The First Yale Unit and WW I
Posted on August 19, 2014 by bl326

Highlighting the YaleNews article “Defending Allied Skies” by Amy Athey McDonald, which draws heavily on the collections of Manuscripts and Archives.

"In 1916 as America faced a revolution in Mexico and full-blown war in Europe, a group of 12 friends at Yale University decided it was time they learned how to fly. That summer the young men, led by Frederick Trubee Davison ’18 (1896–1974) — manager of the Yale crew team — formed the Yale Aero Club and the volunteer Coastal Patrol Unit #1, later known as the First Yale Unit.

They would become the country’s first naval aviation unit in World War I — the eyes in the skies that spotted enemy troops and land mines, chased U-boats and zeppelins, and engaged enemy planes in battles over Dunkirk and Paris.

They came from great wealth, social standing, and privilege. With surnames like Rockefeller and Gates, members of the First Yale Unit were star athletes and students, part of the “silver spoon” set. Schooled in leadership, service, and sacrifice, they were willing to risk everything to join a war 4,000 miles away in Europe." Read more …

Yale’s WW I Memorials
Posted on August 18, 2014 by bl326

— Judith Schiff, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library
With the anniversary of the start of World War I upon us, our Manuscripts and Archives colleague Judy Schiff talks in a YouTube video about how Yale’s participation and losses in World War I are commemorated on campus. Give a listen!

Posted in Events | Leave a reply

Travelling the World in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries

Posted on June 4, 2014 by bl326

Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, has recently acquired, processed, and made available for research the personal papers of Theodore Martindale Purdy, an 1883 Graduate of the City College of New York and long-time resident of Short Hills, New Jersey. The photograph albums, diaries, sketchbooks, and printed ephemera document Purdy's extensive world travels as a journalist and correspondent for the New York Mail and Express from 1883-1931. Purdy was born in 1862, married Helen Van Dyk in 1892, and had two children. His son, Theodore Martindale Purdy, Jr. received a B.A. from Yale in 1925. He died in 1944. An online finding aid for collection number MS 1994 provides additional details about the collection of his papers.

Purdy's travels took him to the Middle East, North Africa, and East, Southeast, and South Asia. The collection contains numerous albums of photographs from his journeys, including these from a trip to Egypt in circa 1889-1891.
His diaries document his travels and observations, such as these entries from March 22nd-24th on his arrival in Cairo by boat.

Purdy was a decent artist and the collection contains several sketchbooks of drawings made while abroad, including these columns seen in temples at Luxor and Karnak in 1891.
Purdy also saved travel guides and other books, including this one in which his marginalia expresses skepticism about the author’s advice for combating seasickness by taking laxatives.

Finally, Purdy saved some very interesting printed ephemera documenting the intercontinental travel technology of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including these three brochures advertising Cunard Line voyages.

Researchers may use the online finding aid to request boxes from the Theodore Martindale Purdy Papers (MS 1994). Consult our website for additional information about the collections and services of Manuscripts and Archives.

Posted in Collections | Leave a reply
We thank all thirteen Yale College seniors who submitted senior essays for prize consideration, and congratulate the following two students on their excellent prize-winning essays:

- **Outstanding Senior Essay on Yale:**

- **Outstanding Senior Essay Based on Research Done in Manuscripts and Archives:**

The prize website provides a list of past winners of each prize, and in the future will contain links to the prize-winning essays on the Yale University Library’s EliScholar digital publishing platform.

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Manuscripts and Archives offers two student prizes each year, in memory of our colleague Diane E. Kaplan, who was instrumental in making these prizes available to Yale College seniors. One is awarded for an outstanding senior essay on Yale. The second is awarded for an outstanding senior essay based on research done in Manuscripts and Archives. Each prize winner receives a $500 cash prize, which will be presented at the student’s residential college commencement ceremony. Essays from any department are eligible for consideration and students are invited to nominate themselves for these prizes. The essay prize submission and judging process takes place each year in March-April.

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**‘Bulldog and Panther’ Exhibit Opens**

*Posted on March 17, 2014 by bl326*

*Bulldog and Panther: The 1970 May Day Rally and Yale – Memorabilia Room, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University*

1969 and 1970 were politically tumultuous years in the United States and indeed around the world. Unrest in U.S. urban areas and on college and university campuses focused on racial and gender inequalities, the ongoing U.S. war in Vietnam, and demands by students for more responsive and inclusive campus decision making. On 19 May 1969 Black Panther Party (BPP) member Alex Rackley was kidnapped and killed in New Haven by other BPP members who believed he was an FBI informant. In a time of intense FBI counter-intelligence focus on neutralizing the BPP’s influence in U.S. cities, the broad swath of indictments for the murder seemed an overreach to many. The defendants were referred to as the New Haven Nine, an allusion to the famous Chicago Seven, and included Bobby Seale, national BPP Chairman, who had spoken at Yale the day of the murder. Seale was extradited to Connecticut on the approval of California Governor Ronald Reagan, and the trial was set to begin in May 1970. A large protest rally was organized for the New Haven Green, scheduled for 1-3 May 1970. This exhibit explores the events leading up to the New Haven May Day rally, and its impact on Yale, the New Haven community, and beyond.

The exhibit is curated by Sarah Schmidt, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, and Bill Landis, Manuscripts and Archives. It is free and open to the public Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM-4:45 PM, through May 16, 2014.

For additional resources on the exhibit see the [New Haven Register article](#) on a discussion panel, part of a collaborative series of events inspired by the exhibit hosted by the Yale University Library and Pierson College. The panel, held on February 26th, was moderated by
Yale history professor Beverly Gage and featured Kathleen Cleaver, Ann Froines, and John R. Williams. Yale TV also did a feature on the exhibit, with interesting interview segments with Henry "Sam" Chauncey, Jr.

Discover Civil War Treasures

Posted on January 29, 2014 by caking

The Civil War Manuscripts Collection is well worth delving into and you will find many gems. The collection is an amalgam of correspondence, journals, photographs, printed materials, and ephemera documenting numerous aspects of the War from a predominantly Union point of view, with many Connecticut regiments and individuals portrayed throughout the papers. There are copious amounts of correspondence of soldiers and officers describing military battles and events and commenting on politics, as well as the challenges of daily camp life. Letters from the wives and families on the home front provide a glimpse into civilian activities.

Women on the home front had the opportunity to support the war effort by organizing fairs through the auspices of the United States Sanitary Commission, an organization founded in 1861 to improve the unsanitary living conditions of the troops. The “Sanitary Fairs” could be elaborate events, lasting for several days to a week or longer, to raise money, heighten patriotism, and promote volunteerism.

Journals and diaries abound: volunteers describing their newly-issued uniforms and artillery to recounting military battles; medical facilities and operations described by Bridgeport surgeon, Robert Hubbard; a prisoner of war relating life in a Confederate prison camp, to name only a few.

Journal of a soldier from the Seventeenth Connecticut Volunteer Regiment describing the loss of life in his regiment on the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg.
A large assortment of photographs and engravings of soldiers, officers, Lincoln’s cabinet members, and civilians are of additional interest, as well as ephemera.

Union General Ambrose Burnside, led successful campaigns in Tennessee and North Carolina, however, was defeated badly at the Battle of the Crater and the Battle of Fredericksburg. The term, sideburns, a distinctive style of facial whiskers worn by General Burnside, is believed to have been derived from his surname.

Examples of pictorial envelopes or “covers” demonstrating patriotic and political sentiments.

The finding aid, *Guide to the Civil War Manuscripts Collection* (MS 619), is available on the Internet and is only one of many collections dealing with the Civil War held by Manuscripts and Archives.

Addressing the Challenge of Preserving Born Digital Design Records

In a recent blog post, digital archivist Mark Matienzo wrote about the efforts being made at Yale to preserve the increasing volume of digital records being acquired by Manuscripts and Archives, the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, and other units of the University Library. One type of born digital record that is particularly challenging to preserve is the architectural drawing and other design documents created by architecture firms. In recent years, architects have increasingly abandoned the process of designing on paper, and instead have used software programs such as CAD (Computer-aided design) and now BIM (Building Information Modeling) to generate drawings and complex models that are made up of a series of multi-layered and interconnected computer files—files that can be difficult to recover due to their varied formats and the continually-changing nature of the proprietary software packages. Given the realities of contemporary architectural practice, how can repositories who collect design records promise to preserve and provide access to these born digital materials?
I recently attended a two-day conference in London, England, “Archiving the Digital: Current Efforts to Preserve Design Records,” which aimed to address this question. Jointly sponsored by the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Victoria and Albert Museum, the conference brought together archivists, curators, preservationists, and records managers from across Europe and North America to discuss what steps firms and institutions have taken thus far to preserve digital design records and what further steps should be considered, from emulation of proprietary software programs to migration of data to common file formats. What the conference revealed is that resolution of this issue will require—as Mark pointed out in his blog post—a great deal of collaboration among archivists, architects, technology experts, and others. Although much discussion is still needed, the conference was a positive step forward, an opportunity to contemplate the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital revolution within the design community, and to begin formulating a preservation strategy ensuring the survival and accessibility of these records well into the future.

History of Fight for Rights of LGBT Parents To Be Preserved at Yale

The Manuscripts and Archives Department in the Yale University Library will be the future home for the records of the Family Equality Council. A more detailed announcement was posted today on the Yale News website.

The Family Equality Council represents the 3 million LGBT parents in America and their 6 million children. In deeding to Yale all of its historical records documenting the organization and its role in the LGBT family equality movement, the Council ensures the preservation of and researcher access to more than 30 years of materials related to its founding, growth, and expansion. Future accessions to the records will carry on documentation of the organization’s ongoing efforts to advance equality for families with LGBT parents.

Manuscripts and Archives is a major center for historical inquiry and also serves as the documentary memory of Yale University. The department maintains rich collections in support of research and teaching in the area of gender and sexuality studies at Yale, and actively seeks to add to its collections in this area. We welcome the use of the collections by researchers from within and beyond the Yale community.

What do Emma Goldman, Djuna Barnes, and the Provincetown Players have in common?

Posted on September 30, 2013 by Mary Caldera
They were all represented by Harry Weinberger, a native New Yorker and lawyer who was admitted to the bar in 1908. A staunch believer in civil liberties, Weinberger defended many aliens, immigrants, labor activists, anarchists, and other radicals, including Emma Goldman. He also developed an expertise in copyright law and represented several writers and artists, including Djuna Barnes and the Provincetown Players.

Weinberger’s papers, held in Manuscripts and Archives, document 116 cases. The files include correspondence with clients, legal briefs, and writ prepared by Weinberger and his staff, as well as other material relevant to the cases. Among the gems in the collection are Weinberger’s voluminous files on the Goldman and Berkman cases, which include correspondence and copies of The Blast, an anarchist newspaper, and files on compulsory vaccination, which Weinberger opposed. The papers are a treasure for those studying radical New York in the inter-war years as well as civil liberty in the US.

The Guide to the Harry Weinberger Papers is now available online at http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0553.

Collaboration Before Preservation: Recovering Born Digital Records in the Stephen Gendin Papers

For some, the phrase “born digital resources” may be unfamiliar, but Ricky Erway, Senior Program Officer at OCLC Research wrote a brief essay entitled Defining “Born Digital”, which provides a handy, working definition: “items created and managed in digital form.” Manuscripts and Archives, the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, and Yale University Library overall have had a notable history of working with born digital resources over the past ten years. Past projects undertaken within the Yale University Library have included the Fedora and the Preservation of University Records project (funded by the National Historical Records and Publications and Records Commission, in collaboration with Tufts University Digital Collections and Archives), Michael Forstrom’s case study of the George Whitmore papers in the Beinecke [i], the migration of government information on CD-ROMs and DVD-ROMs [ii], and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-funded project Born-Digital Collections: An Inter-Institutional Model for Stewardship (AIMS), a collaboration between Yale, University of Virginia, Stanford University, and University of Hull. In 2012, the AIMS project received an National Digital Stewardship Alliance Innovation Award.

Manuscripts and Archives shares a lab space for working with born digital records and obsolete media with the Beinecke. The lab began as a result of our collaboration with the Beinecke on the AIMS project, and now a few years after it began, we have one of the best facilities in the northeastern United States to work with old computer media formats. Our equipment includes consumer-grade computers and drives for a variety of media formats (floppy disks, compact discs and DVDs, Iomega Zip disks, etc.), as well as some specialized equipment, such as forensic write blockers, which prevent a computer or its operating system from modifying the data on a disk or device during the transfer process. We have recently begun a project to begin arrangement and description for a number of collections that contain born digital records. While MSSA staff including myself will be writing more in the future about processing these collections for this blog, I wanted to write a post about a specific example within one of the collections we are processing that emphasizes the importance of collaboration both within Yale and beyond about our efforts to preserve and provide access to born digital records.

MSSA holds the papers of Stephen Gendin (1966-2000), a lifelong HIV/AIDS activist and writer. Gendin’s activism started soon after he tested positive for HIV as a freshman at Brown University. Gendin was an early member of ACT UP (the AIDS Coalition to Unleash
Power), a direct action-focused group, and he founded ACT UP/Rhode Island in 1987. With Sean Strub, in the early 1990s Gendin co-founded the Community Prescription Service, a business and advocacy group for patients requiring FDA-approved drugs for treatment of HIV/AIDS. With the exception of the born digital records within the collection, Gendin’s papers have been processed. After consulting with Arrangement and Description Archivist Matthew Gorham, who originally processed this collection, and Mary Caldera, MSSA’s Head of Arrangement and Description, I agreed to assist with the processing of the born digital records within the collection.

The born digital records within Gendin’s papers, which were created approximately between 1985 and 2000, were received on a variety of removable computer media, including 3.5” and 5.25” floppy disks, a CD-ROM, and a SyQuest 44 megabyte 5.25” removable hard disk cartridge. While we have established some infrastructure and procedures for working with very common computer media formats, this would be the first time in which we had to work with SyQuest cartridges. While not necessarily uncommon when they came to market, today SyQuest cartridges are now very difficult to read because the original drives are very hard to find.

![SyQuest 44 MBs. Photo by portmanteaus.](image)

My first goal was to set forth and find a drive that could read these cartridges, and I turned to my network of colleagues who had similar expertise and equipment. Don Mennerich, a MSSA alumnus and a digital archivist in the Manuscripts and Archives Division at the New York Public Library, has a similar lab as we have within the Sterling Memorial Library, and I scheduled time to visit him. Don had a SyQuest drive that he was not able to get working, so the first order of business was to see if I could help him make it work. After spending about an hour or so there, we made no progress, but he agreed to lend me his drive on the condition that he could visit our lab at Yale to transfer data from a SyQuest cartridge in NYPL’s holdings if I was able to get it to work. I did some research on SyQuest cartridges and found documentation about how to write-protect them thanks to Al Kossow’s [Bitsavers](http://www.bitesavers.org) project, which is an online repository of software and documentation for old computers. Kossow, a former software engineer at Apple, is the Robert N. Miner Software Curator of the Computer History Museum.

I brought the drive to our lab the following week, and tested it with similar combinations of hardware. After remembering that Michael Forstrom, an archivist at the Beinecke, had brought over an Apple PowerBook G3 “Wallstreet” laptop for our potential use in the lab about three years ago, I realized that I could likely get the borrowed drive working with that computer, and asked Gabby Redwine, the Beinecke’s digital archivist to confirm this. The “Wallstreet” PowerBook G3 has been described by Doug Reside as “Rosetta machine” given its ability to act as “a translation aid for those wishing to transfer information from one encoding to another.” [iv] In particular, the PowerBook in our lab has a SCSI port, to which we could connect the SyQuest drive, as well as a drive for Zip disks, with which we could transfer the data to a more recent machine. After a bit of trial and error, I was able to get the PowerBook to recognize the drive and to read the disk, which appeared to contain several databases.
Even though we were able to read the cartridge, my colleagues in Manuscripts and Archives and I still have a good amount of work in front of us to process the born digital records in Gendin’s papers and to integrate the description of those records into the existing finding aid. In the words of Erin O’Meara’s presentation from the OCLC Research Past Forward conference at Yale University this summer, “no one cooks the bacon alone.” In other words, one person cannot do all of this work in isolation – it requires collaboration within the department and institution, and it requires drawing on a variety of expertise, including knowledge about the collection and its creator, that of the archivists who have previously processed these and similar collections, and those of us who have expertise and knowledge about current and obsolete computer technology.

Thinking beyond this sort of collaboration, it should be clear that, as MSSA’s digital archivist, even I needed to draw on a strong professional network to be able to even begin doing this work. Our lab did not have the equipment necessary to work with these materials, so I had to connect with colleagues like Don and Gabby, and use community resources such as Bitsavers as my base of resources and knowledge for obsolete and now rare storage technology. Ben Fino-Radin, formerly the digital conservator at Rhizome, writes in his post “It Takes A Village To Save a Hard Drive” about the experience of recovering and transferring the work of artist Phil Sanders during the New Museum’s XFR STN exhibition as one that needed to leverage a grassroots network that brought together equipment, practicing artists, cultural heritage and preservation professionals, computer history experts and enthusiasts, humanities scholars, and beyond. While more and more academic research libraries such as the Yale University Library grow their capacity to work with born digital content, it is clear that we will not be successful unless we also continue to develop and leverage a strong community based on expertise, trust, and collaboration.

In that spirit, I will continue to share the information that I gain in working with these materials, both on this blog and in other channels such as the Yale ERecs blog about my work and my discoveries. In particular, I will be writing a more detailed blog post about the work I’ve undertaken with the media and records in the Stephen Gendin papers and in other collections I help to preserve and make accessible for our patrons.

References


