Watkinson News: Exhibit at Mt. Vernon

Sally Dickinson, Associate Curator & Preservation Librarian

The Watkinson Library has hidden treasures in its stacks that are accepted lore at Trinity, but it is always a delight to discover that we own an unusual item from an interested 3rd party! Such was the case with Henry Fielding’s The History of Tom Jones: A Foundling, a book owned by George Washington when he was a young man. The library received a request last spring from the Mt. Vernon museum in Virginia to borrow Washington’s copy of Tom Jones for the exhibition “Take Note! George Washington the Reader.” The exhibition celebrates the opening of the Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington at Mt. Vernon. The book, in four volumes, was printed in London in 1750. The Watkinson owns volumes I & 4, which are both signed “Washington” at the head of the title-page.

The books, along with 2 other titles owned (and signed) by Washington, were bought in 1883 with credit extended to Trinity College Library. Tom Jones was from Part II, October 1883 (lot 866). The other titles owned by Washington are the 2nd edition of Considerations on criminal law by Henry Dagge (London, 1774) and William Rowley’s Rational practice of physic (London, 1793.) Rowley’s work is inscribed “To his Excellency General Washington from the author” and also has “Geo. Washington” signed on the title-page.

Some of the Watkinson’s most beautiful and rare books were bought at Cooke’s sale, including several 15th century manuscript Books of Hours, five incunabula (books printed before 1501) and numerous other early printed books. Shown here is a photo of our book in situ:

from the sale for a total of $5,000 (to buy the equivalent material today, if it were on the market, would require well over $6 million!). Tom Jones was from Part II, October 1883 (lot 866). The other titles owned by Washington are the 2nd edition of Considerations on criminal law by Henry Dagge (London, 1774) and William Rowley’s Rational practice of physic (London, 1793.) Rowley’s work is inscribed “To his Excellency General Washington from the author” and also has “Geo. Washington” signed on the title-page. Some of the Watkinson’s most beautiful and rare books were bought at Cooke’s sale, including several 15th century manuscript Books of Hours, five incunabula (books printed before 1501) and numerous other early printed books. Shown here is a photo of our book in situ:

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Enhancing Student Learning (continued)

Online Exhibit: “100 Years Ago at Trinity”
Amy Harrell, Digital Projects Librarian

The Trinity College Digital Repository has grown to become a rich and vast archive of materials that tell the history of the college. This spring, the Library is launching a new way to feature these materials in the form of online exhibits. Using the Omeka platform, we are building a digital exhibit on Trinity College in 1914, titled “100 Years Ago at Trinity.”

Items in the exhibit are taken from the Tripod Trio and the Trinity Ivy, and include articles, photographs, advertisements, and other pieces that when grouped together paint a picture of life in the College in 1914. The exhibit is organized around themes such as student life, the curriculum, the physical plant, and athletics. It launched on March 7, and is available at: http://trinitylibrary.omeka.net/exhibits/show/1914.

We hope this new presentation of digital objects will help uncover and bring life to Trinity’s fascinating archival materials.

New Concepts in Research: Metaliteracy
Rob Walsh, Social Sciences Librarian

In January, the Research Education librarians held our first semi-annual professional development workshop, with the goal of providing us an opportunity to enhance our teaching skills by highlighting emerging pedagogical trends. For the inaugural session, Trudi Jacobson, Head of the Information Literacy Department at SUNY- Albany and co-chair of the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education Taskforce, led a day-long workshop on metaliteracy. Metaliteracy challenges traditional skills-based approaches to information literacy by recognizing related literacy types and incorporating emerging technologies. The current definitions of information literacy are “insufficient for the revolutionary social technologies currently prevalent online” (Mackey & Jacobson, Reframing Information Literacy as a Metaliteracy, 2011, 62-63). The theories embedded in metaliteracy support and inform the ongoing revision of the ACRL Information Literacy Standards.

January’s workshop was sponsored by the CTW consortium. Trinity librarians were joined by our Connecticut College and Wesleyan colleagues to critically examine how our existing approach to research education can integrate the concepts of metaliteracy. Our teaching methods will evolve to ensure that students not only are proficient with accessing, evaluating and analyzing information, but also are adept at actively producing and sharing new information. These latter skills are shaping information literacy in the 21st century.

Seniors Share About: Research Methods and the Library
Kelly Dagan, Outreach and Instruction Librarian

The Library is in its third year of offering our half-credit course on research skills, COLL 220 Research Methods and Information Resources, and several of our inaugural class members are now seniors. Two of them, Beck Prigot ’14 and Gaurav Toor ’14, generously agreed to reflect on their experience with this course, their research, and the Library in personal interviews.

Why did you decide to enroll in the COLL 220 Research Methods and Information Resources course?

GT: Mainly to acquire research skills. I wanted to independently pursue quality research and get sources that are sufficient for the revolutionary social technologies currently prevalent online. (Mackey & Jacobson, Reframing Information Literacy as a Metaliteracy, 2011, 62-63). The theories embedded in metaliteracy support and inform the ongoing revision of the ACRL Information Literacy Standards.

On a more personal level, I knew that enrolling in the course would give me more skills to improve my research papers; although my papers tended to be pretty balanced in their sources before, I knew that the course would give me a larger variety of databases, as well as help me find relevant sources more quickly.

What did you learn during this class and/or through work with librarians that was surprising or engaging to you?

Also, I believe that being a librarian is my calling in life, but I can’t fulfill that goal if I don’t know the basics of the field. Even though I know that I’ll get a proper education in librarianship at Trinity school, it’s better if I can “hit the ground running.”

On a more personal level, I knew that enrolling in the course would improve my research papers; although my papers tended to be pretty balanced in their sources before, I knew that the course would give me a larger variety of databases, as well as help me find relevant sources more quickly.

GT: If you think you know how to do research, both online and manual, you are in for a shocker. The expanse of resources is overwhelming. The ways historians can use statistics, sociologists can use photos from ARTstor, political scientists can make use of PEW data, and other disciplines through the resources, is mind blowing. For me, anyone who takes this class is guaranteed to reconsider research as a monotonous activity. You will learn how to do research efficiently and have fun while doing so.

BP: It has given me a more thorough understanding of how to do research. For example, I decided to write the collection development proposal proposal after my research skills and academic skills class. I knew from this course that I would need to do a lot of research. When I went into my class, I decided to write the collection development proposal. I was very satisfied with the collection that I wrote up, and it was a very helpful experience.

How have your interactions with the Library affected your Trinity academic career?

GT: Never won research. It is so much easier now. Finding data for econometrics projects and peer-reviewed articles for others is an exercise I look forward to. Research becomes an enjoyable, and of course resourceful, habit that everyone should acquire!

BP: As I suspected, my sources for my research papers became more varied – I didn’t have to rely on JSTOR and the library catalog. I was able to access so much more data through sources. However, I’d say that my future academic career has been more affected by my interactions with the Library. As I finish up library school applications, I know that my experiences in COLL-220 and in the Research Associates program have given me both an advantage over some of my fellow applicants and a greater chance of employment. But as I mentioned in my few of my applications, even if I can’t obtain a position in my potential schools’ libraries, I’d still be more than happy to draw upon my experiences at the Library to provide assistance to my classmates in my free time.

Library Workshop for Entrepreneurs

Kelly Dagan, Outreach and Instruction Librarian

In November, the Library partnered with the Career Development Center for their 2013-2014 Entrepreneurship Competition, providing targeted research instruction to the competing student business teams. Librarians Rob Walsh and Kelly Dagan taught the first session on market research and industry awareness, enabling students to refine their proposals for their target markets. Librarians Amy Harrell and Erin Valentino taught the second session on intellectual property rights, guiding students to resources and strategies they could apply to ensure proper use and protection of ideas.

The finalist teams were announced January 16, with awards of $2,000 each to further develop their pitches, and the winning team will be awarded $10,000 to launch their enterprise in April 2014. The Library was pleased to support this exciting opportunity for student innovation and teamwork on campus.
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Why did you decide to enroll in the COLL 220 Research Methods and Information Resources course?

GT: Mainly to acquire research skills. I wanted to independently pursue quality research and get sources for the topic in hand. I was heavily dependent on the research librarians before. Research is an integral part of academic, perhaps even casual, interests and I wanted to break free of any doubt about the worth of my research.

BP: Short answer: Because I wanted to become a more efficient librarian. Longer answer: I’ve always believed that being a librarian is my calling in life, but I can’t fulfill that goal if I don’t know the basics of the field. Even though I know that I’ll get a proper education in librarianship at library school, it’s better if I can “hit the ground running.”

On a more personal level, I knew that enrolling in the course would improve my research papers; although my papers tended to be pretty balanced before, I knew that the course would give me a larger variety of databases, as well as help me find relevant sources more quickly.

What did you learn during this class and/or through working with librarians that was surprising or engaging to you?

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BP: Quite the opposite [where I wrote up a collections development proposal about why the Library should have a more balanced graphic novel collection] was definitely one of the most surprising experiences I had in the class. While I knew that librarians can’t just say “I want these books, here’s the estimated cost and benefit to the library” and be done, I didn’t realize it was such a much research and justification went into establishing a collection. (I’m sure that these kinds of proposals are lengthier and more in-depth in the “real world!”)

How have your interactions with the Library affected your Trinity academic career?

GT: Never worried now! It is so much easier now. Finding data for econometrics projects and peer-reviewed articles for others is an exercise I look forward to. Research becomes an enjoyable, and of course resourceful, habit that everyone should acquire!

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The new framework revises the older standards.

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A new chapter for information literacy is about to begin this summer with the expected formal adoption of a significant revision of the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. A new framework takes into account changes in the information environment and new modes of learning that have developed over the last several years.

The creation of this publication is due, in part, to the support the Library receives from the Friends of Trinity College Library, a vital group of alumni, parents, and friends who share their love of learning by supporting the Library. We welcome your comments and questions about this publication or the Friends of Trinity College Library through the College Librarian’s office: (860) 297-2255.