombia, allegedly introduced by the Society of Jesus in 1739, which continued to function through 1746, according to the prince of Latin American bibliographers, José Toribio Medina. Medina, however, was only able to verify the existence of two early Bogotá imprints, one issued in 1739, and the other in 1740, neither of which is held by the JCB. Thirteen years later the Colombian bibliographer Eduardo Posada increased the number of early known Bogotá imprints to ten—of which the JCB currently holds four—and revised the years of output of the Imprenta de la Compañía de Jesús to 1738–1742.

In 1959, a group of Colombian scholars published a set of essays on Incunables bogotanos: siglo XVIII in which they added eight more early Colombian imprints to the repertoire, bringing the known total to eighteen—of which the JCB holds seven, including the four items registered by Posada—and extended the life span of the Jesuit press to 1753, if not 1767 when the Jesuits were expelled from all of the former Spanish colonies in the New World.

But that is not the end of the tale. Until last year the JCB held only one early Colombian imprint. Now it boasts eleven, including four previously unrecorded titles, or exactly half the currently known total (22) of the Imprenta de la Compañía de Jesús output. This extraordinary good fortune came about through the largesse of the late Maury A. Bromsen, bibliographer, bibliophile, and bookdealer extraordinaire. Among the hundreds of titles donated by his estate were ten early Bogotá items, dating from 1739 through 1741, four of which were previously unknown. Courtesy of Maury, who was a good friend to many of us in the field, including the author of these lines, the JCB probably has the single largest collection of early Colombian imprints in the world.

In chronological order, the first Colombian press imprints now in the JCB, of which it previously held only no. 11, are:

(1) Baltazar de Messa, Afectuosa novena de la santissima Virgen Maria (1739);
(2) Novena al Sacratissimo Corazon de Jesus (1739);*
(3) Novena de Nuestra Señora de Loreto (1739);*
(4) Antonio Xavier de León, Septenario a N. Sra. de las Angustias (1740);*
(5) Novena del glorioso patriarca San Phelipe Neri (1740);
(6) Juan Manuel Romero, Novena, en veneracion de los dolores de Maria (1740);*
(7) Septenario al Espiritu Santo (1740);
(8) Exercicio cotidiano, y devoción a la gloriosa virgen, y martyr Santa Barbara (1741);
(9) Novena de San Stanislao Kostka (1741);
(10) Juan Bautista de Toro, Día de la gran reyna (1741); and
(11) Juan Antonio de Rivas, Nouena en honra de la santissima, inefable, y augustissima Trinidad (1750).

—Michael T. Hamerly

*Not in Medina, Posada, or Incunables bogotanos.
Meet the Beetles

This photograph captures a remarkable effect—insects who leave bite marks in the shape of beetles! The Arnold-Green Collection of Arnold family business records was given to the Library by Senator T. F. Green in 1944, and forms part of the jcb’s impressive holdings of early American business records. But unfortunately, some of the documents show signs of insect infestation (happily, this occurred before they came to the jcb). The Library has been awarded a Preservation Assistance Grant as part of the National Endowment of the Humanities “We the People Project,” to conduct a conservation survey of the collection. Manuscript Librarian Kim Nusco is working with conservator Robert Hauser to assess the damage to the papers and to determine possible modes of treatment and stabilization. Soon the papers will be available for researcher (but never again insect) consumption.

I Found It (Again) at the JCB

In 1996, the John Carter Brown Library published a book entitled, *I Found It at the JCB*, to celebrate the Library’s sesquicentennial. Designed to emphasize the impact that individual books had on scholars, it also celebrated a Fellowship program that had by then fully matured. That publication included 60 essays by 60 Fellows who chose a single imprint—well-known or obscure—that had made a profound impression on them while they were in residence at the Library.

In 2008, the JCB renovated this tradition by initiating an online version of *I Found It at the JCB*. We are now asking new Fellows to write about a particularly memorable reading experience during their stay here. We will offer new commentaries periodically to allow our virtual community to experience the discovery as the Fellows do. You may locate these articles on the JCB website under “Online Resources.” We hope you enjoy these moments of encounter.

—Leslie Tobias-Olsen

RLIN, OCLC, and Acronyms

There are hundreds of acronyms associated with librarianship and it is easy to get confused. We hope to clarify a few of those that are often heard around the JCB.

RLG: Research Libraries Group

RLIN: Research Libraries Information Network—RLG’s online union catalogue

OCLC: Online Computer Library Center

WorldCat: OCLC’s online public access catalogue

In 1980 the JCB became an RLG member and began inputting its cataloguing records into RLIN. In 2007 with the merger of RLG and OCLC, all RLIN records were gradually integrated into OCLC’s WorldCat catalogue. WorldCat currently contains approximately 109,000,000 cataloguing records from 69,000 libraries worldwide, and now includes records for some 85% of the JCB’s collection of rare printed materials and 90% of its modern reference books. One of the JCB’s major goals is to have all of its collections—printed books, manuscripts, archives, maps, and prints—fully catalogued and available online, both in WorldCat and in Josiah, Brown University’s online public access catalogue. Researchers can access both of these catalogues through the JCB website.

—Susan Newbury
Fall Events Calendar

September 24, luncheon talk by Professor Dian Kriz of Brown University on her new book, Slavery, Sugar and the Culture of Refinement: Picturing the British West Indies, 1700–1840 (Yale University Press). Chancellor’s Dining Room, Sharpe Refectory, 12:30 pm

October 2, Lefty Lewis Cabal Lecture. Angel Delgado-Gomez, independent scholar, “Baptising a New World: Meaning and Patterns of Giving Place Names in the American Continent (1492–1800)” Casino de Madrid, Madrid, Spain, 8 pm

October 7, Book Party for The Tropics of Empire: Why Columbus Sailed South to the Indies (MIT Press), by Professor Nicolás Wey Gómez of Brown University. MacMillan Reading Room, 5:30 pm

October 15, Book Party for Champlain’s Dream (Simon & Schuster), by David Hackett Fischer, University Professor and Earl Warren Professor of History, Brandeis University. MacMillan Reading Room, 5:30 pm

October 16, Opening Reception for “Champlain’s Dream,” an exhibition curated by the JCB, in the Canadian Embassy, 501 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington DC, 6–8 pm

November 5, Professor Alejandra Osorio of Wellesley College will speak on her new book, Inventing Lima: Baroque Modernity in Peru’s South Sea Metropolis (Macmillan). MacMillan Reading Room, 5:30 pm

November 7, Professor João Adolfo Hansen of the Universidade de São Paulo will speak on “Cultural Patterns of Antonio Vieira’s representations of Brasil and Maranhão e Grão-Pará.” This lecture, to be followed by a reception and musical performance, will open a two-day conference on “Antonio Vieira, Baroque Portugal and Colonial Brazil,” co-sponsored by the Brown University Department of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies. MacMillan Reading Room, 5:30 pm


This issue of IN JCB is printed on paper made entirely from post-consumer waste. This 100 percent recycled paper reduces solid waste disposal and lessens landfill dependency. By using this paper,
• 6.9 trees were preserved for the future,
• 4,896,000 BTUs of energy were conserved,
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• 325 pounds of solid waste were not generated,
• 2,936 gallons of wastewater flow were saved,
• 640 pounds net greenhouse gasses were prevented from forming.

John Carter Brown Library
Box 1894
Providence, Rhode Island 02912

T: 401 863-2725
F: 401 863-3477
E: jcbl_information@brown.edu
W: www.jcbl.org

The John Carter Brown Library is an independently funded and administered institution for advanced research in history and the humanities founded in 1846 and located at Brown University since 1901.