

Report on the Llewellyn Collection Project

July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012

The 2011-2012 academic year saw continued progress in our stewardship of the Llewellyn Collection. Generous donor funding allowed us to focus on three major areas: creating new videos and displays showcasing portions of the collection; finishing our inventory and monitor and improve storage and housing conditions; and making progress in our goal of creating a web-based interface to the collection.

Exhibits and videos

- Rotated exhibits in display tables and postcard case twice during the year, and rotated several framed works of art in Perry Hall that were particularly susceptible to light damage.
- Sealed display table tops (Perry Hall conference rooms) to protect items on display from accidental spills. Improved access to display tables in Perry Hall via metal rods.
- Began quest for new art hanging system for framed works of art on display in Perry Hall, hoping to improve security of displayed items.
- Produced two short videos highlighting a "visual tour" of the collection, plus seven short videos of faculty member David Lustgarten discussing fonts, design elements, etc. of items in the collection.

Inventory, storage, and preservation

- Completed collection inventory (finished inventory reconciliation). Accessioned and inventoried additional items donated by Lance Llewellyn, and arranged appraisal of these new materials. Participated successfully in the internal inventory audit conducted by April O'Dell.
- Protected items stored on the floor in Miller Information Commons (MIC) storage areas from accidental water damage using plastic bins and crates. Humidified, flattened, and housed all rolled maps and prints small enough to fit in map cabinet. Rehoused all extremely oversized rolled maps in archival tubes. Rehoused all textiles (pennants, flag, placemats, etc.), storing them flat in the map cabinet. Reorganized and rehoused coins, pins, and medals in archival trays. Sleeved postcards, photographs, many pamphlets, and most periodicals in protective archival sleeves. Sleeved almost all dust jackets in protective archival sleeves. Individually boxed 18 fragile books in protective archival boxes. Faced Perry Library bookcase shelves with transparent plastic to reduce collections items' exposure to wood acids. Acquired temperature and humidity monitors and began monitoring conditions in display and storage areas. Arranged for a small number of additional items to be professionally framed by Steve Wienert.
- Reviewed items for conservation needs and prepared list of high-priority items for possible conservation. Arranged for conservation and framing of five maps and prints by MJ Davis, paper conservator.
- In order to facilitate future cataloguing, identified, separated, and grouped periodicals and UVM-specific items in Perry Hall.

Web-based interface to the collection

- Developed a pilot website which will eventually showcase the collection. (This site will almost certainly change when the college revamps its entire web presence later this year.)
- Reviewed options for software to serve as an online database/catalog and web interface to the collection. Developed a project and implementation plan to identify goals, tasks, costs, and people involved. Conducted extensive review of software options, including gathering feedback from current users, and decided on CollectiveAccess. Developed specifications for customizing CollectiveAccess, including initial set of fields and prospective software functions, developed RFP for customization of CollectiveAccess' internal database component, and interviewed contractor candidates. Oversaw customization work by the selected contractor, Jonathan Byerley, including extensive beta testing in several phases.
- Researched copyright issues for digitization and developed proposed copyright policy. Experimented with new photography equipment to prepare for possibility of adding digital photos to the database. Purchased a scanner for safely scanning bound as well as flat items.

For information about expenditures associated with the work listed here, please see the attached budget summary, "Llewellyn Project Expenditures 2011-2012."

Looking ahead

In the past two years, we have made substantial progress in stabilizing the physical condition and security of the collection, and we have made a good start on the complex process of creating a virtual presence. In the coming year, we expect to:

- Continue to work with Erica Donnis on a contractual basis. Erica is a local museum and archives consultant who defined and has directed much of the work accomplished in the past year and a half.
- Fully populate the collection database, move it onto a stable server, then make it publicly available. This step is key to bringing the collection into scholarly use, because it is the way that scholars would learn about the scope of the collection and identify specific items of potential use to their scholarship. We have already selected and acquired the necessary software, and are currently creating identifying records for each item in the collection. We are also currently exploring the web-based front end for the database and expect to install a beta version of that in coming weeks. We expect to have to migrate the system to a more stable (fee-based) server and have begun to explore options for that.
- Continue to work with a consultant such as Jonathan Byerly on a contractual basis to set up and configure the web-based interface to the collection database.

- Reach a final decision on art hanging systems in Perry Hall. The question is not as clear cut as we had hoped, because the system we tentatively chose turns out to have implementation issues. We expect to try at least one more option before reaching a final decision that balances the historic character of the building and interior wall surfaces with the need to secure items and rotate displays.
- Continue to plan additional videos, events, and other ways to focus attention on the collection.

All of us working with the Llewellyn project are deeply grateful for the support we received this year, and we look forward to continuing our work in processing and showcasing the collection in the coming year.

Submitted by:

Janet Cottrell
Director of Academic Resources and the Library

Erica Donnis
Independent Historian & Museum Consultant