

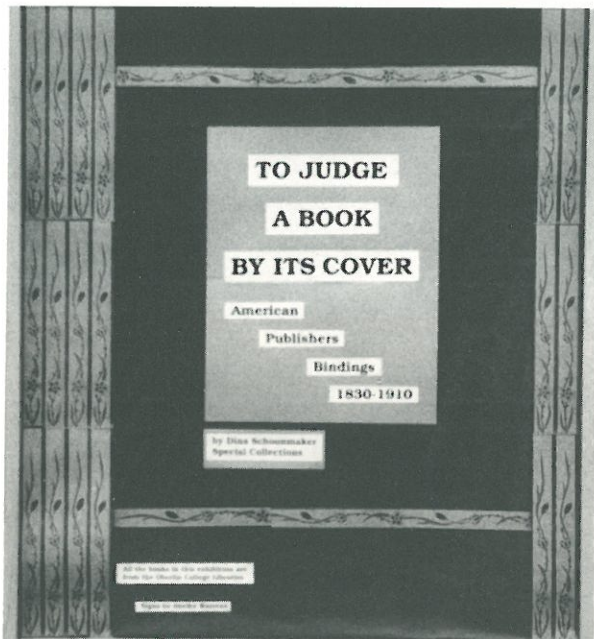


PERSPECTIVES

NUMBER SIX

MAY 1993

American 19th Century Book Cover Design



On March 7, 1993 about forty people gathered in the Goodrich Room of the Main Library to participate in an interactive workshop on American nineteenth-century book cover design. Sue Allen, a book designer and artist from New Haven, Connecticut and Dina Schoonmaker, Head of Special Collections, led the lively session, which was planned to show off interesting cover designs from the collections of the workshop participants. Oberlin College faculty and staff, area book dealers, and other interested citizens brought books that spanned the century—from early simple gold-leaf designs, to ornate and gaudy 1880s covers, to turn-of-the-century artist-designer examples.

Everyone was so involved in discussion and observation that it was hard to tear them away to attend a reception and official opening of the exhibition "To Judge a Book by Its Cover: American Publishers' Bindings from the Oberlin College Library" on the main floor of the library. This occasion attracted about 60

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Meier Gift Of Books On History Of India

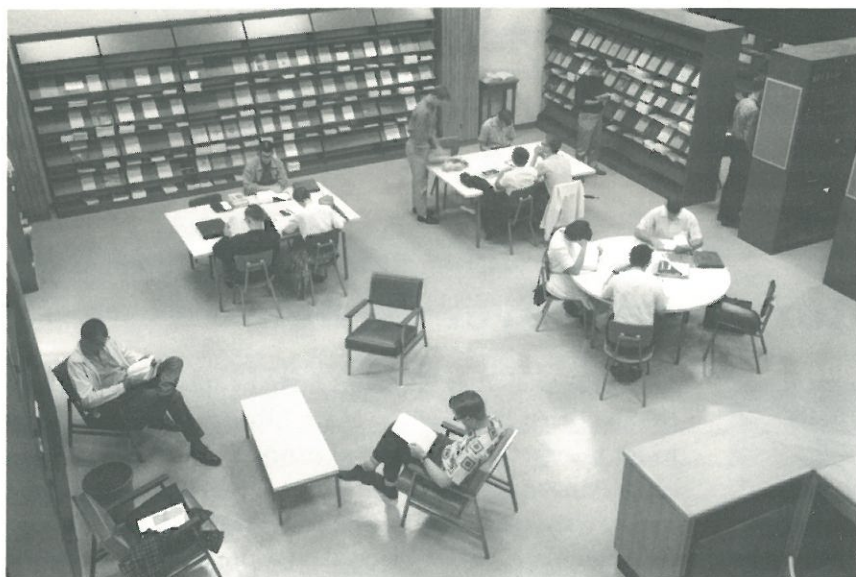
It is always a special pleasure for the Library to announce the receipt of a gift collection that matches a particular curricular or research need at Oberlin. Such is the case with the recent gift by August Meier '45 of over 750 volumes on the history and culture of India. Professor Meier is retiring this year as University Professor of History at Kent State University. Professor Meier gathered his collection while in India during the late 1980s, as part of his

study comparing the American civil rights movement with the nationalist movement in India. The Meier collection is particularly strong in English-language secondary sources published in India 1960–1985 on twentieth-century Indian history. The collection also includes reprints of rare nineteenth-century books, standard reference works, and recent social science studies.

Ray English, Director of Libraries, notes that "Professor Meier's collection is one of the most wel-

come gifts we have received in recent years, for it matches precisely a need created by an expanding area of Oberlin's curriculum." As Oberlin has added faculty members in the area of South Asian studies, the Library has been building collections in the history, literature, and religion of India to support the teaching and research of Professors Michael Fischer (South Asian history), Anuradha Needham (Anglophone literature), and Paula Richman (religion).

Not Just A Study Hall: The Science Library



THEN: The Kettering Science Library in 1961

The Class of 1904 Science Library in Kettering Hall has evolved a great deal since its opening in 1961. Designed originally to house the departmental collections of the formerly disparate botany, chemistry, and zoology collections, it also became a repository for current geology materials. The focus of the collection has further expanded, matching the growth of scientific knowledge. Materials on environmental geology, biochemistry, neuroscience, biopsychology, immunology, cellular and molecular science, soil science, forensic chemistry, alternative agriculture, and many more areas in the frontiers of science are all represented in today's collection.

Moreover, the collection is utilized in a way that the faculty and library staff of the late 1950s could not have imagined. Science coursework has moved far beyond simple lecture and demonstration. Students are required to use scientific literature in nearly every level of inquiry, and the ability to understand and access highly com-

plex reference tools and indexes must be fostered early in their education. The level of activity in the library today reflects current science pedagogy, in a facility that was primarily envisioned for studious reading.

Early documents on the library describe a quiet area, supervised at a distance by a staff member in the main library. Although a service desk was included in the final design for the library, an early planning memo by College Librarian Eileen Thornton went so far as to state: "In the future, we may feel it necessary to set up a regular service desk of some sort, near the entrance....At present, I am assuming that a service desk is not necessary".

The "remote supervision" approach proved unsatisfactory, as the new facility immediately attracted more students than had ever used any of the departmental collections. In fact, an early complaint from the science faculty was that there were *too* many students crowding the library, and these

extra students were thought to be friends of "legitimate" science students, simply using the library facility as a study hall.

It is true that we enjoy a convenient and useful location for students to prepare for their next science class. Many students in the library during the day are busily solving chemistry problems or reading reserve materials before lab or lecture. Equally as likely, however, students are actively involved in library research. CD-ROM versions of the *General Science Index*, *Science Citation Index*, and the *Life Sciences Collection* are in nearly constant use at certain times in the semester, and *Current Contents: Life Sciences on Diskette* has also been a big hit, especially with the neuroscience faculty. The public access terminals for OBIS and FirstSearch are used equally as often.

Printed reference tools remain essential as well. The portion of the collection development budget devoted to science reference materials has been generally adequate during the past decade, allowing purchase of the most critical scientific encyclopedias, indexes, bibliographies, and handbooks. We have opted for electronic access to major reference works, when that is possible and feasible; the *Beilstein* database for organic chemicals and the *Gmelin* handbook for inorganic compounds are two such sources.

Thus, more sophisticated reference tools and increased reliance by students on the primary literature have significantly changed both the quantity and type of activity in the library. At the same

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Science Library...continued

time, the sheer volume of scientific knowledge, as measured in traditional journals and monographs, has transformed our physical space. Another early memo by Ms. Thornton projected that the facility would be adequate, in terms of space for the collection, for at least **ten** years. Thirty-two years after its opening, we are indeed bursting at the seams, and nearly half of the collection has been moved to storage. To provide some future growth space, we are pursuing plans to install compact movable shelving on the ground floor while expanding the mezzanine.

The combined pressures of physical constraints and an active clientele keeps the full-time staff of one professional librarian and one administrative assistant fully occupied. A contingent of 14 student assistants, working a combined total of 75 hours per week (the lowest FTE student staff of peer institutions having staffed science libraries, according to our 1991 survey) helps to handle the more than 18,000 transactions at

our service desk each year.

All in all, the Kettering library has become integral to the science curriculum and vital to the teaching and research of science faculty and students. Its mission would be greatly enhanced by the realization of long-term plans to create a comprehensive science library in a new or renovated facility, integrating the collections of astronomy, computer science, mathematics, physics, and psychology with the Kettering collection. Our survey of 96 peer institutions suggests that colleges with a professionally-staffed science library, combining most or all materials for the sciences in one collection, generally have more active library instruction programs, higher levels of circulation and use of course reserve materials, improved use of electronic and printed reference sources, and better coordination of science collection development than those colleges with fragmented departmental libraries.

Despite the shortcomings related to a limited facility, Oberlin's

science library compares favorably in most respects with those at Earlham, Haverford, Middlebury, and Colgate. Colleges with exceptional science library facilities in terms of space, staffing, and/or materials budget include Wesleyan, Franklin and Marshall, Bryn Mawr, Smith, Bowdoin, and Holy Cross. Williams College is presently planning a new science library that will outpace nearly every other liberal arts college in terms of space and collection size. Additional shelf capacity in Kettering would indeed prove helpful in accommodating collection growth for the next ten years. Ultimately, however, the quality, diversity, and depth of Oberlin's curricula and research in science require a library fully equipped with electronic information sources, printed sources, and (yes) study space, to complement and support the scientific inquiry that is an essential component of a liberal arts education.

—Alison Ricker, Science Librarian



NOW: The Kettering Science Library in 1993

The Mending Lab

Tucked away in a corner of the fourth floor of the Oberlin College Library is a hive of activity in which miracles regularly occur: the Mending Laboratory. Not miracles on a large scale, but on a book-size scale. Books that arrive looking as if they belong on the dust heap exit trim, tidy, solid, and respectable. Responsible for these transformations are students like Dawna Daniels (English), Rob Pickard (philosophy and religion), Kwon Chon (philosophy), Beth Shoemaker (religion and bassoon), and Charles Kowalski (Classics). Last but not least, Banu Casson, a trained conservator and PhD in

anthropology, also lends her talents to this work.

The students rehabilitate the circulating collection, repairing books with broken spines, detached covers, torn pages, or other defects. In the ten years the mendery has been in operation, over 27,000 books have been restored to usable condition. Banu Casson works her often invisible magic exclusively on Special Collections items, reattaching boards bound in leather, resewing the signatures of books and pamphlets and then casing them in appropriate bindings, or making attractive “clamshell” boxes for books that are too

brittle to mend.

The menders use archivally correct methods which they learn in an intensive month-long summer training session conducted by Dina Schoonmaker, Head of the Preservation Department. The students, who all have financial aid work-study awards, are employed full time in the summer and five to ten hours a week during the academic year. They are taught the rules of archival repair—that the mending must be reversible, and that all materials used, including papers, boards and adhesives, must meet archival standards.

Oberlin has been a leader in conservation and has one of the premier book repair facilities among college libraries. The mending lab and the services of the professional conservator have been funded through generous annual gifts from an alumnus/alumna couple, while the College supports the employment of the student menders, binding supplies, and the Preservation Department, which supervises the operation.

Tours of the mendery can be arranged by calling Dina Schoonmaker in the Preservation Department at 216/775-8285.



Visiting Librarian Laszlo Kovacs in the Mending Lab

Melissa Fay Greene

Alumna Melissa Fay Greene delighted an Oberlin audience on April 19 in reading sections from *Praying for Sheetrock*, her award-winning book that chronicles the civil rights struggle of a black community in McIntosh County, a rural area south of Savannah, Georgia.

At the beginning of her reading Greene explained how she first became interested in McIntosh

County. Following her graduation from Oberlin in 1975 she began work as a paralegal in a legal aid office in Savannah, where she began to hear stories about the coastal area. At that time McIntosh County was famous throughout the region both for its entrenched corruption and its colorful local lore. Greene became fascinated with stories about the county, including those relating to Sheriff Tom

Poppell, who dominated local political life and controlled the economy through a system of kickbacks. She was also captivated by the Gullah dialect of the African-American people of the area. In her spare time, more out of inherent interest and curiosity than any intention to write a book, Greene set out to record their unique voices

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Friends Fund New Acquisitions

The Friends Acquisitions Committee has recently authorized purchase from Friends of the Library funds of the titles and categories of materials listed below.

A. NEW PROGRAMS

1. African-American Religion—\$1,000

Videocassettes for classroom instruction and other materials to support the teaching of the African-American religious experience in the Religion Department (Prof. A. G. Miller).

2. African Politics—\$1,500

Materials to support library-oriented courses in contemporary African affairs, e.g. women and the transition from socialism in the third world (Prof. Eve Sandberg).

3. Caribbean History—\$1,500
Materials to support a new course in the History of the Caribbean in the Black Studies Department. (Prof. James Millette). These purchases will complement recent Friends acquisitions in third world literature in English.

4. Islamic Religion and Culture—\$1,000

Materials to support courses in Islamic culture and Religion offered in the Religion Department. (Prof. James Morris).

B. MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATION—\$3,000

Retrospective works on medieval manuscript illumination, particularly reference and historiographical titles to support teaching and

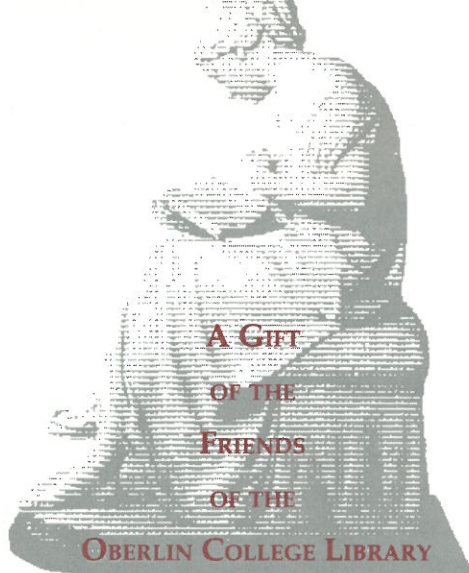
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Another Banner Year for the Friends

The Friends of the Library continued its steady development during the 1992–93 academic year, sponsoring a number of exciting programs and increasing membership substantially. As of May 1 the Friends had 556 current members, including those who gave specifically to the Friends as well as those who provided gifts in kind or contributed to other library funds and automatically became members of the Friends. Contributions and pledges made specifically to the Friends of the Library during the 1992–93 year exceed \$40,000. Most importantly, the Friends provided exceptionally strong support for the library's collections. The generosity of the Friends enabled the library to acquire a number of major titles and categories of materials that might otherwise be lacking. Most recent titles authorized for purchase by the Friends Acquisitions Committee are described elsewhere in this issue.

Friends Bookplate

OBERLIN COLLEGE LIBRARY



The bookplate reproduced above is inserted into all titles acquired for the library from Friends of the Library funds.

Friends of the Library at Commencement

Saturday, May 29

4:30 p.m. Friends of the Library
Commencement
Weekend Reception

5:00 p.m. "The Libe," a
slide talk by Ray
English, Director of
Libraries

Both events will take place in the Goodrich Room on the fourth floor of Mudd Center.

Friends Acquisitions...continued

research in medieval art, architecture, and religion (Prof. Jeffrey Hamburger).

C. CONTINUED ACQUISITION OF ANTI-SLAVERY MATERIALS

—\$2,000

Additional titles will be purchased for Oberlin's well-known collection of pre-1863 anti-slavery tracts.

D. HISTORY OF PRINTING, BOOKS FROM PRIVATE PRESSES—\$3,000

Oberlin now holds representative titles from some of the most important private presses in the history of printing: Ashendene, Doves, Grabhorn, and Kelmscott. These funds will be used to purchase representative works from important private presses (e.g. Janus Press) published during the past twenty years.

E. LITERARY FIRST EDITIONS

Acquisition of two seventeenth-century first editions by English literary figures will support teaching of literature by permitting students to encounter copies of early texts contemporaneous with their authors.

1. Behn, Aphra. *Poems upon Several Occasions: with a Voyage to the Island of Love*. London, 1684. First edition. This work by England's first professional woman writer is an allegory describing an imaginary voyage to the Island of Love, purportedly located off the African coast.

2. Suckling, Sir John. *Fragmenta Aurea: A collection of all the Incomparable peeces, written by Sir John Suckling*. London: for Humphrey Moseley, 1646. First

edition, with the third issue text and second state portrait by William Marshall. With signature of Edmund Malone, Shakespeare editor (1782).

F. PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIALS

1. Goebbels, Joseph. *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, ed. by Elke Froehlich. Munich: K. G. Saur, 1992-93. This complete collection of diaries from Hitler's propaganda minister is a major primary source for the study of German history of the Nazi era.

2. *Etudes Preliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans L'Empire Romain*, ed. by M. E. C. Van Haaren and M. B. de Boer. E. J. Brill, 1961+. A selection of 60 vols. from one of the major collections of modern studies on the archaeology, art, and religion of the ancient world.

G. COLLECTIONS OF MAJOR SCHOLARLY ARTICLES

1. *Articles on Calvin and Calvinism*, ed. by Richard G. Gamble. 300 articles in 14 vols. Garland Publishing, 1992.

2. *Studies in Early Christianity*, ed. by Everett Ferguson. 18 vols. Garland Publishing, 1993.

Both of these sets reprint basic, scholarly articles essential for the study of Christianity, including articles from many important fugitive periodicals.

3. *Studies in Homosexuality*, ed. by Wayne R. Dynes. 13 vols. Garland Publishing, 1992. Gay studies is an emerging area in the Oberlin curriculum. This collection offers an interdisciplinary collection of major articles on bisexu-

ality, homosexuality, and lesbianism.

H. MAJOR NEW REFERENCE WORKS

1. *Encyclopedia of U.S. Social History*, ed. Mary K. Clayton et al. C. Scribner's Sons, 1992. This work traces the development of American society from colonial times to the present day.

2. *Index to Subjects and Corporate Names in the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections, 1959-1984*. 2 vols. Chadwyck-Healey, 1993. This index brings together in one sequence nearly 30,000 entries for associations, institutions, business firms, and government agencies appearing in the descriptions of entries in this standard listing of manuscript collections.

I. NEW REFERENCE SOURCE ON CD-ROM

Omni Gazeteer on CD-ROM. SilverPlatter Information. This CD-ROM version of the most exhaustive compilation of information on U.S. place names ever assembled makes it possible to locate quickly any named place in the U.S. by place name, zip code, latitude and longitude, or feature type (lake, airport, landmark).

J. JOURNAL ON MICROFILM

American Journal of Public Health, 1976-92 on microfilm, University Microfilms. This acquisition on microfilm will complete the library's holdings for an important journal that the library subscribed to until 1975 and then reinstated in 1993.

Greene...continued

and personal stories and to immerse herself in the local history of the region.

In the mid-1970s McIntosh County was in the midst of a tense struggle for civil rights. The impetus for change went back to an incident in 1972 when a white policeman shot a black man in the face at point-blank range following a trivial argument. The black community, led primarily by one courageous man and assisted by idealistic legal aid lawyers, rose up to demand basic civil and human rights. By the late 1970s, when Greene left the area, the black community had won significant political gains.

Almost a decade later Greene was drawn back into the life of

McIntosh County when her husband was asked to defend the leader of the black community, whose life had taken a tragic turn that eventually led to his imprisonment. Greene realized then that the story of this rural Georgia county had come full circle and that the tape recordings and research she had done years earlier had the makings of an interesting book. Only two years later she had written *Praying for Sheetrock*, a powerful narrative with vivid characters and continuous dramatic action. A work of nonfiction that in many ways reads like a novel, *Sheetrock* was named a finalist for the National Book Award and received several other prestigious literary awards as well.

SUMMER HOURS:

Mudd Center:

Monday – Friday

Circulation/Stacks 1 – 5:30 p.m.

Scholar Studies

and A Level 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.
(Fri. 8–5:30)

Conservatory Library:

Monday – Friday 1 – 4:30 p.m.

Art Library:

Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – noon
1 – 4:30 p.m.

Science Library:

Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – noon
1 – 4:30 p.m.

Book Design...continued



Sue Allen at Book Cover Design Workshop

people, who helped to open the exhibition of over 120 books from the College's collections. Dina Schoonmaker designed the exhibition and wrote a catalog to accompany it.

In the evening, Sue Allen presented an excellent and informative slide lecture in the Art Building on "Gold on Cloth: 19th-Century American Book Covers" to over 70 people. Ms. Allen occasionally teaches a summer week-long course on the subject at the Rare Book School (now at the University of Virginia, formerly at Columbia University), and it was at one of these sessions that Dina Schoonmaker first encountered her and determined to bring her to Oberlin.

The weather cooperated (a week later the "Big Blizzard" struck), and the whole program was very successful, both in attracting an audience and in opening their eyes to what is an esoteric yet fascinating aspect of book publishing and design.



Case from Book Cover Design Display

The Friends of the Oberlin College Library provide significant support for special acquisitions and programs that help the library fulfill its fundamental role in the academic life of the college.

JOIN US. BE A FRIEND.

Members receive the *Library Perspectives* newsletter, invitations to Friends programs, and other privileges. Most of all, Friends have the satisfaction of supporting Oberlin's outstanding library.

Annual membership categories:

- \$5 Student \$25 Friend \$50 Associate
- \$100 Sponsor \$500 Patron \$1000 Benefactor

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Friends contributions are tax deductible.

Library Perspectives, a newsletter for users and Friends of the Oberlin College Library, is issued three times a year. Printed from an endowed fund established by Benjamin A. and Emiko Custer.

Printed on recycled paper.

**Library of Congress
Catalogs Now Available
via the Internet**

The Library of Congress (LC) has recently instituted a system allowing electronic access to its main book catalogs as well as numerous information files. The two subsystems making up LOCIS (Library of Congress Information System) are SCORPIO, which includes files for books, legislation, and copyright registration, and MUMS, which is comprised of 14 separate files representing the official cataloging for the Library of Congress collections.

Oberlin College students, staff, faculty, and friends can search LOCIS from their home or office terminals simply by entering the following telnet address: **LOCIS.LOC.GOV**. More detailed information about what is included in LOCIS, and tips on how to search it, is available at the Main Library reference desk.

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