

Llewellyn Collection of Vermont History Annual Project Report, 2012-2013

Champlain College's archivist, Erica Donnis, has worked with the Llewellyn Collection of Vermont History almost since its arrival at the college. Her report on 2012-2013 collection-related activities follows, and an FY 13 budget report is attached.

Collections Database and Website

At the end of FY 2012, we had just completed developing an internal collections database using the open-source software program CollectiveAccess. In FY 2013, I made good progress in beginning to populate the database with catalog records, completing the cataloging of the sheet music in the collection as well as items Lance Llewellyn donated in 2012, for a total of about 350 records. I hired a work-study student to assist with scanning items and uploading images to the database. Unfortunately the cloud server we were using, BlueHost, was not able to handle the high-quality TIFF images we were producing, so we investigated alternatives with the assistance of Champlain's IS department and identified a replacement server. While the transfer to the new server was under discussion, we saved our images on an external hard drive purchased for the project.

Concurrently, we developed a public website to showcase the Llewellyn Collection, with the capability of accommodating other special collections in the future. We worked with consultant Jonathan Byerley to customize CollectiveAccess' "Pawtucket" module, which allows viewers to view, browse, and search abbreviated catalog records and view online exhibits. We also developed internal guidelines addressing the potential copyright issues of providing online access to collections items and a copyright statement for the website. By the end of FY 2013, the new site featured all of the approximately 350 catalogued items in the collection, including images of those items in the public domain. I also completed two online exhibits, both adaptations of exhibits mounted in Perry Hall (see below): one on sheet music in the collection, and the other on historic hotels in downtown Burlington. However, we decided to keep the website URL under wraps until the official public unveiling of the collection at an event in September 2013, after the end of FY 2013.

Exhibits

During the year, I curated several small exhibits in Roger H. Perry Hall highlighting items from the collection. These exhibits, which were each on display for several months, depicted and interpreted Burlington streetscapes; Burlington pennants; sheet music composed and/or published by Burlington residents; historic hotels in downtown Burlington; and the late-nineteenth-century Burlington architects Alfred and Clelland Fisher.

Interview of Lance Llewellyn

I met with Lance Llewellyn and Connell Gallagher, retired director of Special Collections at the University of Vermont, to interview Lance about the collection, obtain background information about his collecting activities, and begin to discuss a scope for future additions to the collection.

Additional Items

Lance Llewellyn donated three boxes of additional materials to the collection in FY 2013. An initial inventory was prepared; these materials are awaiting full cataloguing.

Collections Management

The following collections management tasks were accomplished in FY 2013:

- Exhibits: I upgraded the lining material used inside the display tables and purchased some additional conservation-quality display supplies to augment those already on hand.
- Art Rotation: I rotated two large framed pennants, which had been on display in Perry Hall since 2010, off exhibit to protect them from light exposure; they were replaced with two framed posters produced by the Maltex Cereal Company. Due to security concerns, I replaced the 1798 framed map of Vermont (on display in the Perry Hall lounge area since 2010) with a twentieth-century poster of a Vermont Morgan Horse Show, which we had framed with conservation-quality materials by Steve Wienart.
- Art Security: We continued our discussions about the most appropriate method to secure artwork on display, while respecting the historic plaster walls of Perry Hall. We purchased and tested an art alarm unit and two sample art hanging systems, but came to no definite conclusions.
- Rehousing: We purchased some conservation-quality sleeves, tags, and other supplies for use on the additional items donated in 2013.
- Environmental monitoring: I continued to monitor the temperature and humidity levels in collections exhibit and storage areas.