

SPRING 2005  
Vol. 3, No. 2

# SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

## Rare Books of Ornithology

Special Collections is fortunate to hold a number of rare books which chronicle the history of both the science of ornithology and the art of bird illustration from the 16th-19th centuries. These include a 1547 printing of an Italian work on falcons; Thomas Bewick's, *History of British Birds* (1804), the first book to use wood engravings as an illustration technique; the seven volume octavo edition of John James Audubon's, *Birds of America* (1840-1844), which was a gift of Mr. and Mrs. A. Dwight Church; and the first edition and sequel edition of Alexander Wilson's *American Ornithology*, which preceded Audubon's great work. The works of John Gould, Charles Lucien Bonaparte, and Thomas Nuttall among others are also present. Perhaps



Detail from *Recueil de cent-trente-trois Oiseaux* (Rome, 1775), believed to be the work of Maddalena Bouchard.

the rarest and certainly most distinctive illustrated bird book in the collection is *Recueil de cent-trente-trois Oiseaux des plus belles Especes...*, (Rome, 1775). Believed to be the work of Maddalena Bouchard, this large folio is comprised of hand-colored engraved plates, each within a line and yellow wash frame. MSU's copy is in its contemporary mottled calf binding, but lacks seven of the 87 plates. Most of the plates depict birds of prey and each one bears the bird's name in French, Latin, and Italian. Bouchard must be considered a primitive among bird artists and predictably these illustrations have been criticized over the years for lack of accuracy and artistic merit. Still, while not

true to nature in the conventional sense, the drawings have great style, energy, and charm. Whatever the merits of the illustrations, there is no disputing that since some of the world's finest ornithological collection lack Bouchard's masterpiece, it has become one of the rarest and most sought after color plate bird books in the world. MSU's copy of *Recueil de cent-trente-trois Oiseaux*, along with all our other ornithological works, are available for use and viewing in the Special Collections Reading Room. —Peter Berg

## Did you know...

♦ Special Collections recently received as a donation the archive of the literary journal, *Fourth Genre: Explorations in Nonfiction*. Published by the MSU Press and now in its fifth year, this successful and important journal is devoted to publishing notable, innovative work in nonfiction, ranging from personal essays and memoirs to literary journalism and personal criticism. In addition to contemporary nonfiction, *Fourth Genre* features interviews with prominent nonfiction writers, roundtable discussions, book reviews, and work by photographers and visual artists. The archive is open and available for students and researchers interested in this emerging and lively field of writing.

♦ The cover of the September 2004 issue of *College & Research Libraries News*, the publication of the Association of College and Research Libraries, features an illustration from our Sunday Book Collection. The cover illustration is the frontispiece of the book, *Little Red Cloak* by Harriet Burn McKeever, published in 1866. Every month the CRL News highlights a special collection from member libraries. Special Collections has more than 700 nineteenth century Sunday school books, some of which can be seen online at <http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/ssb/> thanks to a grant the MSU Libraries received from AT&T and the Library of Congress.



Visit us online at  
[http://www.lib.msu.edu/coll/main/spec\\_col](http://www.lib.msu.edu/coll/main/spec_col)

for more information about the MSU Libraries' Special Collections, and the collections featured here.

Information about gifts, endowments, and other giving opportunities is available from the Director of Development for Libraries, Computing & Technology at [www.lib.msu.edu/digital/friends](http://www.lib.msu.edu/digital/friends)

# Levy Endowments Honor Parents and “MSU Family”

The MSU Libraries is pleased to recognize the philanthropic efforts of 20-year Library employee and MSU alumna (MA '79) Suzanne J. Levy. Among four newly created endowments, three are specifically designated for Special Collections:

- ♦ Suzanne J. Levy Endowment for Michigan State University Libraries' Comic Art Collection in Honor of Randall W. Scott
  - ♦ Harold and Suzanne Levy Endowment for the Michigan State University Libraries' Jewish Studies Collection
  - ♦ Suzanne J. Levy Endowment for the MSU Libraries' Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Collection in Memory of Anne E. Tracy
  - ♦ Suzanne J. Levy MSU Libraries' Director's Discretionary Endowment in Honor of Clifford H. Haka
- The gifts were a wonderful surprise

and cause for much celebration in the Libraries. When asked why she chose to give to MSU, Sue responded, “When my father passed away, I never expected to receive a large inheritance and I really wanted to give back to my MSU family. I came to MSU as a student and stayed. My home is MSU. My coworkers and the greater MSU community are my family and I want to make a positive difference that will have a lasting impact. I wanted to do something that will honor the Jewish heritage of my parents. I grew up with a large extended family of aunts, uncles, and our family matriarch, my beloved grandmother Dorothy. I hope that the endowment to enhance the Jewish Studies Collection will ensure resources for materials that will facilitate a greater understanding of Jewish heritage.” Dr. Peter Berg, Head of Special Collections added, “when fully funded Sue’s generous endowment will provide resources to acquire important, new Judaic materials, preserve existing materials, and allow us to use technology for digital and other web initiatives all in support of the Jewish Studies Collection.”

The endowment for the Comic Art Collection in Honor of Randall W. Scott was also completely unexpected. When advised of Sue’s decision Mr. Scott was visibly moved, and remarked “this is a dream come true. MSU holds the most comprehensive Comic Art

Collection in existence, which is used by researchers from throughout the world in numerous fields. The Comic Art Collection has been a passion of mine for many years, and I am humbled by Sue’s endowment. I consider this a validation of the collection.”



*Harold and Suzanne Levy*

The endowment for the MSU Libraries' Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Collection in Memory of Anne E.

Tracy honors the work and passing of one of MSU’s most beloved and well known figures. Anne Tracy taught courses in gay and lesbian history for the Women’s Studies program and worked in Special Collections for 27 years. She was a strong partisan in the struggle for the civil rights and acceptance of gender minorities. Dr. Peter Berg recalled, “Anne’s skills were so wide-ranging, that she was important to all our collections. Whether she was dealing with rare books or popular ephemera, she knew what was important and how

to record it for our users. She was the heart and soul of Special Collections.” When Anne died on February 14, 2003, she left a legacy of important collections, including a distinguished collection of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual materials. Sue fondly remembered that, “Anne was a kind and compassionate person who helped so many people. I want this endowment to provide financial resources for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Collection that Anne started. The Collection is important and I hope that present and future scholars will find it useful.”

Upon receiving word of the endowments Libraries Director, Clifford H. Haka remarked “these gifts are truly meaningful because Sue has first hand knowledge of the Libraries and is making significant financial contributions that will result in lasting legacies. I am deeply moved by her generosity.”

Sue also established an endowment with the College of Veterinary Medicine to assist elderly individuals on limited fixed incomes to pay for pet care. Sue’s love of animals also resulted in a generous gift to a local chapter of the Humane Society. We applaud Sue for the meaningful ways in which she has chosen to donate towards efforts that are dear to her heart. —*Belinda Cook*



# Fantastic Forms: Artists' Books in the MSU Libraries

What are “artists’ books” you ask? Definitions of the term are as varied as the objects themselves. In simple terms, artists’ books are books created by artists, where the artist has total control over every aspect of the creative process. Generally speaking, they are produced in limited editions. Artists’ books differ from *livre d’artiste* in that the *livre d’artiste* is a book illustrated with original artwork. Artists’ books can take any format, from a traditional codex to a tunnel book and beyond – the variations are endless.

The history of artists’ books can be traced to the Sixties, when artists began making multiple copies of cheaply produced work in order to disseminate and democratize their art. Artists’ books offer a non-traditional yet innovative approach to the relationship between book and reader, and as such, they are among the more unique items collected by the MSU Libraries. At present the collection contains approximately 45 books. Artists’ books not only support the curricular needs of the art department, but their presence enriches the holdings of the library, offering patrons a chance to experience this wildly creative aspect of bookmaking.

The MSU Libraries’ collection includes items by nationally known artists including Julie Chen and Karen Kunc. Chen’s piece *The Veil* is an extraordinary work of craftsmanship. Its concertina design unfolds into a circle that sits freestanding, aided by magnets in the front and back covers. Kunc’s *On this Land* is a traditional accordion fold design that reveals beautiful color prints accompanied by the poetry of Lenora Castillo. Women and Midwestern artists are particularly well represented in the collection. Michigan-born artist Laura Davidson is represented with a significant number of her books, including *A Northern Woods Bestiary* and *Tool Book*.

The variety of formats used in artists’ books is astounding. One of the more unusual pieces in the MSU collection is *Gastronomy During Wartime: a Banquet Menu* by Rebecca Morton. Encased in a hexagonal box, the actual

“book” is a hexagonal carousel structure. On each side of the carousel is a course from the menu of a meal served by the Marechal de Richelieu during the Hanoverian War. On top of the box is a paper mâché “covered dish” that houses the booklet describing the history of the menu and the piece itself.

Emily Martin’s work *Eight Slices of Pie* is made in the shape of a pie and housed in a covered pie tin with each section of the book made of folded paper in the shape of a slice of pie. Martin’s choice of format is always unique but retains the “feel” of a book in the way the text is presented and read. Miniature artists’ books are featured in the collection, too, including works by well-known book artists Pat Scoby (Hide) and Bonnie Stahlecker (Mid Point.) Like their larger counterparts, the

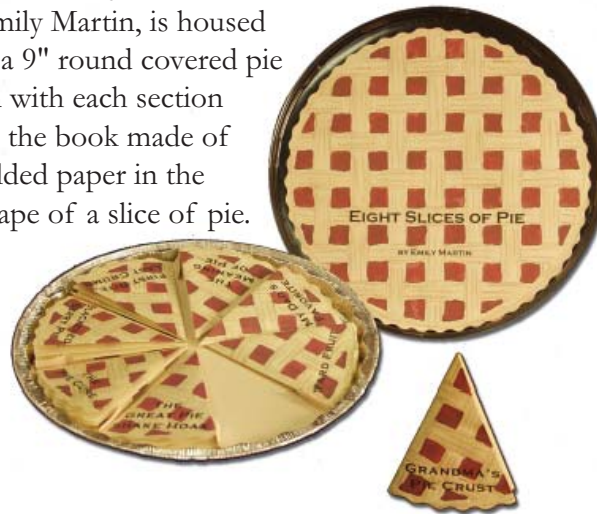
format of miniature artists’ books is limited only by the boundaries of artistic imagination.

The future of the MSU Libraries’ artists’ book collection looks bright. Peter Berg, Head of Special Collections, and Terrie Wilson, Art Librarian, have formed a collaborative agreement to select artists’ books and share the cost of purchase. Due to the need for an archival environment and secure housing, all artists’ books are housed in Special Collections. Most artists’ books are cataloged in MAGIC, the online catalog of the MSU Library collection, and the books themselves can be viewed by request in the Special Collections Reading Room. Artists’ books offer the bibliophile a chance to go beyond the boundaries of traditional form and explore the intersection where books and art collide. —Terrie L. Wilson

*Gastronomy During Wartime: a Banquet Menu*, by Rebecca Morton, is a hexagonal carousel structure with a paper mâché “covered dish” top (19x28x28cm.)



*Eight Slices of Pie*, by Emily Martin, is housed in a 9" round covered pie tin with each section of the book made of folded paper in the shape of a slice of pie.



# Social Activism at MSU Has International Effects

From the 1960s through the 1990s, U.S.-based activists helped galvanize global efforts against apartheid in Southern Africa, using campus demonstrations, economic and corporate boycotts, media and music campaigns, and educational events. These activities contributed to the eventual demise of the apartheid system and the election of Nelson Mandela in 1994 as the first black president of South Africa. The Patricia L. Beeman Southern Africa Liberation Committee Collection documents the work of one such group of anti-apartheid activists at Michigan State University, the Southern African Liberation



*In addition to primary source material, the Patricia L. Beeman Southern African Liberation Committee Collection documents anti-apartheid activism at MSU with T-shirts, posters, buttons, and other ephemera. For an online inventory, select Mss. 258 from the list at [http://www.lib.msu.edu/coll/main/spec\\_col/rare/mss/numblast](http://www.lib.msu.edu/coll/main/spec_col/rare/mss/numblast)*

tirelessly to promote social justice in Southern Africa through the passage of anti-apartheid resolutions and legislation – on campus, in local city and county government, in the state legislature, and at the national level. They also worked constantly to educate the university and East Lansing communities about social conditions in Southern Africa.

SALC was a group of activists composed of students, faculty and staff from MSU and residents of East Lansing, all concerned with the liberation of Southern Africa from white minority rule. SALC educated the university community about Southern African independence movements and campaigned for a variety of legislative and policy responses to conditions in Southern Africa. Among SALC's campaigns was the passage of the East Lansing Selective Purchasing Resolution in 1977 that prohibited the City of East Lansing from using suppliers with links to South Africa.

The next year, SALC successfully campaigned for MSU to divest of its stock in companies with subsidiaries in South Africa, making MSU one of the earliest major universities in the United States to take such action. From 1978 to 1982, SALC worked closely with Senator Jackie Vaughn, Representative Virgil Smith, and Representative Perry Bullard on a state resolution calling for national sanctions against South Africa and on a series of divestiture bills for the State of Michigan. From 1979 to 1984, SALC campaigned for the removal of the McGoff name from the Festival Stage of the Wharton Center for Performing Arts due to John McGoff's public support of the apartheid South African government. This campaign also resulted in 1983 in a change in the university policy for naming buildings. One particularly memorable campaign occurred in 1986, as SALC urged the Board of Trustees of the MSU Foundation to divest its holdings of stocks of companies operating in South Africa. This campaign included a campus protest that involved building a mock shantytown in front of the Administration Building, complete with a large wooden coffin. This coffin now resides in Special Collections. These campaigns along with parallel actions throughout the world provided international support for the internal struggle for majority rule in Southern and South Africa.

In addition to this social activism, Patricia Beeman organized SALC's numerous education activities, such as annual film series at MSU, on-campus speakers from Southern Africa, a photographic exhibition, and an information table in the International Center for the distribution of books, pamphlets, posters, protest buttons, T-shirts, pencils, and flyers. Such educational activities reached countless minds. She and her husband also assembled an extensive collection of newspaper clippings that thoroughly document America's changing view of the conditions in South and Southern Africa from 1973-1997.

Patricia Beeman's activist work provides an inspiring model of community organization producing positive social changes. As Frank once put it, "Pat felt that if people understood the horrors of apartheid, they would want to remove their support for such an unjust system." Through the activities of SALC, Pat and Frank were able to make people understand those horrors and they did cause Americans to remove their support for apartheid regimes.

Her husband, Frank Beeman, donated the Patricia L. Beeman Southern Africa Liberation Committee Collection to Special Collections in 1998. —Lisa Robinson