



The Case of the Purloined Letter

by John Anderies

I once had a conversation with a library employee that went something like this:

Library employee: Did you see this article in the news about [some other] archive? They discovered [something rare and valuable] in their vault.

John: Those kind of articles are so contrived. Archivists know what they have in their vaults! They just decide that they need some publicity one day, so they call up the press and say they have "discovered" something that will sound flashy to the reporters.

Library employee: Huh. [Employee makes mental note to take the next archival "discovery" with a grain of salt.]

Imagine my surprise when three years later I found myself involved in just such a situation here at Haverford. The headlines proclaimed: "Descartes Letter Found, Therefore It Is" (*New York Times*), "Stolen Missive by Descartes Turns Up at Haverford" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*), "Key Letter by Descartes, Lost for 170 Years, Turns Up at Haverford" (*Chronicle of Higher Education*), "Stolen René Descartes Letter Discovered at US College" (*The Guardian*).

To be clear, the 1641 letter in the hand of philosopher René Descartes was not unknown to me or my staff of librarians and archivists. And it was not unknown to the College's history faculty, which had used the letter in classes over the years. One student wrote a paper about it for his junior seminar in 1979. But the letter's existence was unknown to Descartes scholars, those highly specialized academics who compile and analyze the complete writings of the 17th-century philosopher.

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The Haverford Collection

by Margaret Schaus

What is the favorite fashion item for Haverford men? (Those profiled in the latest issue of *Feathers & Fur* favor band T-shirts.) Why did Haverford President John Coleman take his sabbatical as a garbage collector? These and more questions about Haverford College can be answered in a new collection at Magill Library. Books, magazines and videos concerning the College were relocated this summer from the Library's different floors to form the Haverford College Collection in the Gummere-Morley Room. College yearbooks, student



A portion of the Haverford Collection

magazines, catalogs and managers' reports all chronicle the changes from the late 19th century to the present day. Histories and memoirs cover the founding of the College, its

impact on individual students and faculty, and the College's ongoing ties to the Society of Friends.

Pulling materials together makes for some interesting juxtapositions. The early 20th century archaeological excavation reports of Beth Shemesh from Elihu Grant sit close to the recent catalog of ancient Greek vases given to the college by Ernest Allen. Biographies of Haverford presidents represent a diversity of achievements with Hugh Borton advising on a new peace-time Japanese government, Gilbert F. White championing the stewardship of natural resources, and Isaac Sharpless leading in educational and historical circles (while at the same time dramatically developing the College's curriculum and physical resources). Humor magazines from 2009 carry on

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Quakers and Slavery Material Now Online

by Anne Moore

Over 300 individual primary source documents, including photographs, lithographs, organizational records, rare books and personal correspondence have been digitized to create the Quakers and Slavery digital collection. Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College and Haverford's Special Collections collaborated in the creation of the online collection, exhibiting resources related to Quaker discourse and action on the abolition of slavery. Materials culled from a number of the repositories' 17th, 18th and 19th century collections have been digitized, transcribed, cataloged and uploaded to Triptych, the Tri-College Digital Library, triptych.haverford.edu.



This digital collection includes Quaker abolitionist publications from the earliest known anti-slavery tract in 1688 to manumissions records from the mid-19th century. The digitization of these important materials encourages researchers to conveniently access them online and reduces handling, thus aiding their preservation.

In addition to the digital repository, an exhibit website allows researchers to learn more about Quakers and their discussions surrounding the issue of slavery. The website, trilogy.haverford.edu/speccoll/quakersandslavery, features a number of ways to explore this topic through custom searches, browsing, an interactive timeline or searching an interactive map by region. Included on the website are a number of thematic essays written by scholars, students and project staff. Some titles include *Radical Quaker Women*, *George Fox*, *The Underground Railroad*, and the *Pennsylvania Hall Association*. This project was made possible by a generous grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) through a program

stipulated by the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), administered in Pennsylvania by the Office of Commonwealth Libraries.

From October 11, 2010 to February 18, 2011, Magill Library's Sharpless Gallery will showcase original documents on Quakers and slavery from the Quaker Collection. Completion of this physical exhibit as well as the digital collection coincides with an international conference on Quakers and slavery which will take place November 4-6, 2010. Swarthmore College's Friends Historical Library and Haverford's Special Collections will join with the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania to host this conference. Conference events at Haverford will take place on November 6. A full program of events is available on the conference website: www.quakersandslavery.org/program.htm.

– Anne Moore is Digital Collections Librarian

The Haverford Collection *(continued from p. 1)*

a tradition evident in caricatures of students in turn-of-the-century yearbooks.

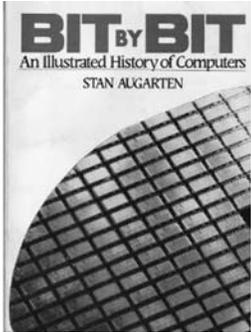
You might come to get one title in the Gummere-Morley Room, perhaps the College Prowler "Off the Record" report on Haverford according to its students. While there you may notice a whole series of DVDs from the Bi-Co Student Film Festival and take a couple to watch. Virtually all of these materials can be borrowed to review at home.

In addition to the collection in the Gummere-Morley Room, many of Haverford's key resources have been digitized and are searchable through the Special Collections website. The College Archives in Special Collections includes many one-of-a-kind documents, publications and artifacts. Archivist Diana Franzusoff Peterson (dfpeters@haverford.edu) welcomes your questions.

– Margaret Schaus is Bibliographer & Reference Librarian

Digitizing *Bit by Bit*: An Ongoing Experiment

by Dora Wong



Professor Steven Lindell selected *Bit by Bit* as the main text for his computer science course, A History of Mechanized Thought, for the clarity of the book's conceptual explication, the eloquence of its prose and its abundance of historical photographs. This classic

book by Stan Augarten published in 1984 traces the history of computing – from the development of the abacus to personal computers and from the evolving notions of mechanical devices to binary system-empowered machines that perform intellectual work.

Development of computers has since progressed at great speed, and the idea of enhancing the text with current information to extend the scope of this subject is appealing. As a first step, the author's permission was secured. Mr. Augarten, now residing in Paris, was contacted by email with the help of Stanford University Library's Archive Division, with which he had deposited his manuscripts. Once Mr. Augarten granted permission, Haverford library staff created scanned images of the book with an underlying text layer, rendering the book's contents searchable. This underlying text layer, commonly achieved through optical character recognition, or OCR, was proofread for maximum fidelity to the text.

Due to the resulting large file size, the work was divided into chapters, each bookmarked at important milestones. Plans are afoot to link these digital chapters through Tripod so students can read and interact with their personal downloaded copies. Such interaction could include inserting notes or comments using the freely-available

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Donation Strengthens Library's Japanese Holdings

by Hank Glassman

The Haverford College Library is most fortunate to have recently received a bequest of several hundred books from retired Villanova University faculty member, Prof. Cornelius J. Kiley, a distinguished scholar of ancient and medieval Japanese history. His articles have been extremely influential in the field, many still cited decades after their initial appearance. Prof. Kiley's research has focused primarily on legal history, systems of land tenure and the history of foreign kinship groups in early Japan.

Among Prof. Kiley's many articles are: "Provincial Administration and Land Tenure in Early Heian," in Hall, Shively, and McCullough, eds., *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 2; "A Note on the Surnames of Immigrant Officials in Nara Japan," in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*; "Estate and Property in the Late Heian Period," Hall and Mass, eds., *Medieval Japan: Essays in Institutional History*; "The Imperial Court as a Legal Authority in the Kamakura Age," in Mass, ed., *Court and Bakufu in Japan: Essays in Kamakura History*; "Uji and Kabane in Ancient Japan," in *Monumenta Nipponica*; and "State and Dynasty in Archaic Yamato," in the *Journal of Asian Studies*.

Included in the valuable collection of Japanese books given to the College are a great many volumes of primary sources in local history, dictionaries, scholarly monographs and works of literature. These books, especially the scores of volumes of primary source documents, will be of great use to my scholarship on medieval Japanese religious culture, and will also be much used by students in advanced courses and thesis research in Japanese history, literature and language.

– Hank Glassman is Associate Professor of
East Asian Studies

The Library Newsletter is available on the Web at
www.haverford.edu/library/about/news

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And, as it turned out, we had no idea that the document had been stolen in the 19th century by one of France's most notorious document thieves. The discovery was made by one of these Descartes scholars, Professor Erik-Jan Bos, who is working at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands to compile the complete correspondence of Descartes. Bos had written me to inquire about our holdings, prompted by our recent production of an online guide to the autograph letter collection containing, among others, the Descartes letter.

What happened next was a whirlwind of detective work and media attention that one might imagine taking place in a Dan Brown novel. We found that the letter had been known as far back as the 17th century, being mentioned in inventories from that time. And we found remnants of a scraped-off French property stamp under ultra-violet light.

As noted in the press, Haverford's President, Stephen Emerson, quickly made the correct decision to return the letter to its rightful owner, the Institut de France in Paris. Just as quickly, this venerable institution awarded Haverford a prize of €15,000 and invited President Emerson and his guests to Paris. In June the letter was turned over in a ceremony amid distinguished scholars, foreign dignitaries and the flashing bulbs of reporters.

I was lucky enough to participate in this great event and even luckier to meet the many people who had played a role in unveiling the letter's fabulous story. Among these were the Dutch scholar Erik-Jan Bos and his supervisor, Theo Verbeek; Haverford alumnus Conrad Turner '81, who had written the research paper on the Descartes letter in 1979 and the librarians from the Institut, Mireille Pastoureau and Fabienne Queyroux, who warmly welcomed the letter's return nearly two centuries after it was absconded.

Oh, and I've learned to be a little less jaded about news stories of newly discovered documents. To



Conrad Turner '81 and John Anderies discuss the letter

be sure, there are still documents from the past waiting to be discovered and fascinating stories waiting to be shared with the world.

To read more about the letter's discovery, its contents and its voyage back to France, go to www.haverford.edu/news/stories/40601/51.

– John Anderies is Head of Special Collections

STAFF NEWS

Diana Franzusoff Peterson, Manuscripts Librarian & College Archivist, attended the biennial conference of Quaker Historians and Archivists at Wilmington College in Wilmington, Ohio and a session of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Conference in Philadelphia, both in June. She gave an illustrated talk about some of Haverford's Special Collections materials to the Class of 1955 during Alumni Weekend in May.

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Adobe Reader application. Another idea is to extend the scope of this text by enhancing it with recent applications in information technology, such as linking to multimedia and articles of interest.

– Dora Wong is Science Librarian

Introducing Adam Crandell, Music & Languages Librarian

by Norm Medeiros

In April, Adam Crandell joined the Library staff as Music & Languages Librarian. Below is a brief interview I conducted with him to help readers get to know this talented and jovial individual.

NM: How did you become interested in librarianship?

AC: I've always had a love of learning. I remember, quite vividly and happily, spending hours upon hours researching as an undergraduate and graduate in the library. Many times I would get a hunger pang at night and think "Why am I so hungry?" and then it would dawn on me that I hadn't eaten for 12 hours. I've always loved technology, too. In elementary school, I would check out books from the public library about computers, primarily Macs — I was in love with Macs — and read about how they worked. I still remember reading about the emergence of GUIs, especially since they were what separated Macs from machines running MS-DOS. But I'll stop there before I date myself too much. And finally, I've always been a compulsive organizer. My sister and I — we must have been around 7 and 9 — cataloged our parents' music collection. We had lists that organized them by format, by artist, and by title. Yes, we were rather nerdy.

NM: What attracted you to Haverford and your current position?

AC: Before I came to Haverford I was an intern at the Library of Congress. Although I was working with some wonderful materials and amazing people, I noticed that there was not a lot of room for individuality. Given the volume of materials and inherent bureaucracy, everyone had their specialized job to do and to do it in a very prescribed way. That didn't really mesh well with me, as I am a musician at heart and an inherently creative person. I knew then that I wanted a position where I had more variety in what I did, and what I did had room for a little creative license. I really felt like Haverford offered that,

and five months later I would say my impression was spot on.

NM: Your position involves collaborating with Bryn Mawr and Swarthmore colleagues. How does this experience influence your work at Haverford?

AC: I've been really fortunate to have the Tri-Co colleagues I do. Two former Haverford music librarians are still around in the Tri-Co, and so I'm able to use them as sounding boards for my own ideas and to gain greater insight into some of the challenges I face. That has been unbelievably helpful, as you can imagine. I'm also on the committee to update the Subject Portal, so I have the opportunity to work with some truly amazing librarians — Melanie Maskin at Swarthmore and Susan Turkel at Bryn Mawr. They say two heads are better than one, and I would say — to take the idiom a step further — that three heads are better than two.

NM: During your interview you gave an impressive presentation on technological innovations in music research. What "latest and greatest" technology excites you?

AC: First off, I'm glad you thought it was impressive. I would have to say that up until recently, information technology has been geared towards "textual" or "symbolic" language: you searched indices for words, gave abstracts in words and even now we "Google" words. Put in other terms, we've become pretty adept at searching words with words. With music, however, that has been rather impossible. One could not say, "I want to know if there are any other occurrences of the 'Tristan' progression that occur before Wagner," and have any way to find that out short of scouring every bit of music by hand. Nor could one ask, "Are there any performances of Beethoven's *Sonata Pathétique* similar to that of Barenboim?" But advances in technology are allowing us to search and compare music, both notated and performed. This can be seen in some nascent technologies — like apps for your cell phone — that allow you to whistle that tune you've had stuck in your head all day and actually find out what it is. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

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Adam Crandell (*continued from p. 5*)

NM: What would readers be most surprised to learn about you?

AC: So many skeletons to choose from. Well, I lived and studied in England for a year, and as many of you probably know, goods and services can be frighteningly expensive over there. This was also at a time when the exchange rate was over \$2 to the pound, so that made the situation even more acute for a student living off a shoestring budget drawn on U.S. funds. In one of my brilliant cost-saving plans, I decided to forgo getting my hair cut – ever. My entire time abroad that year, I never got my hair cut, except for right before I returned home, as I didn't want my mom to see me and die of shock. One of my friends in England described me as looking like Michael Jackson sporting the Jheri curl hair-do, if that gives you any idea what I looked like. And yes, some photos still survive.



Adam Crandell, Music & Languages Librarian
