

Treasures from the TOWER

The new director of special collections offers a tour of recent and notable highlights from the rare collections of the River Campus Libraries.

WHEN THE DOORS OF RUSH RHEES LIBRARY OPENED in 1930, the building featured a space on the main floor known as the “Treasure Room.” Housed in that small sanctuary were some of the University’s historically important documents, original manuscripts, rare books, and other materials.

In the nearly 85 years since then, the collection has grown to more than 100,000 volumes—ranging from a recently acquired vellum roll that dates from 1374 to a nearly 7,000-work collection of first-edition modern poetry and fiction—and more than 600 manuscript collections. Cared for in secured stack spaces on the second floor of Rush Rhees, the “treasures” are now overseen by the Department of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation.

And while scholars from around the world continue to visit the department for their primary-source research in history, biography, and other projects, the stewardship focus of the library’s staff has expanded from preserving the material to finding ways to share the one-of-a-kind collections with a wider world.

Several projects in recent years have digitized collections from the 19th and 20th centuries—particularly aspects of Rochester’s strong collection of abolition, suffrage, and Civil War materials—and several more projects are under way.

Students around the world can now see Frederick Douglass’s handwritten “passes” for the Underground Railroad and view original letters of Abraham Lincoln as he proposed ways to end slavery shortly after the Civil War began.

Making sure that historically important materials are not only preserved, but also available for scholars and students has always been the key reason behind the special collections, says Jim Kuhn, the newly appointed Joseph N. Lambert and Harold B. Schleifer Director of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation.

“Our rare and unique holdings are here for use by the campus and greater community,” says Kuhn. “Digitization expands our reach, but there is often no substitute for access to the original object in our reading rooms and classrooms.”

From his vantage point astride the analog world of historical artifacts and the digital world of technology, Kuhn offers a guided tour of a few selected treasures from Rochester’s collections. **R**



Inventory of the Library at St. Victor of Marseille (1374)

LATIN MANUSCRIPT ON VELLUM ROLL

A fascinating and ancient object in the collection is a library catalog, dated April 20, 1374, of the library at St. Victor of Marseille, a monastery founded by John Cassian in 415 CE. The manuscript on vellum is one of five known surviving inventories, is complete and properly notarized, and was written just four years after the death of Pope Urban V. Prior to his election, Urban V—born Guillaume de Grimoard—had been the abbot of the monastery, which had benefited considerably during Urban’s papal reign. The library at St. Victor consisted of approximately 700 volumes with, not unexpectedly, a strong emphasis on works of theology and Biblical commentary. The classics of the ancient and medieval worlds and a respectable collection of law books are also noted in the catalog. Reconstructing libraries on the basis of catalogs like this one has been attempted by librarians and scholars; manuscript digitization projects have made the work considerably easier in recent years. I hope that a student or class might take up the challenge for this important record.

*Descriptions by Jim Kuhn
Photographs by Adam Fenster
Introduction by Scott Hauser*

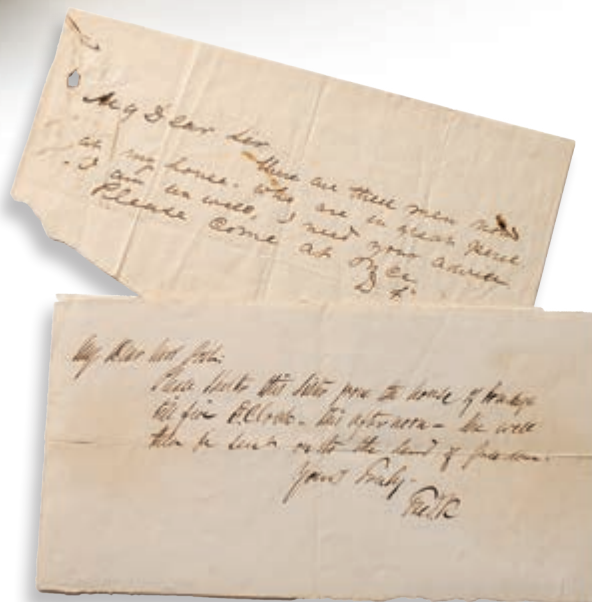


Two 'Passes' for the Underground Railroad

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

The department has strong 19th-century manuscript collections related to the Civil War, and to the abolition and women's suffrage movements. Among our most compelling items are passes to Rochester safe houses on the Underground Railroad, each written by Frederick Douglass about persons who remain—for obvious reasons—unidentified on paper. Unidentified, yet poignantly close. By studying such original documents, students and scholars can better understand the transit north of escapees from slavery. "My Dear Sir" is Douglass's close friend Samuel Drummond Porter, who frequently concealed men and women in the barn on the property of his sisters. His own property on South Fitzhugh Street in Rochester was under near-constant surveillance. "My Dear Mrs. Post" is addressed to the Rochester suffrage and abolition activist Amy Post, a central figure in an ongoing digital humanities project to transcribe and digitize the papers of this family of 19th-century "revolutionaries."

Online: the Post papers: <http://postfamily.library.rochester.edu>;
the Douglass collection: <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/douglass>.

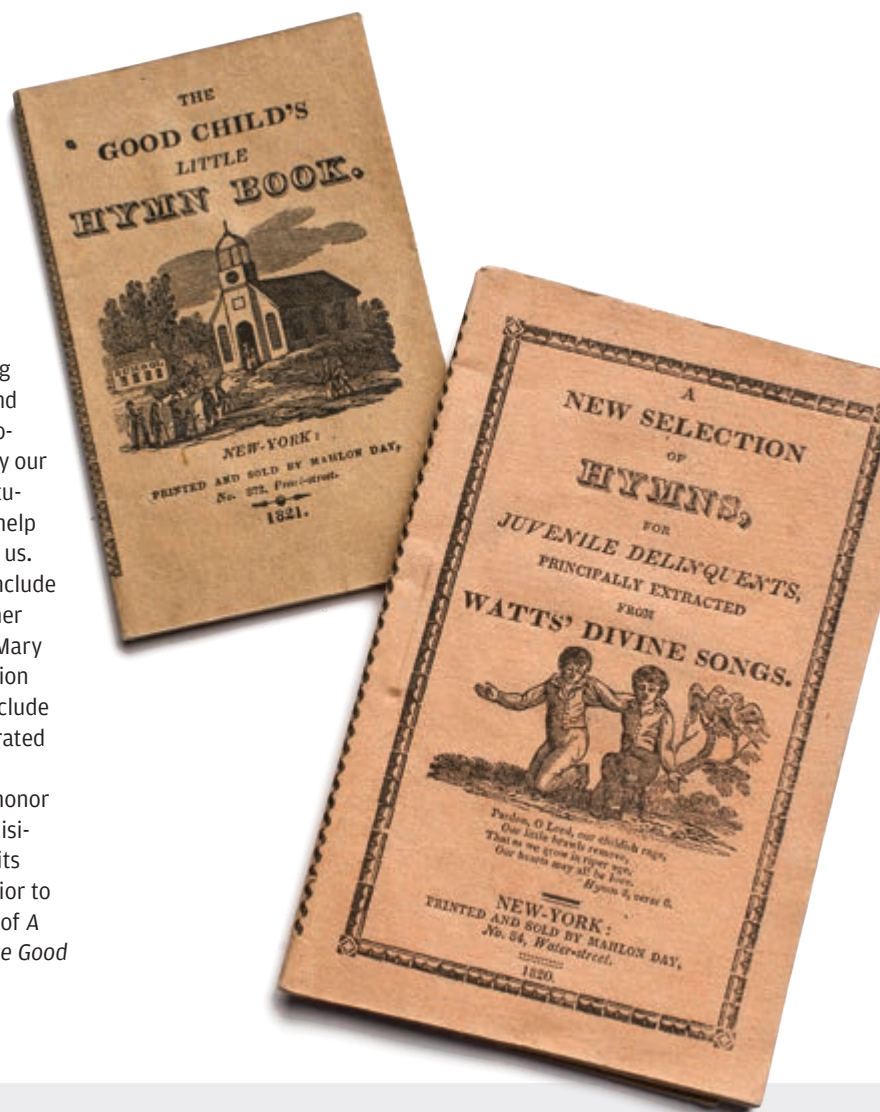


A New Selection of Hymns for Juvenile Delinquents (1820) and The Good Child's Little Hymn Book (1821)

ISAAC WATTS (NEW YORK, NY: MAHLON DAY)

The libraries opened an exhibition this spring called *Acquiring Minds: Building Special Collections, 2009-14*. Conceived to provide a sense of the range of recent collecting activities in support of study, teaching, and advanced research, we paired up new acquisitions with items long held by the department. Sharing how we build on existing strengths we hoped might spark new and renewed interest in the many well-known and the perhaps not-so-well-known opportunities for research and teaching presented by our rare holdings. The exhibition also provides an important opportunity for public acknowledgement of the funds and donors that help strengthen the research collections now available here to all of us. Among items added to the collection in the past year on view include titles published by the early 19th-century New York City publisher Mahlon Day (1790-1854). Acquired through the support of the Mary Faulk Markiewicz Fund as an addition to the Markiewicz Collection of Children's Books, these charming small books for children include alphabets, hymns, and Bible stories and can be profusely illustrated with woodcuts, sometimes hand-colored.

The original collection was donated by Victor Markiewicz in honor of his late wife, Mary, with an endowment fund to support acquisitions, in 1983. In the decades since we have continued to build its strength in American and English children's books published prior to 1920. Two of my own favorite recent additions include this pair of *A New Selection of Hymns for Juvenile Delinquents* (1820) and *The Good Child's Little Hymn Book* (1821).



Introducing the Lambert and Schleifer Director



TREASURE KEEPER: As the Joseph N. Lambert and Harold B. Schleifer Director of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation, Jim Kuhn oversees Rochester's historic collections.

A former librarian at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., Jim Kuhn was installed this spring as the Joseph N. Lambert and Harold B. Schleifer Director of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation.

The position was named in recognition of a \$1 million commitment from Joseph Lambert '59 and his partner, Harold Schleifer. The position plays a key role in the University's efforts to preserve, digitize, and share historic collections.

As an undergraduate at Rochester, Lambert worked in Rush Rhees Library, locating and checking out books—and even tending the fires of the Welles-Brown Room. Schleifer, at 14 years old, shelved books at the New York Public Library. While Lambert went on to become an ophthalmologist, Schleifer pursued a master's degree in library science and eventually became the dean of the University Library at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

Kuhn, who earned master's degrees in library science and philosophy at Kent State University, oversaw cataloging, technical services, and collection information services at Folger, where he last served as the interim Eric Weinmann Librarian. He is a councilor-at-large for the American Library Association.

Autograph Letter of Abraham Lincoln (1862)

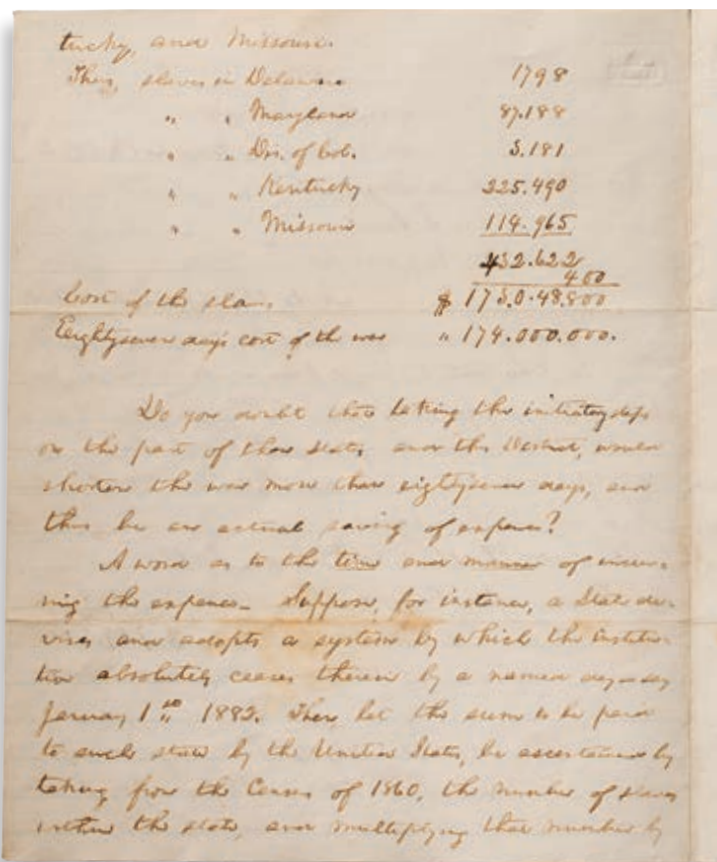
SIGNED TO JAMES A. MCDUGAL, U.S. SENATE

History is full of “what if” moments: in a March 6, 1862, message to Congress, President Abraham Lincoln advocated a scheme for gradual, compensated emancipation among slave-holding border states. The plan would be to buy the freedom of slaves directly, rather than paying the financial and human costs of war.

But opposition to the idea was fierce, and so Lincoln engaged directly with opponents via letters like this remarkable March 14, 1862, letter to “War Democrat” Senator James McDougal of California in which Lincoln points out that “[l]ess than one half-day’s cost of this war would pay for all the slaves in Delaware . . .” and that “. . . less than eighty seven days cost of this war would, at the same price, pay for all in Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Kentucky, and Missouri.”

Although in the end such lobbying efforts by the White House failed, with no border state stepping forward to voluntarily give up slavery in return for such “pecuniary aid,” Lincoln’s annual message to Congress on December 1, 1862, renewed calls for both compensated emancipation and for colonization. A second “fair hand” copy of this letter exists in the collection of the Library of Congress. While there may be no way to be sure which of Lincoln’s three private secretaries created that copy, we do know that William Stoddard, Class of 1858, served Lincoln in that capacity from 1861 to 1864, and is believed to have copied out the first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Online: Lincoln’s letters: <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/lincoln>.



Campus Keepsakes

For the first 70 years or so of the University’s existence, the archives were often, quite literally, the “University’s attic.” But with the expansion of the University in the 1920s, and perhaps the celebration of the 75th anniversary in 1925, materials of special value and importance to the life of the University began to be formally collected for posterity.

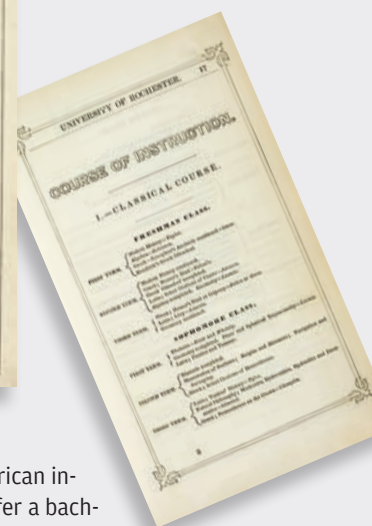
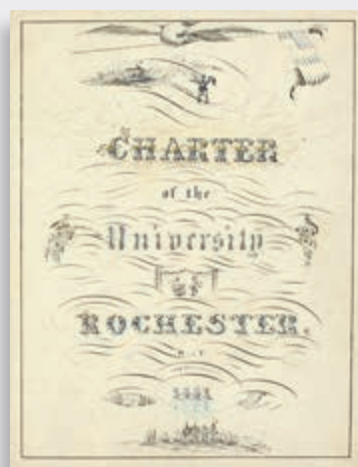
In addition to highlighting a few of those treasures for the 2014 history, *Our Work Is But Begun: A History of the University of Rochester, 1850-2005*, by Janice Bullard Pieterse (University of Rochester Press, 2014), Melissa Mead, the John M. and Barbara Keil University Archivist and Rochester Collections Librarian, is putting together an exhibition on University history, which will be on display in Rush Rhees Library this fall.

Here are her descriptions of a few favorites:

University Charter

The original charter of the University was granted in 1851, providing for the “Establishment of an institution of the highest order for scientific and classical education.”

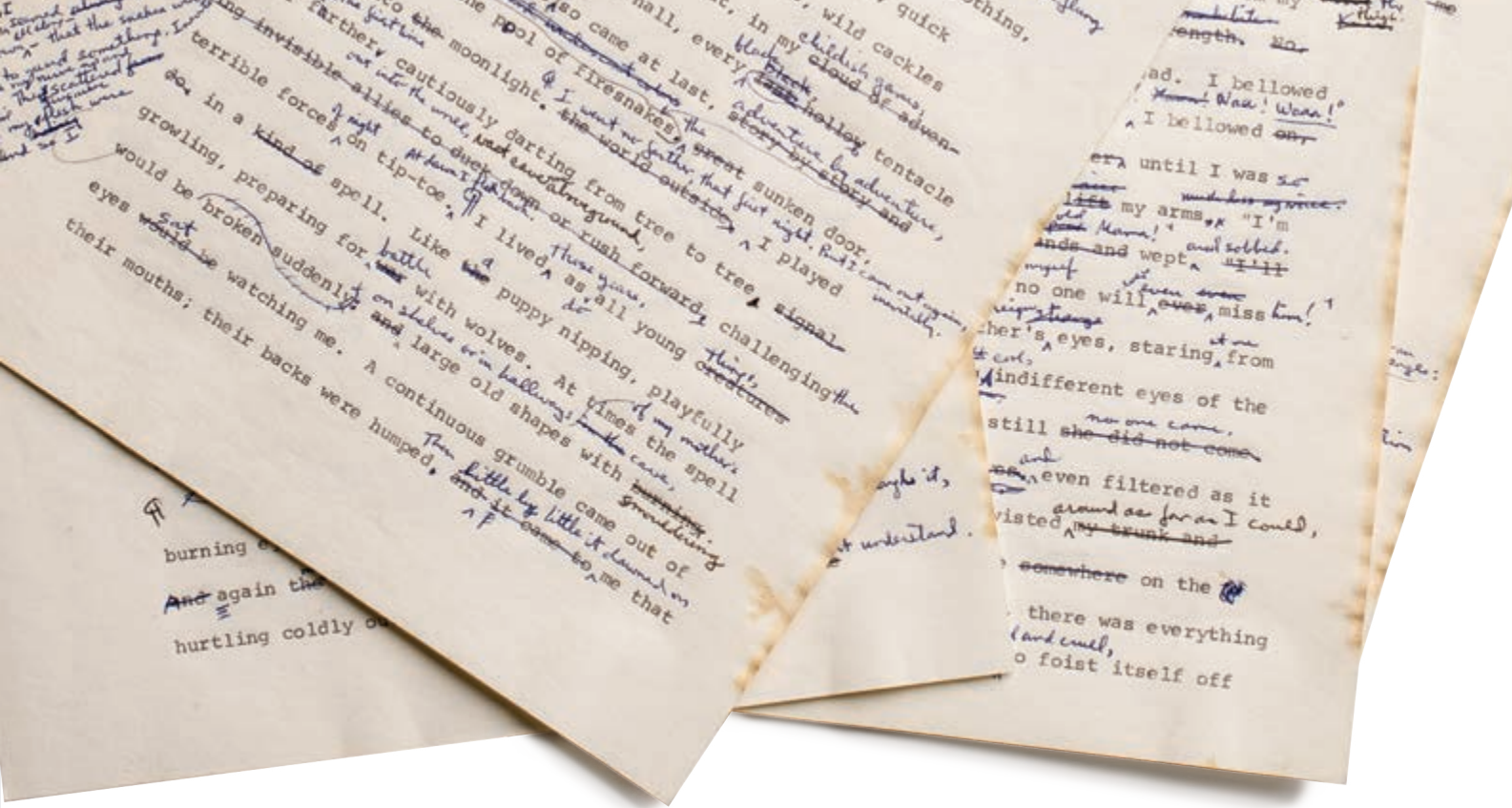
Consisting of 12 vellum leaves, plus one blank leaf at the end, the charter is signed by the chancellor of the University of the State of New York, and sealed with the Great Seal of the University of the State of New York. A key symbol of office, the charter is presented to each president at inauguration.



Course of Instruction

Rochester was one of the first American institutions of higher education to offer a bachelor of science degree, a program of study that allowed students at the time to skip Latin and Greek. The idea was so new that an 1850 report to the trustees acknowledged that some would find it “a radical and dangerous innovation.”

For the first two years, students in both BA and BS tracks studied history, literature, mathematics, “natural philosophy” (science), and languages. During junior and senior years, all students continued courses in literature and philosophy, but candidates for the BA elected additional credits from three subject areas: mathematics and mechanics; natural sciences, including chemistry; and classical languages. Bachelor of science students could study French or German, and pursued studies in both of the scientific departments. (Continued on next page)



Original Typescript of *Grendel* with Author's Corrections (c. 1970)

JOHN GARDNER

Some 43 years after its initial publication in 1971, the retelling of the Beowulf legend from the point of view of its monster character in *Grendel* remains one of John Gardner's best-known and well-loved works. The department holds the collection of record of John Gardner among its 20th-century literary collections, including original typescripts, proof copies, first American and other editions and translations, correspondence, and reviews. Written, as novelist-

reviewer D. Keith Mano has noted, "in a poet's prose," *Grendel* in typescript with authorial corrections, provides a vivid glimpse into the artistic mind at work. Studying his changes shows Gardner's aesthetic and moral values. In the words of Phyllis Andrews, the curator of Modern Literature Collections, examining where the pages have been extensively marked up in blue and black ink, and in red pencil "does not fail to evoke awe from student viewers."

Trial Printings of Texts for *The Holy Grail* (1870), 'Property,' and 'Lucretius' (1868)

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

Rowland Collins chaired the English faculty from 1972 to 1981 and bequeathed his collection of Alfred Lord Tennyson books, manuscripts, letters, and other memorabilia to special collections. Exhibited in 1992, the collection continues to be added to through the Rowland L. Collins Book Fund. During the past six months we purchased an extraordinary "trial book" of unique proof sheets for "Property" and "Lucretius" (the first and last of the seven *Other Poems* published in 1869), and one of only two surviving second proof states for the Arthurian poem *The Holy Grail*.

Throughout his career, Tennyson fought for authorial control of both content and presentation, moving from publisher to publisher, and sharing authorial revisions with friends on what has been called a "return or burn" basis.

For that reason, authentic Tennyson proof sheets such as these (also known as "trial books") are quite rare, and were often forged in the 19th century. Beyond support for Tennyson scholarship, proof sheets provide teaching material related to the role of revision in the writing process, 19th-century printing and publishing history, cultural



transmission, and forgery. We hope this addition will also strengthen research potential for Arthurian scholars working in Robbins Library and beyond through the Robbins Library digital projects, including adding digital images to Tennyson texts available in the online Camelot Project.

Online: the Camelot Project: <http://library.rochester.edu/camelot>.