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The Robert B. Ariail Collection of Historical Astronomy:

A ‘COLLECTION OF ASTONISHING PROPORTIONS’

Dr. Owen Gingerich, left, presents a rare volume to his friend Robert Ariail.

For more than 50 years, USC alumnus Robert B. Ariail quietly built a major collection of astronomy books, documents, telescopes and equipment. In September, it was announced that he had given those treasures to the USC Libraries and the South Carolina State Museum.

During a special reception and gallery event held on September 13, approximately 120 guests toured an exhibit of selected items from The Robert B. Ariail Collection of Historical Astronomy and heard astronomers extol the virtues of the collection.

“Robert Ariail has put together a vintage collection of astonishing proportions, not only the finest assembly anywhere of early American telescopes, but a library to match,” said Owen Gingerich, Professor of Astronomy and History of Science at Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. “With respect to popular astronomy of the 19th century, his book collection rivals, and in critical areas exceeds, the Library of Congress itself.”

During the event, Gingerich surprised his friend Ariail by contributing a rare volume to the collection: Arthur P. Norton’s Star Atlas, a set of 16 celestial charts first published in 1910.

The Robert B. Ariail Collection of Historical Astronomy is astounding: more than 5,000 rare books, star atlases, manuscripts, periodicals and catalogs are to be housed at USC’s Hollings Library, and 200 antique and modern telescopes and astronomical instruments are to be housed at the State Museum. Some of the items date back nearly 500 years. According to experts, the telescope collection is among the best collections of American telescopes, and the book collection is one of the best collections of historical astronomy in the Southeast.

The oldest book in the collection is the first printed star atlas, compiled in 1540 by Alessandro Piccolomini, titled De la sfera del mondo. Other items include Johann Bayer’s Uranometria (1603), the first atlas to cover the entire celestial sphere; Sir Isaac Newton’s book Opticks (1718); and a copy of the largest 18th-century star atlas, Atlas Coelestis (1753), by John Flamsteed.

“If you just look at one telescope or one star atlas, you’ll know the fascination they have for me,” Ariail said. “They are continued on p. 2
so beautiful, and they open up the world. And when you think about the people who have used these things throughout time, and you think about their skill, their talent, their intellect … it’s just amazing. I want to preserve the collection so it can be used by amateurs, scholars, writers, whoever is interested in the topic. The State Museum and the USC Libraries will do that.”

Perhaps the rarest item in the collection is the Bevis Atlas (engraved in the 1750s, issued in 1786), created by Dr. John Bevis. (See story at left.)

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**A VERY RARE BOOK INDEED:**

**RESEARCHING THE JOHN BEVIS ATLAS**

BY DR. PATRICK SCOTT

One of the most exciting tasks for Irvin Department staff is researching newly donated rarities. Last fall, Robert Ariail brought in a mid-sized, 18th-century star atlas in a well-worn contemporary binding labeled *Celestial Atlas*, with the comment, “I think you'll find that’s something rather special.”

The volume had 51 beautifully engraved copperplate star maps, with a one-page index and an undated engraved frontispiece showing the Prince of Wales surrounded by cherub-astronomers. Instead of a formal title page, the volume included a one-page handbill or advertisement dated 1786, headed *Atlas Celeste*, referring to the insolvency of its first publishers and offering copies at the knockdown price of one and a half guineas rather than the original five guineas.

The mysterious volume is one of the rarest star atlases of the period, and its checkered publication history makes it of special importance for the history of astronomy. Its maps had been prepared for publication some 40 years earlier by Dr. John Bevis (1695-1771), a Wiltshire physician and amateur astronomer. Subscriptions had been taken up for publication in 1749, but the entrepreneur behind the project, John Neale, went bankrupt in the fall of 1750, before the atlas had been distributed. This early date is confirmed by the engraved frontispiece, which depicts not George IV, Prince of Wales in 1786, but his grandfather Frederick, Prince of Wales, who died in 1751.

For the next 35 years the engraved maps and copper plates were tied up in the courts, and Bevis’ important research, such as his discovery of the Crab Nebula recorded on the maps, remained unknown to contemporary scientists. Eventually, when both Bevis and Neale were dead, Bevis’ executor auctioned his copies, and as the 1786 advertisement indicates, an enterprising bookseller bought them for resale.

The atlas was always a wonderful book for the library to receive; staff research since the donation means that its historic significance is now more fully understood.
Elizabeth Sudduth

Elizabeth Sudduth began her new duties as Director of the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections on Nov. 1, 2011.

“In March of this year, the Library appointed a search committee to find a new Director of the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections,” said Tom McNally, Dean of the University Libraries. “Patrick Scott had raised the bar to a new level of excellence in his years leading our rare books department. The search committee had a major challenge to find new leadership that could sustain the momentum that Patrick had developed.

“Our search committee was chaired by Dr. Mark Cooper, Interim Director of the Libraries’ Moving Image Research Collections, and the committee had representatives from library faculty and staff, the Irvin Department, library administration, library special collections, the English department, and the Thomas Cooper Society,” McNally said. “We interviewed three excellent candidates, and found the most qualified candidate was already among us.”

Indeed, Sudduth’s firsthand knowledge of the department is extensive: she joined the department as a faculty member in 2000 and had served as its associate director since 2009.

“The Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections has exceptionally broad and deep collections that are still growing, a strong service tradition, a dedicated and knowledgeable staff, and one of the best special collections facilities in the nation,” Sudduth said. “I am honored to provide the leadership to affect meaningful change to fine-tune our program to better support the educational mission of the University and to plan together to meet the needs of future researchers.”

Over the course of her 25-year career in academic libraries, Sudduth also has held positions of progressively increasing responsibility at Williams College and Randolph-Macon College. Her educational background includes a master’s degree in library science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a bachelor’s degree in economics, cum laude, and graduate study in history at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Sudduth is the author of numerous scholarly publications, including four books. She is a member of several professional organizations, including the South Carolina Library Association, the American Library Association, the Association of College and Research Libraries, and the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services. In addition, she has served as Program Chair for the Thomas Cooper Society since 2000.

Elizabeth Sudduth

CURRENT AND UPCOMING EXHIBITS

In the Hollings Library, Irvin Department Exhibition Gallery

“A Quieter and Less Eventful Life: Ernest Hemingway on Writing and Other Pursuits” — through February 28, 2012

“Eighteenth-Century Scottish Writers and the Scottish Enlightenment: From the G. Ross Roy Collection and other Scottish Special Collections” — March-May 2012
SPECIAL EVENTS HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH ENGLISH BIBLE EXHIBIT

A lecture and special gallery tour was held in conjunction with this summer’s exhibit “The English Bible: An Exhibition for the Four-Hundredth Anniversary of the King James Bible, 1611.”

The exhibit, with selected major items and explanatory panels, included sections on English biblical translation before the King James Version, the making of the King James Version, and its later influence in America. There were nearly 100 items in the exhibit, which was on display in the Irvin Department Gallery from May through August.

On Aug. 1, Dr. John R. de Witt, pastor emeritus of the First Presbyterian Church (ARP) of Columbia, talked about the history and significance of the King James Bible. During the event, de Witt gave the Libraries a rare 1632 folio to add to its King James Bible materials.

Dr. John R. de Witt

Approximately 120 guests enjoyed light refreshments and toured the exhibit before and after the lecture.

Special gallery openings were held during the weekends of July 23-24 and Aug. 20-21. These events gave patrons the opportunity to tour the exhibit during weekend hours. Regular hours for the Hollings Library are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

“The English Bible” exhibit then traveled for display at USC Beaufort’s South Campus library through October, when USCB faculty gave public lectures and led programs related to the anniversary.

DEPARTMENT HOSTS HEMINGWAY SYMPOSIUM AND EXHIBIT

On Nov. 11, the Irvin Department welcomed two distinguished speakers, hosted a symposium for undergraduate researchers and opened a major new exhibition from the Speiser and Easterling-Hallman Foundation Collection of Ernest Hemingway titled “A Quieter and Less Eventful Life: Ernest Hemingway on Writing and Other Pursuits.”

The first speaker, Dr. C. Edgar Grissom of Hattiesburg, Miss., talked about his experience as a Hemingway collector and in researching his recent book, Ernest Hemingway: A Descriptive Bibliography (Oak Knoll, 2011). The second speaker was Professor James L.W. West III, the Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of English at Penn State University, Director of Penn State’s Center for the History of the Book, and a USC alumnus (B.A. 1968, Ph.D. 1971). He talked about the continuing significance of Hemingway’s achievement and of USC’s collection.

Earlier in the day, students from several USC campuses and other South Carolina colleges shared their research on Hemingway at a symposium co-sponsored by the Thomas Cooper Society and the South Carolina Honors College.

The exhibit, which features newly acquired manuscripts, explores Hemingway’s published and unpublished works on writing and the writing life. In these works, and especially in his unpublished letters, there are apparent contradictions between his desire for the quiet, contemplative life of a fiction writer in his prime years and his interests in crafting a public persona as war correspondent, big game hunter and sportsman.

Ernest Hemingway, circa 1926

Two recent acquisitions: letters from Hemingway to literary critic Charles Fenton, signed and dated, 1952 and 1953

“The year 2011 marks 10 years since Mr. Hallman’s support brought the Hemingway collection to the University,” said Patrick Scott, Director of the Irvin Department. “It’s time to show some of its amazing treasures to a new generation of students. We also want to recognize the significant material added in the past three years with funding from the Hallman trustees.”

The Hemingway exhibit is on display in the Hollings Library through Jan. 31, 2012.
Great collections attract new donors and further gifts. At least that was the story behind the Irvin Department’s latest major archival donation, the papers of American composer Serge Hovey (1920-1989).

Dr. Esther Hovey, Hovey’s widow, had visited South Carolina from California several times for Robert Burns conferences. His son, Daniel Hovey, donated Hovey’s substantial archive — 38 boxes of papers, musical scores and some books — because Hovey’s achievement linked closely to the University’s G. Ross Roy Collection of Robert Burns and Scottish Poetry.

Born in New York, Serge Hovey spent much of his career in California. He was educated as a classical pianist and composer, studying with Arnold Schoenberg. He composed not only for the concert hall, but also for cinema, schools and the theatre, notably with his music for the American premiere of Bertold Brecht’s Life of Galileo (1947). In the 1940s, inspired by Schoenberg, Gershwin and others, Hovey began exploring the multicultural basis of American music, first through his own Jewish heritage, as in his music for Sholem Aleichem’s Tales from the Old Country (1948), and then also in African-American culture, as in his song-cycle of Langston Hughes poems, I, Too, Sing America (1951). The donation includes scores and other material on all these varied aspects of Hovey’s work.

In the later 1950s, contact with the American folk musicologist Alan Lomax and Scottish ball scholar Hamish Henderson led Hovey to the work for which he is now best known: the music for the songs of the Scottish poet Robert Burns.

His first major composition drawing on Scottish song was his Robert Burns Rhapsody: A Scottish-American Fantasy for orchestra and choir, which premiered in Berlin in 1959. That composition concludes with Burns’ great song of social equality, “A Man’s A Man For A’ That.” Soon Hovey set himself to the less-glamorous task of researching the original tunes for each of the 324 songs attributed to Burns and providing simple piano accompaniments for modern performance. As recorded by the greatest of modern Scottish folk singers, Jean Redpath, in seven albums (1976-1990), Hovey’s newly authenticated settings quickly led to a new appreciation of Burns’ artistry as a songwriter.

For the last 20 years of his life, Hovey struggled with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease. After his death, Esther and Daniel Hovey prepared his settings and notes on 155 Burns songs for publication in The Robert Burns Song Book (two volumes, 1999 and 2001). His last completed composition, aside from his work on the songs, was his Scottish-Americana, Arranged for Computer Music System, or Robert Burns Rhapsody no. 2.

Much of Hovey’s work remains unpublished. He never saw his influential achievement through into published form, as he had wished, to be performed and enjoyed by future singers, both professional and amateur.

His unpublished settings, and his original research files, will be a treasure trove for researchers. Scholars who come to study his settings of Burns will be able to back up their research from the Burns resources of the Roy Collection.
RARE ITEMS GO ON THE ROAD TO TEACH AND INSPIRE

A fall/winter exhibition at the Concord (Mass.) Free Public Library is a collaboration between that library’s William Munroe Special Collections and the USC Libraries’ Joel Myerson Collection of Nineteenth-Century American Literature. “Collecting Transcendentalism” explores why and how research collections develop by focusing on subject strengths of the two participating institutions.

The exhibit, on view from Oct. 28, 2011, to Jan. 31, 2012, showcases major works by authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller and Henry David Thoreau.

Myerson, Carolina Distinguished Professor of American Literature, Emeritus, assisted in curating the exhibit. He also delivered “Collecting Transcendentalism: A Scholar-Collector’s Perspective” on Oct. 30 in Concord.

JOSEPH R. McELRATH COLLECTION OF FRANK NORRIS

Joseph R. McElrath, scholar, bibliographer and alumnus (Ph.D., English, 1973), recently donated a collection of 62 volumes by the American progressive-era novelist Frank Norris, who is best known for his novels McTeague (1899), The Octopus (1901) and The Pit (1903). The collection includes American and British editions of Norris’ work; a rare copy of Norris’ first book, Yvernell (1892); and two books by Charles W. Chesnutt.

McElrath recently retired from Florida State University, where he was the William Hudson Rogers Professor of English and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. His work on Frank Norris includes Frank Norris: A Descriptive Bibliography (1992) for the highly regarded Pittsburgh Series in Bibliography and Frank Norris: A Life (2006), the definitive biography. He is the fourth author of a Pittsburgh Series in Bibliography volume, or “Pitt Bib,” to have placed a collection in the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections.

DAVID W. ROBINSON AFRICA AND MIDDLE-EAST STUDIES COLLECTION

David W. Robinson Jr. has had close connections with the University for a long time. He grew up in Columbia in the shadow of the old university, on Barnwell, Greene, College and Henderson streets, and it was just a short walk to campus. His family watched the University grow over the years and rooted for Gamecock teams of all stripes.

Robinson graduated from Dreher High School and went on to pursue his undergraduate education at Davidson College. After working and conducting research in West Africa and earning a Ph.D. in history from Columbia University, he went on to teach African and Islamic history at Yale University and Michigan State University.

His research interests include francophone West Africa and Muslim societies in the 18th through 20th centuries. Over the course of his career, he built a substantial research collection of more than 3,000 volumes. He has donated these books to the University of South Carolina Libraries, some going to the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections and some to the University Libraries’ general collection, with the provision that any duplicate items go to two historically black colleges in South Carolina.

“Many of the men in my family are lawyers, and most received their training at the USC law school. My father...
was particularly involved as he practiced law in Columbia, and he played a key role in the creation of the Research and Development Foundation, and thus the growth of the University,” Robinson explained. “My stepmother, Susan Robinson, was involved with him every step of the way. Her gift of the precious Catesby volumes, through the kind agency of Dr. Patrick Scott, encouraged me to think about donating my books on Africa and Islam to USC. It seemed only natural to send them back ‘home’ and enrich the holdings of an area of the world that has particular importance for South Carolina.”

Two of his former Michigan State University graduate students are now teaching similar subjects at the College of Charleston, and another is the director of archives for the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) in York, S.C.

“Theyir presence in the state is an added incentive to bringing my collection back to Columbia,” he said.

TOM AND JILL BETTENDORF DONATE D.H. LAWRENCE COLLECTION

Longtime friends, Thomas Cooper Society members and booksellers Tom and Jill Bettendorf recently donated more than 160 volumes by and about D.H. Lawrence to the University Libraries. The collection includes British and American editions of Lawrence’s works, scarce paperback editions, a 1923 edition of Lawrence’s Studies in the Classical Literature, biographies and criticism, and important reference works.

FROM THE ESTATE OF TREVOR HOWARD-HILL

The Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections has received more than 850 volumes from the estate of Trevor Howard-Hill, the C. Wallace Martin Professor of English, Emeritus, who taught at USC from 1972 to 1999.

Howard-Hill, who died this past summer, was internationally known as an expert on the dramatic manuscripts of the Shakespearean period, bibliography, book history and editorial theory. He had been the editor of the Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America since 1994. Following his retirement, he continued to edit the prestigious 100-year-old journal from an office in Thomas Cooper Library.

Highlights of the Howard-Hill gift include his reference collection, books about book collecting and the history of books, and copies of his own publications, many of them annotated. The gift strengthens the Irvin Department’s reference collections with its books about bibliography and book history.

VOLTAIRE’S HISTOIRE DE CHARLES XII ROI DE SUÈDE (1833)

Keith Revelle, a longtime friend and donor to the University Libraries, recently donated a copy of Voltaire’s Histoire de Charles XII roi de Suède in memory of Robert W. Books. This particular edition in French was printed in New York by Collins and Company in 1833 and is held by only 16 other libraries in the world.

LIBRARIES ACQUIRE 14TH-CENTURY MISSAL

A 14th-century missal that completes the University’s teaching collection of medieval manuscripts was purchased at auction this summer. A missal is a liturgical book containing all instructions and texts necessary for the celebration of the Mass throughout the year.
The Thomas Cooper Society Newsletter

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IRVIN DEPARTMENT CONTRIBUTES COMPANION EXHIBIT AT THE COLUMBIA MUSEUM OF ART

The Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections has created “Picturing and Writing the Americas: From Humboldt to the Hudson River School,” an exhibition at the Columbia Museum of Art that will be on view from Nov. 19, 2011, to April 1, 2012. “Picturing and Writing the Americas” coincides with the museum’s new exhibition, “Nature and the Grand American Vision: Masterpieces of the Hudson River School Painters.”

The Hudson River School painters helped to shape the mythos of the American landscape in the 19th century. Artists among this group include Thomas Cole (1801-1848), considered the leader of the movement; Asher B. Durand (1796-1886); William Hart (1823-1894); Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900); and George Inness (1825-1894).

“These exhibits will bring more than 40 landmark Hudson River School paintings together with a group of rare printed works held by the University Libraries that reproduce the American landscape for a 19th-century audience,” said Jeffrey Makala, Librarian for Instruction and Outreach in the Irvin Department, who curated the exhibit. “This exhibition of illustrated printed works will help connect the singular visions of the Hudson River School artists to the broad reach of 19th-century American print culture.”