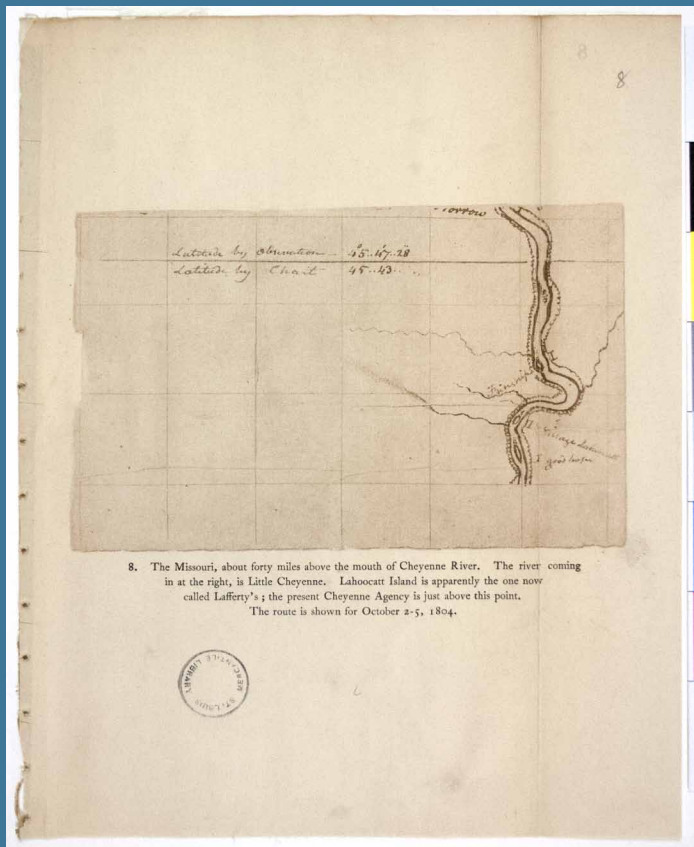


Reorganization of the Map–Print Area at the St. Louis Mercantile Library



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ABSTRACT

This project addresses the organization of material in the map-print area of the St. Louis Mercantile Library (the Mercantile). The project was carried out in two stages, the first being the identification and the ordering of the collections in the area. The second stage was documenting and cataloging of a subset of those collections.

To this point in time, the map-print area is used as a valuable resource for safely and securely holding oversized works on paper. Broadly speaking, the area holds three collections, the Barriger Railroad collection, the Pott Waterways Collection and fine art. Historic maps use a sizable share of the drawer space. Out of necessity, the materials are simply organized. This organization has facilitated taking full advantage of the limited space available. It is hoped that the new organization will limit unnecessary movement of materials by making individual objects easier to find and thereby improving the care of the objects.

The subset of objects cataloged in the second stage of the project was identified as the Mercantile's 1906 accession of Reuben Gold Thwaites' edited 1905, 8 volume of *Original Journals of Lewis and Clark*, first edition published by Dodd, Mead, and Co. The 8th volume of this printing is an atlas of facsimiles of maps drawn during the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The maps had been unbound and are currently matted. This was done for a 2004 exhibition and included additional historical maps of contextual interest. The maps will be un-matted and consolidated into protective folders in the new location at a later date.

All stages of the project were conducted under the supervision of the Mercantile's Fine Art Collections Curator Julie Dunn-Morton in cooperation with the assistance of Herman T. Pott National Inland Waterways Curator Sean Visintainer.

COVER IMAGE

Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Volume 8: 8. Thwaites, Reuben Gold. 1905. From the collections of the St. Louis Mercantile Library at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

INSCRIPTION: "The Missouri, about forty miles above the mouth of the Cheyenne River. The river coming in at the right, is Little Cheyenne. Lahocatt Island is apparently the one now called Lafferty's; the present Cheyenne Agency is just above this point. The route is shown for October 2-5, 1804."

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OBJECT DESCRIPTION

The Mercantile edition of *Original Journals of Lewis and Clark*, from which the map facsimiles come, was published in 1905. It is one of 750 eight-volume sets published between 1904–1905 by the New York publishing company Dodd, Mead, and Co., at the urging of the American Philosophical Society. A separate but related project published by Dodd, Mead, and Co., at this time, was a portfolio of hand-colored engravings of the 1830s work by Karl Bodmer. This related publication is also in the possession of the Mercantile. This edition of *Original Journals* was published to satisfy public curiosity on the occasion of the centennial of Lewis and Clark's Expedition. The publication's scholarship was an invaluable resource satisfying interest in the expedition with the most complete and accurate records available about the expedition until the 1950s.¹

The maps that have been cataloged from this 8th volume were reproduced from the collection of maps passed down to Clark's descendant Julia Clark Voorhis. The majority of maps reproduced are credited to the hand of William Clark. A few are credited to Meriwether Lewis by Yale University. The original maps are now in the care of Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, New Haven, Conn. The journals are in the care of the Missouri Historical Society. Many other original documents from the expedition are in the care of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pa. An in-depth study on the development of the publication is discussed in Paul Cutright's *A History of the Lewis and Clark Journals*, University of Oklahoma Press.²

1 Blessing, Matt. 2004. "Reuben Gold Thwaites and the historical resurrection of Lewis & Clark." *Wisconsin Magazine of History*. 88 (2): 42-49.

2 Yale University Library, "Guide to the Lewis and Clark Expedition Maps and Receipt WA MSS 303-304." Accessed May 1, 2013. <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.clark>.

OBJECT LIST

The following pages present the catalog entries for the full set of objects now listed in the Mercantile's PastPerfect database. The pages contained have been exported and show the information that accompanies each record. The upper right-hand corner is a thumbnail image that can be enlarged. The image contains a scale marking one-inch units in the colors cyan, magenta, yellow and black. These images are for visual reference but do not possess resolution sufficient for reproduction. The software also allows for the automated output of a finding aid that can be made public via the Mercantile's website.

D R A W E R L I S T

The following list presents the entirety of the map–print area that was reorganized. The list contains portions of larger collections as well as smaller collections in their entirety. These collections represent three major groups: objects that are part of the St. Louis Mercantile Library Art Museum, the John W. Barriger III National Railroad Library, and the Herman T. Pott National Inland Waterways Library. While this area of the Mercantile is limited in size, it provides an important place of safety for oversized objects. The identification of drawers is accurate; however, it is also expected to change for the benefit of the efficient management of space. Consequently, the date of the list should be noted. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the use of drawer labels that are easily changed will be taken advantage of. It should also be noted that the following is a working list for the convenience of the Mercantile staff. The necessity of its fluid nature benefits from the use of informal names and easy modification; for that reason, it is intended for internal use only.

Mercantile Library Map-Print Area flat files, 83 drawers

reorganized 3/14/2013

SECTION A

CABINET No. 1

- 1-1 display boards - architecture
- 1-2 (Barriger R.R.) maps-lithograph?
- 1-3 (Barriger R.R.) maps-lithograph?-Large & small
- 1-4 (Barriger R.R.) drum signs-glass
- 1-5 (Pott Waterways) topographic maps 1913 USGS

CABINET No. 2

- 2-1 (Barriger R.R.) maps
- 2-2 (Pott Waterways) maps
- 2-3 maps extra-large - color and styrene
- 2-4 (Barriger R.R.) maps
- 2-5 (Barriger R.R.) maps

CABINET No. 3

- 3-1 artist B, French maps
- 3-2 (Lewis & Clark) maps
- 3-3 (Lewis & Clark) maps
- 3-4 (Lewis & Clark) maps
- 3-5 (Lewis & Clark) maps

CABINET No. 4

- 4-1 oversized print, artist A-Z
- 4-2 (Morgenthaler)
- 4-3 (American Art Union), broadsides
- 4-4 prints, photos, painting-B&O R.R. 1828
- 4-5 portraits, (Currier & Ives), (Mississippi Lime)

CABINET No. 5

- 5-1 portraits (lithograph), native, artists L-
- 5-2 prints-assorted, artists H-R
- 5-3 artists H-K
- 5-4 (Shopmaker American Political Collection)
- 5-5 (Fulwider(sp))

CABINET No. 6

- 6-1 Coachman Bus Photos, (Barriger R.R.) Posters, (Currier & Ives), (Harper's Prints), Locomotive Plan reproductions, Great Northern Drum Arch schematic drawing, club photos, maps (Barriger R.R.), Schwarts photos
- 6-2 (Van Vliet)
- 6-3 artist S
- 6-4 (Nuderscher), (Trumbell?) (M265-2008.003)
- 6-5 (Severson)

CABINET No. 7

- 7-1 artist - (Anerson, Stella, Grim, Winton)
- 7-2 (Barriger R.R.), (Pott Waterways) prints French
- 7-3 (Scott)
- 7-4 (Feldacker Labor Art Collection)
- 7-5 (Feldacker Labor Art Collection)

CABINET No. 8

- 8-1 (Pott Waterways) blue prints/lines - riverboat architecture
- 8-2 (Pott Waterways) blue prints/lines - riverboat architecture
- 8-3 (Bodmer) lithographs, (Goodman)
- 8-4 (UMSL Campus Architecture) blue lines - Mercantile Lib.
- 8-5 (Weather Bird), (Barriger R.R.) posters, Mercantile Lib. rendering

CABINET No. 9

- 9-1 (Pott Waterways) blue prints/lines - riverboat architecture
- 9-2 artist M-(Mathis)
- 9-3 -----
- 9-4 (Rinehart)
- 9-5 (Rinehart)

CABINET No. 10

- 10-1 (Veiled Profit Floats) gouaches
- 10-2 (Weather Bird), 4' pencil Eads Bridge drawing, Great St.L Tornado, (Morgenthaler), newspaper prints-Paris,
- 10-3 (Weather Bird), maps (unbound atlas, 1794), (Compton & Dry), (Mississippi Lime), Broadsheet, Oil on Paperboard
- 10-4 (Weather Bird)
- 10-5 (Weather Bird)

CABINET No. 11

- 11-1-5 plans architecture

CABINET No. 12

- 12-1-5 plans architecture - Mylar

CABINET No. 13

- 13-1-5 plans architecture - Mylar

CABINET No. 14

- 14-1-5 plans architecture - Mylar

SECTION B

CABINET A

- A-1 (Pott Waterways) photos - portraits & riverboats, (Harpers Bazaar)
- A-2 (Pott Waterways) art & mktg ephemera
- A-3 (Barriger R.R.) photos
- A-4 (Barriger R.R.) prints & ephemera
- A-5 (Barriger R.R.) blueprints, Mylar, surveys, architecture, plans carriage

CABINET B

- B-1 exhibit staging area, Colman-Offset - 1 color black, legal pad notes
- B-2 (Barriger R.R.) blueprints & Mylar - cloth - note: off gassing
- B-3 (Barriger R.R.) blueprints & Mylar
- B-4 (Barriger R.R.) blueprints & Mylar
- B-5 (Barriger R.R.) photos

CABINET C - this cabinet contains only three drawers

- C-1-3 (Shopmaker Political) ephemera

METHODS

The fundamental motivation of this project was the opportunity to work with objects in a museum setting. Pedagogically speaking, my goal was to learn inductively, case by case, about the values and frameworks that museum professionals use to think about the care of objects.

However, making those tacit lessons explicit is an important step in appreciating what I was learning. To this end, I went beyond learning by example and introduced myself to writings in the fields of the museum registrar and the archivist. Not surprisingly, what I found expressed two different perspectives, though the perspectives—or should I say identities—could blur in interesting ways. At the end of my reading, I came across a *New York Times* article titled “Leaving Cloister of Dusty Offices, Young Archivists Meet Like Minds.” The article used the term archivist to describe people coming from both perspectives, that of the archivist as well as the museum registrar, but it never mentioned the word ‘registrar.’ Curious. My takeaway from this article is that identities in the professions may be in flux.

My introduction to the theory of archival practice came by the name of the British archivist Sir Hilary Jenkinson and his espousal of the concept of *respect des fonds*, the understanding that groups of objects should be kept together in their original relationships, the intellectual and physical order and origination, or provenance, holding contextual information that can easily be destroyed. This lesson found its name in the aftermath of the French Revolution, after which government documents were freely reorganized based on their content and a context understanding of French history was lost. An example of *respect des fonds* in practice can be seen in my project in the organization of the Lewis and Clark maps. The maps were created as a group, and while no longer bound together, they will be kept as a group.³

In addition to Jenkinson, I found the Illinois archivist Margaret C. Norton insightful. Her focus was on the content of documents, discounting the medium, or perhaps more exactly stated, the physical embodiment of content as having extrinsic value. I found her ideas

3 Gracy, D. B. (1981). *An Introduction to Archives and Manuscripts*. New York, N.Y., Special Libraries Association.

especially interesting because the physical existence of content can be understood as one example of an original relationship that should be respected according to respect des fonds. In a sense, her ideas run somewhat counter to the principle. If one accepts that there can be no content without form.

Two readings were used to outline the major ideas in archival practice, David Gracy's *An Introduction to Archives and Manuscripts*, and Greene and Meissner's "More Product, Less Process." Gracy's *Introduction* outlined for me both simple nomenclature and practice. With this introduction, I was able to understand the context within which I was working. The objects held by the Mercantile are of great historical value and, as such, encourage great care in their preservation. Greene and Meissner's "More Product, Less Process," gave me a greater understanding of the tensions brought to bear by limited resources. In their writing, perhaps, they discuss objects of less intrinsic worth; however, the issues of limited resources, desire for the greatest level of care and accessibility are universal.

An outline of the museum registrar's perspective on objects and their care was found in Dudley and Wilkinson's *Museum Registration Methods*. This volume was practical in its focus; nonetheless, I found its prescriptions largely paralleled the tenets of the archival community. Contrasting archival thinking, however, was an accepted understanding of the intrinsic value of objects and rather less of a focus on utility.

While my project was conducted in the Mercantile Library, I was learning to see objects from the perspective of one of the country's venerable membership libraries. I also wished to add to my learning with a variety of institutional perspectives. To this end, my fellow museum studies cohort member, Shannon Tournier, arranged for a tour of the National Archives at St. Louis. Tournier is participating in an internship at the Archives and was able to arrange an in-depth tour led by the director, Bryan McGraw. As a National Personnel Records Center, the archives holds more than 65 million military personnel files. One critical use of these records is to confirm military veteran status. The records they hold provide proof for military personnel of

their service and thereby ensure eligibility to the benefits of their service. Walking through the facility made an indelible impact due simply to its great size that holds 27,000 square feet of records storage.

The mission of the Archives is extrinsic—the documents it holds are tools for making decisions, thereby justifying the expense spent on preservation. Arising out of this observation was an interesting conversation about the value of digitization with director McGraw. With so many documents, of which, in the view of the federal government, access to content is really the only thing worth spending money on, why not begin digitization. After all, a computer search will be much quicker than one by hand, and less destructive too. While that may be a common understanding, the reality of digitization is much too problematic for a number of reasons. The first problem is the scale of the task—millions of individual documents would require handling. Each document would need to be handled one at a time to digitize. Currently, only documents that are requested need personnel devoted to their access. Additionally, each time a record is pulled, refileing errors, although rare, would inevitably result in lost records.

Beyond this practical problem, other important issues would need to be addressed. According to McGraw, digital retrieval of information could easily challenge the ability of the center to keep personnel information private as required by law. Documents often contain information relevant to multiple individuals. Thus, privacy guidelines demand that each record be examined and necessary redactions be made.

A further critical challenge to converting records to digital format is the need to continually reformat files once they are digital. This is the only way to avoid digital obsolescence. This conversion of digital encoding is required by the breakneck speed with which digital formats change. The stability of paper is far more reliable.

McGraw went on to describe the difficulty of dealing with documents that are born digital. Emails that require archiving come from a variety of computer formats. These formats

become obsolete in time and their files cannot be shared between electronic systems. Ironically, the only format that is reliable is ink on paper. Even microfiche is becoming a problem, as the machines that read the film are no longer made. So for the time being, creating digital documents by the National Archives is done more for public outreach than for preservation and retrieval.

As is the case with the National Archives, the key to keeping track of the materials held by the Mercantile is accurate record-keeping. The mercantile records include membership data and the catalog of items they hold. This information is managed with two software applications, PastPerfect (PP) a proprietary collection management software package and Archivists' Toolkit (AT) an open source collection management software package focused on archives. The software packages are used to manage different types of information and unfortunately can only exchange it to a limited degree. While PP flexibly handles membership and object information, AT is preferred by archivists for its ease of use in generating finding aids and organizing object records in hierarchies of series and subseries; however, both programs do have this functionality. While PP runs its own relational database, AT draws information from a separate database and can profit from MySQL, making searches more flexible. While PP can hold images, AT does not have this ability. While PP cannot read XML data, AT can. Despite a multi-decade effort to provide highly functional and easy-to-use software for museum and archive needs, it is remarkable how ineffective programmers have been at rising to the challenge. All of the software packages currently available are lacking remarkably basic functionality. Why would software not be able to import data in the form that it can export? A good question for a later date perhaps.⁴

⁴ Archivists' Toolkit, "Features Matrix: Archivists' Toolkit, Archon, and PastPerfect." Accessed May 3, 2013. <http://archiviststoolkit.org/node/76>.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Coming to the completion of this project brings me to reflect on the future directions that continue in the path of the work I started. Simplest of these tasks will be cataloging the handful of Lewis and Clark maps that belong to the set I was working with but are on display throughout the library—a straightforward project. Of more contextual use will be the cataloging of Karl Bodmer's prints in Maximilian Prince of Wied's *Travels in the Interior of North America*. Dodd, Mead, and Co., published a series of Bodmer's images shortly after *Original Journals of Lewis and Clark*. Understanding the relationship of the documents would be of interest.

On a more technical note, investigating the practicality of exchanging information between PastPerfect and Archivists' Toolkit could be of benefit. The programming language used to write PastPerfect is unfortunately no longer supported by the company that created it, Microsoft. I anticipate that at some point the software will be updated with a new programming language. But having flexibility in the management of the Mercantile catalog could be of use.

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