Fall 2006

*Thomas Cooper Society Newsletter* - Fall 2006

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The Thomas Cooper Society, along with the Thomas Cooper Library, experienced a very busy and interesting year. Activities included exhibits and exhibit openings, receptions, and other literary and library events.

The first exhibit of the academic year was “Leaves of Grass at 150,” which celebrated the 150th anniversary of the publication of Walt Whitman’s major work. The majority of the items on display were from the Joel Myerson Collection of 19th-century American Literature. Dr. Myerson, who is a USC Distinguished Professor Emeritus of English, served as curator for the exhibit and presented a talk about the Whitman materials at the exhibit opening on Aug. 30.

“22 Collections: An Exhibition from the Matthew J. and Arlyn Bruccoli Collections,” featured items related to 20th-century American literature and history collected by the Bruccolis over a lifetime of research and study. The exhibit, which opened Nov. 1, included materials by and about Robert Coover, James Dickey, George Garrett, William Haggard, Joseph Heller, George Higgins, John Jakes, George Plimpton, Budd Schulberg, and other American authors.

“Fredson Bowers, A Centenary Exhibition” was on display in December and January to commemorate the achievements of the most influential descriptive and textual scholar of the 20th century. A related symposium featured a panel discussion by Professors Patrick Scott (moderator), Matthew J. Bruccoli, George Geckle, and Joel Myerson.

In January, a major exhibit was mounted titled “Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings: An Exhibition Introducing the Robert D. Middendorf Collection.” This exhibit presented materials about the life and work of the best-selling Southern author of The Yearling (1938) and Cross Creek (1942). Noted Rawlings scholar from Southern Illinois University, Dr. Rodger Tarr, presented remarks about Rawlings’ role in the formation of modern American literature at the exhibit opening.

In February and March an exhibit titled “African Americans and Abolition: Sources and Stories” was on display. The exhibit documented the contributions of African Americans to the abolitionist movement in the 19th century.

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GROUNDBREAKINGS HELD FOR NEW LIBRARY WINGS

Friends and supporters of the USC Libraries gathered on two separate occasions last summer to participate in groundbreaking ceremonies for Thomas Cooper Library’s two new special collections wings.

A ceremony for South Carolina Political Collections (SCPC) was held on May 10 and one for rare

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Major new John Milton Collection on display—see page 4.

Holding golden shovels at the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections groundbreaking are, left to right, Mr. Claude M. Walker Jr., Dr. Patrick Scott, Mr. Michael Watson, USC Student Body President Mr. Tommy Preston Jr., and USC President Dr. Andrew A. Sorensen.
Rhett Jackson, longtime S.C. independent bookseller and past president of the Thomas Cooper Society, was honored earlier this year with Lifetime Achievement Awards bestowed by the American Booksellers Association (ABA) and the Playboy Foundation.

The American Booksellers Association paid tribute to Rhett Jackson and his wife, Betty, with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the celebration of bookselling at this year’s BookExpo America. This is only the second time in its history that the association’s board of directors has bestowed a Lifetime Achievement Award.

In making the award, ABA President Mitchell Kaplan said of the Jacksons, “They’ve taken an active role in their community, both in Columbia and in South Carolina. At the same time, they’ve been a strong voice in support of First Amendment rights and in promoting the importance of small business and the importance of book culture.” An ardent proponent of civil rights and social justice, Rhett Jackson spearheaded a successful campaign to end segregation in the United Methodist Church.

The Hugh M. Hefner First Amendment Lifetime Achievement Award was announced in May at a New York City awards ceremony at which Jackson and seven other individuals were singled out for their personal achievements in defending the First Amendment.

In conjunction with the meeting of the Southern Regional Conference of Irish Studies in March, the library mounted an exhibit titled “Irish Literature from the 18th Century to the Present Day.”

Another major exhibit, “John James Audubon and Ornithological Illustration,” was mounted in April. The exhibit included European bird illustrations of the 16th and 17th centuries, Audubon’s double-elephant folio Birds of America (1827 – 1838), and 19th-century bird illustration after Audubon. At the exhibit opening, USC emeritus professor Dr. David Rembert gave an illustrated talk, “The Ethelind Pope Brown Natural History Watercolors and How They Came to Thomas Cooper Library.”

The Audubon exhibit also celebrated the establishment by an anonymous donor of an endowment (to support the Audubon collection) honoring Davy-Jo Ridge, former associate director of libraries. The story about the college’s Audubons and about Audubon’s friendship with John Bachman was told by Ridge in her book A Load of Gratitude: Audubon and South Carolina (1985).

An exhibit, “Recent Gifts and Acquisitions, 2005–2006,” was on display at the society’s annual meeting on April 25.

On Aug, 30, the society and the library presented a background session about Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEEDS). The session was directed by Michael Koman, USC’s environmental project manager, who talked about ways the new library wings will be made energy-efficient.

A book signing and reception for Georgia Hart, author of a book of poetry titled Lightly Spritely, was held on Oct. 13 and in December, the society sponsored its annual coffee to honor USC retirees.

At the University’s annual literary festival in October, the society presented the Thomas Cooper Medal for Distinction in the Arts and Sciences to noted American playwright Edward Albee, following his talk about the role of the arts in education.

The society’s annual dinner on Feb. 20, featured a speech by American author, Susan Vreeland lauding the benefits she had derived from libraries in researching her books.

Also in February, society members participated in the S.C. Book Festival by attending events and maintaining a booth to publicize the society and library.

In March, the society and the library sponsored a screening of clips from the University’s unique Movietone News Collection. Bill Birch, a Movietone News cameraman from the WWII era related tales of his experiences on the home front and in the Pacific Theater.

On April 23, the society sponsored a talk by William Price Fox at the South Caroliniana Library.

The society’s annual general meeting was held April 25.

Many society members were in attendance at the library groundbreaking on June 14 for the new rare books and special collections wing, which will be completed in 2008.

Officers of the Society during 2005–2006 were Reece Williams, president; Lucille Mould, immediate past president; Robert Patterson, president-elect; Patrick Scott, secretary; and Lynn Barron, treasurer.
AUDUBON EXHIBIT DRAWS APPRECIATIVE CROWDS

An exhibition, “John James Audubon and Ornithological Illustration,” drew many visitors to TCL during its April through June presentation. The exhibition also celebrated the establishment by an anonymous donor of an endowment to support the Audubon collection and honoring Davy-Jo Ridge, former associate director of libraries.

The exhibit was arranged chronologically, beginning with European bird illustrations of the 16th and 17th centuries and concluding with 19th-century American bird illustration after Audubon. A major feature of the exhibit was one of the library’s greatest treasures, Audubon’s huge double-elephant folio Birds of America, published in parts between 1827 and 1838. TCL’s folio was purchased for the South Carolina College library by special vote of the S.C. legislature in 1831. Only 200 sets of this work were printed, and fewer than 130 complete sets, with all 435 plates, now survive. The story about the college’s Audubons and about Audubon’s friendship with John Bachman was told by Ridge in her book A Load of Gratitude: Audubon and South Carolina (1985).

That first Audubon purchase has been supplemented by many additional gifts over the years, including a set of the Audubon-Bachman The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America donated by Governor James H. Adams in 1851 and other illustrated bird books from Mrs. J. Henry Fair, Miss Claudia Lea Phelps, and the John Shaw Billings Endowment. Recent additions include Julia Bachman’s specially bound set of the octavo edition of Birds of America, donated by Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Dana, and manuscripts of Audubon and Bachman donated by Mr. James P. Barrow.

Also displayed was a print from the Alecto Press Catesby watercolors (purchased in 1997 by the Thomas Cooper Society), a mid-18th-century watercolor (from the collection donated by Mrs. Ethelind Pope Brown), and John Gould lithographs (donated by Mr. N. Heyward Clarkson Jr.).

On permanent display in the entrance hallway to the Graniteville Room are the three double-elephant folio versions of Audubon’s first plate, “American Wild Turkey” (Lizars, 1827; Havell, 1828; Bien, 1859), donated by Mrs. Jennie Haddock Feagle.

HUNT ENDOWMENT ENHANCES BIOGRAPHY HOLDINGS

Thomas Cooper Library’s collection of biographical materials has been considerably enlarged and enriched, thanks to the Katherine Otis and Bruce Oswald Hunt Biography Collection Endowment.

The endowment provided funds to purchase a four-volume set of the Dictionary of American Philosophers, an online version of the Dictionary of National Biography, the Critical Lives series, and Men and Women of Science, as well as biographies of notable individuals.

For more information about the Hunt Endowment, please visit www.sc.edu/library/develop/hunt.html.
UNIVERSITY RECEIVES MAJOR JOHN MILTON COLLECTION

USC has recently received a major new treasure, the Robert J. Wickenheiser Collection of John Milton. The collection, which was amassed by Dr. Wickenheiser over a 35-year period, was purchased for the University with leading support from William L. Richter and The William L. Richter Family Foundation.

Many items from the collection, which contains more than 6,000 volumes pertaining to the 17th-century English poet, were on display in the Thomas Cooper Library’s Mezzanine exhibit area from Sept. 21 to Nov. 1.

The exhibit opened with a lecture by the distinguished Milton scholar Dr. John T. Shawcross, who is Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Kentucky.

The Wickenheiser collection includes holdings of first and other 17th-century editions of Milton’s writings, which place USC’s collection among the top 10 in North America. Its special focus on illustrated editions makes it perhaps the most comprehensive collection of Milton illustrations in existence. From the first illustrated edition of Paradise Lost (1667) through all the major illustrators that follow, the collection includes drawings by several prominent artists, including John Martin (1789–1854) and Gustave Doré (1832–1883). The collection’s 18th-, 19th-, and 20th-century Milton editions preserve a comprehensive record of the poet’s continuing impact, while holdings of Milton biography, scholarship, and criticism document knowledge of Milton’s writings and influence.

“The Wickenheiser collection brings the library its first major 17th-century research collection to join our great collections in succeeding centuries,” said Paul Willis, dean of libraries. “It is a collection that will draw faculty and scholars to South Carolina, to the continuing benefit of the academic community here.”

“The breadth of Milton’s own interests make this a collection that will stimulate an equally broad range of research projects across a variety of disciplines both by established researchers and by students at the graduate and undergraduate levels,” said Dr. Patrick Scott, director of special collections.

Prof. Roy Flannagan, a Milton scholar now affiliated with USC Beaufort, commented: “Dr. Wickenheiser’s collection is … a paradise for a scholar of 17th-century English literature.”

John Milton (1608–1674), author of the epic poem Paradise Lost (1667), is the most important English-language poet of the 17th century. He was active in politics, as author of the first major text on the freedom of the press, Areopagitica (1644) and as Latin secretary to Britain’s revolutionary government in the late 1640s and 1650s. He was also deeply involved in the same religious debates as the Pilgrim Fathers and was a pioneer in his writings on education and on marriage law. For centuries after it was written, his poetry drew responses from poets, learned scholars, ordinary readers, musicians, artists, and illustrators. Milton was as influential in America as in Europe, and the Wickenheiser Collection includes not only the first American editions of Milton’s poetry, but also rare printings of political pamphlets that were influential in debates on the Constitution and Bill of Rights.
Dr. Robert J. Wickenheiser started collecting Milton and other 17th-century poets as a graduate student at the University of Minnesota in the late 1960s. As a young professor at Princeton in the early 1970s, he began focusing on the history of Milton illustration, and with his wife, Pat, and the late Robert H. Taylor, past president of the Grolier Club, visited and established friendships with many of the best-known antiquarian bookdealers on both sides of the Atlantic. Since retiring, Dr. Wickenheiser has completed a full-scale illustrated catalogue of the collection, scheduled for publication for the John Milton quatercentenary in 2008.

The Wickenheiser collection's major donor, William L. Richter, is president of Richter Investment Corporation and senior managing director of Cerberus Capital Management. In recognition and appreciation of the support provided by The Richter Family Foundation, the University’s Board of Trustees has approved naming a room for Richter in the new special collections library.

COMMENTS ON THE WICKENHEISER COLLECTION

“… one of the major collections of materials related to John Milton, editions and studies and artworks, in the world . . . indicating the breadth and nature of Milton's position in the literary, political, religious, and sociological world over the nearly three and one-half centuries since his death.”—John T. Shawcross, Professor Emeritus of English, University of Kentucky

“… a magnificent collection, in mint condition, preserved under ideal circumstances, broad in scope, and unique in some of its items … what has to be one of the best private collections of Milton and Miltoniana in existence.”—John Mulryan, professor of English, St. Bonaventure University

“Dr. Wickenheiser's collection is … a paradise for a scholar of 17th-century English literature.”—Roy Flannagan, Scholar-in-residence, University of South Carolina Beaufort

“Bob Wickenheiser introduced me to Milton when I was a Princeton sophomore. I enrolled in his section of Chaucer to Pope, a prerequisite for the English major, with the idea of getting the old stuff out of the way so that I could concentrate on modern literature, the novel in particular. As a result of Bob’s extraordinary teaching and his enthusiasm for the 17th century and Milton, what I thought was an initial obstacle became a lifetime’s passion. I saw the collection in its early life and I’ve followed its growth with admiration. South Carolina will now be a frequent destination for Milton scholars.”—Stephen Fallon, professor of English, University of Notre Dame

“… breathtaking in its reach—Milton is here but also Miltoniana, the latter in abundance. This is a collection that, unlike any other I have seen, represents Milton on an international scene and as an important token of his culture.”—Joseph Wittreich, Distinguished Professor of English, CUNY Graduate School

TCS members who were not able to pick up a copy of the brochure about the Wickenheiser collection at the exhibit opening, and would like to have one, are asked to contact Zella Hilton at 803-777-8240 or at zmhilton@gwm.sc.edu. The full brochure is also available online (in pdf) at www.sc.edu/library/spcoll/britlit/milton/exhibit.html.
Brigadier General Evans F. Carlson (1896–1947) was the subject of a symposium and exhibit at Thomas Cooper Library on Oct. 23.

Featured in the exhibit were photographs Carlson took while traveling with members of the Chinese 8th Route Army as a military observer in 1937. Included are photos of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Zhou Enlai, and Zhu Deh in Lin Feng and Yenan. Other items on display were some of Carlson’s journals, letters, and other personal effects from the Carlson family’s papers.


Carlson accompanied Chinese Communist guerrillas in their operations against the Japanese in 1937. He was impressed with Chinese tactics and used this knowledge to form a Marine Raider battalion during the Second World War. “Carlson’s Raiders” completed several successful missions behind enemy lines on Guadalcanal and Makin Island during the war.

During his military career, Carlson received a total of three Navy Crosses for “extraordinary heroism and distinguished service.” He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

American writer and humorist William Price Fox gave a talk and read from his latest book, *Satchel Paige’s America*, at an event held in April at the South Caroliniana Library. The event was sponsored by the Thomas Cooper Society.

Fox is an S.C. author and writer-in-residence at USC. He is the author of nine books, including *Southern Fried; Ruby Red; Moonshine Light, Moonshine Bright;* and *Wild Blue Yonder.*
WILLIAM BLAKE, VISIONARY AND ILLUSTRATOR

“William Blake, Visionary and Illustrator” was the subject of an exhibit at Thomas Cooper Library from July through mid-September. A major focus of the exhibit was the illuminated books and drawings of the English romantic poet who lived from 1757 to 1827.

The centerpiece of the exhibition was an original engraving by Blake from his series Illustrations of the Book of Job (1825). Also on display was the first edition of William Hayley’s poem The Triumphs of Temper (1803) with engravings by Blake.

The illuminated books of poetry for which Blake is now best known, including Songs of Innocence (1789), Songs of Experience (1794), Europe (1794), and Jerusalem (from 1804), were shown in the Trianon Press color facsimiles purchased 30 years ago with support from the John Shaw Billings Endowment.

This exhibit drew on the resources of the library’s Department of Rare Books and Special Collections. The original editions of many of the books for which Blake prepared engravings were acquired by the South Carolina College library soon after publication.

The exhibit’s engraving from Illustrations of the Book of Job was acquired with support from the Nancy Pope Rice and Nancy Rice Davis Library Treasures Endowment, and engravings for The Triumphs of Temper were purchased with gifts in memory of Mrs. James Willard Oliver.

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books and special collections was held on June 14. Inclement weather on both days caused the SCPC shovel wielders to take refuge under a tent and those for rare books to forgo an outdoor ceremony altogether. However, nothing could dampen the good spirits evident at both events as several hundred well-wishers applauded the speakers, learned more about the special collections, and enjoyed delicious refreshments.

RARE BOOKS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS GROUNDBREAKING

Addressing the audience of library supporters at the rare books groundbreaking were Dean of Libraries Paul Willis, President Andrew A. Sorensen, Student Body President Tommy Preston Jr., Ex Libris Society President Claude M. Walker Jr., Class of 1956 representative Dr. William Weston III, and Director of Special Collections Dr. Patrick Scott.

Scott prefaced his remarks with a quotation from John Milton: “Books are not dead things, but do contain a potency of life.” Continuing in this vein, Scott said, “As with books and documents, so with libraries and collections—they do not come into existence all alone. We in rare books and special collections record in our catalogue the history or provenance of many of those individual rare books, not only how they were originally created, but how they came here. And the same with the concentrations of materials, documents, and books that we call special collections.

“The University benefits and will continue to benefit from these collections, their use, development, and interpretation. And that’s the point, the reason, the need for the building.

“True, we need more space. True, standards and expectations have moved forward for preservation and environmental conditions for these increasingly valuable materials. But most of all we need the building so we can carry on the kind of commitment and enthusiasm and understanding that has been involved in the building of the collections—the places to study the materials, the teaching rooms through which students can be introduced to them, the galleries and program space in which they can be made available to the public, the technical capacity to enter into the digital conversation through which the collectors’ original vision can now be communicated. We are just beginning to turn the soil on the potential of these collections, for students and faculty here, and for the increasing recognition of the University around the world.

“We can all be proud of what is here and what has been done and grateful for those who have made it possible. It is not an end in itself. The books are not absolutely dead things. They do contain a potency of life. And this building will help us realize that potential.”

When it opens in 2008, the department’s new home will provide attractive space for all these activities—exhibits, teaching, public programs, and digital projects, as well as expanded and up-to-date study space for researchers, enhanced environmental conditions and security for both people and books, and much increased and upgraded stack space to ensure the long-term availability of these extraordinary collections.
“Mountains Beyond Mountains: Research Materials in the University Libraries, An Exhibit for the First-Year Reading Experience, 2006” was on display in the Thomas Cooper Library Lobby exhibit area from mid-August to mid-October.

The exhibit took its name from the book chosen for the 2006 First-Year Reading Experience, Tracy Kidder’s Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World. Using elements and themes found in the book, this exhibit helped introduce students to the wide variety of sources and formats of information found in the USC libraries.

The exhibit was curated by Beki Gettys and Jeffrey Makala with the help of library colleagues, who lent items and supplied subject expertise. These included Robin Copp, Chris Hare, Jennifer Latino, Christine Whitaker, and Deborah Yerkes.

**CURRENT AND UPCOMING EXHIBITS**

“George V. Higgins: A Retrospective”—TCL Mezzanine Exhibit area from Nov. 9 through Jan. 8, 2007

“Hugh MacDiarmid and the Modern Scottish Renaissance”—TCL Graniteville Room from Nov. 28 through Jan. 31, 2007

“James Dickey”—TCL Mezzanine Exhibit area from Jan. 18 through April 9, 2007

“Olaudah Equiano and 18th-Century Africa”—TCL Main Lobby from Feb. 1 through March 31, 2007

“Charles Darwin”—TCL Mezzanine Exhibit area from April 18 through June 30, 2007