Welcome to the 2021-2022 academic year! I was certain that by the time I was chair, we would be well on our way back to normal. As it turns out, I may need to adjust my idea of what constitutes “normal”. Some, if not most, of us are back in the office full time and as I write we are welcoming our entire student body back to campus. It’s almost like a regular fall semester. Except that this year we’re starting with two full classes – almost 600 students at my law school - who have never been on campus. Our 3L class went on Spring Break as 1Ls and didn’t get to come back. In addition to the stress of simply being in law school, our students are dealing with the stress of not knowing where to go, who to talk to, and the surge of the Delta variant. The last year and half have been difficult for all of us and it looks like this will be another unique year.

Librarians will do what we always do – ask how we can help. Help our students, our patrons, and our attorneys with whatever they need to get the job done. My question to the LHRB membership is the same: how can we help you? We’ve had
over a year of virtual everything: meetings, happy hours, games, parties, conferences. We're all pretty used to Zoom by now and I personally really like the convenience of being able to take part in professional development opportunities from my office. That said, I miss the energy of in-person events. I miss the brainstorming that can only happen during those spontaneous conversations that pop up after a thought-provoking conference session.

I hope that we will be able to be in-person for the 2022 AALL annual meeting in Denver. If you didn't get your ideas into Ideascale before it closed, don't worry. You can write up a proposal on any topic that you think would be of interested to the wider AALL membership. If you're looking for speakers, look no further! Send out a call for collaborators in the LHRB My Communities group on AALLnet. Remember to ask the Education Committee for help in crafting your proposal. They have fantastic ideas and are always willing to help. The official call for proposals will be coming out soon. Remember – just because you didn't see it in Ideascale doesn’t mean you can’t propose a session on it.

The now ubiquitous use of virtual learning technology means that we don’t have to wait until next July to host a program. We have access to AALL’s webinar platform and the ability to host several programs throughout the year either though AALL or using Zoom. If you have ideas for a webinar, or if there’s just something you want to learn more about from your fellow LHRB members, please let me know at hkushnerick@stcl.edu.

Last year was a challenge for all of us, and it looks like this year will more of the same – at least for a little while. Hang in there. It’s been tough, but you’re doing a great job. Stay safe, and remember to take time to take care of yourself. I look forward to seeing everyone in Denver, July 16-19, 2022!
In case you haven’t noticed, the pandemic is not over. Given the circumstances, we are taking the wiser course of action of doing only one newsletter again this year. Thanks to all the contributors for keeping the newsletter going and hopefully 2022 will allow the SIS to return to a more normal pace of production. For those keeping score at home, I said that last year, but hope springs eternal.

Sometimes I wonder at the utility of a once a year newsletter, but Kaylan Ellis has indeed given us a terrific roundup from LHRB members. LHRB member Tim Kearley fills us in on Roman law happenings, putting his retirement to good use. And thanks to LHRB member Gail Warren we are able to share a legal history piece from Karen Johnson on naval history.

Thanks to our new volunteer, Meredith Kostek, we have a Q&A with Georgetown’s Austin Williams for an update on its Special Collections. Like last year, I’m hoping this snapshot will serve as a marker and provide insight into how law libraries’ special collections are dealing with the continued pandemic. Speaking of volunteers, we do need a new Recent Acquisitions column editor, so please contact me if interested.

Thanks again to the editors and contributors! For more legal history items, please check out LHRB’s Twitter account (now with 364 followers!): https://twitter.com/lhrbsis. I welcome any comments or feedback on the newsletter: kcristobal@law.utexas.edu.
Libraries are wonderful places, as most are aware, but there are different kinds of libraries, and I would wager that a researcher of naval history would not necessarily think of a court library or a court librarian as a source for their research or a research topic, at least not initially. Me either, if truth be told.

It was by chance that our library, the U.S. Courts Library in Norfolk, Virginia, even became a small repository of archival items. The primary function of court libraries is to serve the research needs of the judges and their staff. However, many court librarians also become court historians. Not long after our library first opened, a local attorney donated his father’s copy of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, a small book by comparison to today’s handbook. The small gift’s importance and special place in Norfolk’s court history remained unremarked for decades. We now know that the book is one of the first handbooks published after the standardization of the rules in 1932. This donation sparked an interest in early American legal and court history, that researcher’s Pandora’s box we all know so well. The more I researched, the more questions I had and paths to follow. My co-worker, Library Technician, Mary M. Russo, now retired, helped put some of my finds on paper including the story you will read below.

As time went on, as the role of the library was evolving into the repository for the court’s history, so too, more artifacts and files and records were donated, and some were even found by exploring forgotten cabinets, boxes, and rooms in the courthouse basement. It was so much fun!

Beautiful antique furniture, rare and unique books of the court, architectural models, lamps, an old pen and inkwell, and photographs are now part of our historical collection.
Records and files that are now part of the collection include a variety of court-related documents. If you look through the material you’ll find resolutions from the 1930s and 1940s memorializing judges, lawyers, and others who held roles in the court – even a librarian who previously worked for a federal judge before going on to read law and becoming the bar library director. There are court papers from the early 1800s – from a case involving a ship seized by the Chesapeake that was smuggling slaves- and papers from a handful of admiralty prize cases.

In the file of one of the prize cases, I found a highly curious document. The file contained a letter dated February 20, 1823, with a copy of an order from the President of the United States, James Monroe, instructing the Deputy U.S. Marshal to “immediately discharge from his confinement” Seth Foster, U.S. District Court Clerk, for the court at Norfolk. Foster was the court’s first Clerk of Court and remains the court’s longest-serving Clerk of Court to date. His offense; money owed to the United States that had gone missing from the sale of the Brig Transfer. Despite the assessment of Foster’s responsibility for the missing funds and his obvious confinement, Foster remained court clerk, while in jail, and for another thirteen years afterwards. His story reflects the issues of the day and brings forward a time of great hardship in Norfolk.
Seth Foster’s life story reads like an 18th-century novel, but instead of rags to riches, his story goes from riches to rags. Personalities in the story include Cyrus Griffin, first judge of the court-appointed by George Washington; another famous judge of the court, St. George Tucker; and even President of the United States James Monroe. Events range from an honored position to a hell-hole of prison, from misappropriation of funds to restoration of honor. And, I was obsessed to learn his story. It took several years of searching, contacting historians and archives to pull together Foster’s story and to bring to light a little-known case in our naval history, a story that really was not all that uncommon in the early days of our country.

According to his obituary, Foster was born in Boston around 1757. How and when he came to Norfolk is unknown, but he first appeared as an alderman for the borough and commissioner for the local court in 1795. In June of that year, he assumed the one-year term as mayor. When that term was finished, he returned to the council, then served again as mayor from June 1800 until May 1801, when he resigned to
assume the position of the first Clerk of Court for the U.S. District Court in Norfolk at the request of Cyrus Griffin, the first federal judge commissioned in Virginia. Although federal courts were created by the first Judiciary Act in 1789, it was not until 1801 that the district court was moved from Williamsburg to Norfolk. District courts had limited jurisdiction at the time, but importantly, district courts heard admiralty cases. Norfolk was the Commonwealth’s primary port.

On August 7, 1785, records show that he was married to Ann Starke King, widow of John King, a merchant of Hampton, and the daughter of Bolling Starke, a wealthy landowner, politician and descendent of Pocahontas, and Elizabeth Belfield of Dinwiddie County. Foster and Ann were the parents of three sons, William P. Foster, who became a deputy marshal of the court in Norfolk around 1813; Winslow Foster, who, in 1822, was commander of the revenue cutter Alabama; and Seth Belfield Foster, a doctor, who served as deputy court clerk for a few years before relocating to West Virginia.

How and where Foster received his education remains unknown, based on the sources at my disposal, but he was qualified to act as a lawyer before the court, and over his many years as clerk Foster served as an appraiser, a commissioner, a crier, and a registrar.

According to notations by Virginia biographer, S. Bassett French, Seth Foster was one of the wealthiest men in Norfolk. “He was a man of the old school of very refined and polished manners,” French wrote “... honored and cherished for his Virtues.”¹ He was a staunch Federalist, a trait he shared with Cyrus Griffin who chose him to be clerk in Norfolk. Foster’s elegant hand recorded court documents under five succeeding judges of the court. He was one of the last of the queues in Norfolk, wearing a long plait of hair down his back.²

Foster’s troubles have their root in an admiralty prize case that comes into the court in June of 1805. Charles Stewart, naval hero of the Early American era, captured The Brig Transfer in March 1804 during the Barbary War. Commodore Edward Preble, in charge of the blockade of the harbor at Tripoli, added additional guns to the brig and used her to patrol the harbor. Valued at the time of her capture at $5,000, she apparently deteriorated quickly, and in 1805 U.S. Naval personnel, led by Lt. Ralph Izard, Jr. brought her in the Norfolk harbor. With the case pending in the district court, Judge Cyrus Griffin ordered the ship sold before further deterioration made her worthless. She was sold at auction, and in July 1805, Foster received $611.30, the amount remaining after deduction of all fees and charges related to the sale. He received the money from Cary Selden, deputy U. S. Marshal, with instructions to deposit it in the Bank of the United States. The historical record proves that Foster carried out the deposit.

The sale had no impact on the case at issue. Complicated legal issues in the awarding of this prize led the court judge to hold over the case. The last entry in the order book for 1805 states that the case is to be held over “due to reasons of great importance to

¹ S. Bassett French, Biographical Sketches. Library of Virginia.
² Hugh Blair Grigsby, Discourse on the Life and Character of the Hon. Littleton Waller Tazewell 38 (1860).
the United States of America.” The succeeding order book has been lost, and we do not see reference to the case again until 1809 when an order was entered for distribution of the proceeds to the crew who captured it. Despite the order, final awarding of the prize faced further delays and did not emerge until 1817 when the U.S. Congress awarded $2,500 to be shared by the estates of Preble, Stewart, and others in the crew.

The decision to place the money in the Bank of the United States proved problematic. The money received by Foster remained in the Bank of the United States until 1811, and, one would think would be secure. However, the Bank required Congress to renew the operating charter every 20 years. Congress refused to renew the bank’s charter and the bank closed. At this time, Foster wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Navy asking what he should do with the money.4

Financial instability hit Foster personally around the same time. Jefferson’s embargo in 1809, followed by the War of 1812, merchants up and down the coast of the United States suffered losses. In May 1814, Foster wrote a letter to Moses Myers, a local merchant also in dire straits, apologizing for a past due account.5 Foster and Myers joined thousands of others in the reversal of fortune they endured. One by one, many saw their fortunes vanish. The once busy wharves of Norfolk grew silent. One bleak Monday morning when District Attorney William Wirt was in town for the May 1817 term, he wrote a letter home to his wife about the changed city of Norfolk and her people:

There is an air of sadness over this place which depresses me extremely. It is no longer the animated, bustling place we knew in 1805-6. I thought it possible at first that it was ... the knowledge of the fact that the society once so social and harmonious here had been chilled and seared [sic] by personal finds that imparted this changed and melancholy appearance to the place. But I see very plainly that all that commercial prosperity which gave gaiety and spirit of good humor to the town is almost extinguished if not entirely gone. The port is no longer crowded with ships, nor the wharves loaded with crates and bales of freshly landed goods, nor the market square and streets filled with drays, carts, wheelbarrows and noisy porters. The people of the town themselves confess the sad change and seem to think that Norfolk has received its death blow in the late war. Yet enough of their habits both of business and of hospitality remains to remind me of what the place was twelve years ago, and to make me feel the change affectingly. The merchants and the sailor wives still come down to the end of the street to look out for some expected ship.6

On November 16, 1819, fourteen years after the sale of the Brig Transfer, the order book of the court recorded the case U.S. v. Seth Foster, a “rule to shew cause.” Foster was ordered to appear in court on the first day of the next term (May 1820) to explain what happened to the missing $611.30, equivalent to over $10,000 today. The

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3 U.S. District Court Order Book, 1819-1850, August 1, 1822.
4 Seth Foster to the Honorable Paul Hamilton, Secretary of the Navy, January 29, 1811. Record Group 233, Records of the House Committee of Naval Affairs, 15th Congress, National Archives and Records Administration.
5 Seth Foster to Moses Myers, May 26, 1814. Chrysler Museum.
6 William Wirt to Elizabeth Wirt, May 5, 1817. William Wirt Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS1011, Reel #3, 1815-1820.
following day, the court ordered Foster to supply the court with a list of all processes served by his son, William P. Foster, a former deputy marshal, to include the amount of fees not collected, and a list of the allowances made to William for the custody and safe keeping of vessels. Was this order related to the missing money? No answer appeared and no connection became clear. A later court case showed that William had collected fees and assessments from local citizens, but he failed to account for and pay the amounts to the United States. By 1819, William no longer resided in Norfolk. Seth Foster, the father, remained Norfolk to face the court.

The winter that passed was surely one of great anguish for Seth and Ann Foster. They had lost everything and been subjected to public disgrace. When the court convened on May 13, 1820, U.S. District Judge St. George Tucker, receiving no reasonable explanation from Foster, ordered that an attachment be issued against him for his contempt in not complying with the order on November 16, 1819. Two years passed. At the court session of May 6, 1822, Tucker noted that Foster had neither deposited the money nor issued the ordered attachment. A motion was filed by the United States Attorney, Robert Stanard, to enforce obedience by August 1.

On August 1, 1822, Deputy Marshal William Loyall took Foster into custody. He was to be held at the jail in Norfolk, “with the benefit of the prison rules.” That meant that Foster would be allowed to leave the jail each morning to go to his work, but he had to return to the jail each night. Jails of that time period were foul and putrid places, where diseases ran rampant. Benefit of the prison rules meant that for at least part of the day, the prisoner enjoyed healthier surroundings. In early November of that year, the U.S. Attorney requested the court to withdraw the benefit of the prison rules, a harsh step that would restrict Foster to the jail with little hope of redemption. Tucker denied the motion, giving Foster one more chance to repay the money.

On November 23, 1822, Foster wrote a heart-rending petition to President James Monroe, the only person who could grant him clemency. Foster told Monroe that at the age of 65, he was elderly and had an elderly wife to support. He was penniless, and his assets consisted of nothing exceeding $30. He did not explain the lost money, but declared that in his long years of service to the United States he had accounted for every penny placed in his trust for the government of the United States – except for the $611.30 in question. Through it all, Foster remained Clerk of the Court and recorded these events. In February 1823, an order of discharge came down from President Monroe, the same one in the court files today. He had investigated Foster’s claim, and finding no malice, Monroe used a law passed in 1817 for the relief of debtors to order that Seth Foster be released from prison. On March 5, 1823, Foster walked out of the jail adjacent to the Borough of Norfolk Courthouse, the same courthouse where his federal district court met. He emerged as a free man, both free of prison and cleared of debt.

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7 U.S. District Court Order Book, 1811-1819, November 17, 1819.
9 U.S. District Court Order Book, 1819-1850, August 1, 1822.
10 Petition of Seth Foster, November 23, 1822. Record Group 59, Petition for Pardons, File 651, National Archives and Records Administration.
A chastened Foster returned to his work serving the court under Judge Tucker, the very person who put him in jail. His small fees from the clerk’s job appeared to be his only source of money. His beautiful calligraphic handwriting showed signs of tremor as the cases were recorded. In his final years, a young lawyer named George Conway helped him to fulfill his duties. He died on June 14, 1836. The following notice appeared in the local newspaper:

Died, Yesterday morning about sun-rise, in his 80th year, SETH FOSTER, Esq. Clerk of the U.S. Court of this district. Mr. F. was a native of the city of Boston, but had for many years resided in this town, and formerly filled the offices of an Alderman and Mayor. He not only made a profession of religion, but, by his conduct in life, for the last sixteen or eighteen years, gave proof of his having been with Jesus. Foster’s funeral was held the following morning at the Methodist Protestant Church on Fenchurch Street. His eulogy, likely presented by his longtime friend and benefactor, Rev. J. French. Foster died penniless and most probably was buried in the Cedar Grove Cemetery in Norfolk established in 1825. Rev. French had a large plot in the cemetery, and it is known that there were eight more burials on that plot in addition to those of Rev. French and his stepdaughter, the only two recorded burials. Perhaps that was also the last resting place of Seth and Ann Foster. A fire destroyed cemetery records in the early 1900s, leaving researchers to make a best guess.

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A final note to Foster’s story involves an unexpected visit to the U.S. Courts Library over 150 years after Foster’s death. I think as researchers we are connectors – we connect to the past, we connect with other researchers, we connect with people who have a shared interest; but to connect a man with his past, his ancestry, was not something I could have foreseen. I think that’s the real reason why Foster’s story came to the Library, why Foster presented himself to me over the years. It was my honor to have been a part, a connector. A few years ago, on my birthday, I received a call from the Slover Library’s Sargeant Memorial Room, a marvelous local history collection which I hope all of IJNH’s researchers take the time to investigate. The archivist said to me, “Karen, I’m sending a man over to see you. You will want to talk with him!” And what a gift to spend the day with Seth Foster’s great, great, great, great, great-grandson. He had come to Norfolk from Norway on a quest to find information about his family! I had a lot to share. ■

As many of you know, in the past few years there have been two major events in Justinianic studies—the publication of what probably will prove to be the definitive, and final, translations into English of two units of the *Corpus Juris Civilis*: the *Codex of Justinian: A New Annotated Translation, with Parallel Latin and Greek Texts* (Bruce W. Frier gen. ed., 2016), and *The Novels of Justinian: A Complete Annotated English Translation* (David J.D. Miller, trans. & Peter Sarris ed., 2018). For examples of scholarly praise for the Codex translation see, for example, Sarah Bond at 68 *Classical Rev.* 119 (2018), and Paul J. Du Plessis at 36 *L. & Hist. Rev.* 429 (2018), and for the new Novels translation, see Zachery Chitwood, 95 *Speculum* 595 (2020).

This recent verification of the importance of Justinian’s law books’ suggested to me that it would be worthwhile to update and combine my and Miller’s two earlier works concerning the *Novellae Constitutions* into a single entity for several reasons: 1) the Miller and Sarris Novels translation does not include Kroll’s Preface; 2) Sarris in his Introduction kindly characterized my 2010 piece as “extremely useful” in understanding the Novels history and transmission. (Peter Sarris, *Introduction: The Novels of the Emperor Justinian*, in 1 David J.D. Miller & Peter Sarris, *The Novels of Justinian: A Complete Annotated Translation* 1, 13 n.39 (2018); and 3) as a librarian, I thought researchers would find it helpful to have a new, consolidated version of the two articles to use in conjunction with the Miller and Sarris translation—something that might be shelved adjacent to it.

Self-publishing (via KDP—Kindle Direct Publishing) was quite an adventure. It’s not as easy as KDP makes it out, friends! However, it was quite satisfying, and I’m planning to do it again. I hope to produce in the near future a second edition of my *Lost in Translations: Roman Law Scholarship and Translation in Early Twentieth Century America*. I’m expanding that work to show why women, African Americans, and Native
Americans were not part of the reception of Roman law and the classics in America during the period covered by the book. This largely involves the history of educational discrimination in America into the early twentieth century. The first edition’s publisher, Carolina Academic Press, wasn’t interested in doing such an expansion, which is well beyond its usual area of interest, so I have decided to undertake the second edition myself. It strikes me that self-publishing can be a reasonable way of putting into circulation a work involving unusual disciplinary combinations that don’t fit comfortably into the offerings of conventional publishers. Stay tuned.
Congratulations to the LHRB-SIS members who received awards from AALL in 2021! Recipients of the Joseph L. Andrews Legal Literature Award included Scott Pagel (Jacob Burns Law Library, George Washington University Law School) for *Academic Law Libraries Within the Changing Landscape of Legal Education: A Primer for Deans and Provosts* and Douglas Lind (Southern Illinois University Law Library) for *The Leaven of Sympathy: A Bio-Bibliography of Frederick C. Hicks*. Kevin Marmion (William S. Hein & Co., Inc.) received the Hall of Fame Award. Finally, Daniel L. Wade (Yale Law Library) was posthumously awarded the Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award.

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An open-source textbook called *Introduction to Law Librarianship* was published in August 2021, featuring contributions from three LHRB-SIS members. Jason LeMay (Emory University Law Library) and Jaime Valenzuela (University of Arizona Law Library) co-authored a chapter titled “Special Collections & Archives.” Kaylan Ellis (Ohio Northern University Law Library) co-authored the chapter “The Profession of Law Librarianship.”

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Laurel Davis (Boston College Law Library) curated an online exhibit in fall 2020 called “Female Imprimatur: Women in the Lawbook Trade.”

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Ryan Greenwood (University of Minnesota Law Library) curated several exhibits with both physical and digital components between 2020 and 2021, including “Law and the Struggle for Racial Justice: Selected Materials from the Riesenfeld Rare Books Center,” “A Witness to Barbarism: Horace R. Hansen and the Dachau War Crimes Trials,” “Noted and Notable: Treasures of the Riesenfeld Rare Books Research Center,” and “Böcker Har Sina Öden’ (Books Have Their Destinies): Treasures of the Swedish Law Collection.”

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**Kathryn James** (Yale Law Library) has assumed the role of Rare Book Librarian at Yale Law Library following Michael Widener’s retirement. Kathryn was previously the Curator of Early Modern Books and Manuscripts & the Osborn Collection at Yale’s Beinecke Rare Book Library. She is looking forward to networking with LHRB members and learning about the world of law rare book librarianship. Her email address is: kathryn.james@yale.edu. Welcome, Kathryn!

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**Michael Maben** (Indiana University Maurer School of Law Library) was selected by the Technical Services SIS as the Renee Chapman Memorial Award for Outstanding Contributions to Technical Services Law Librarianship recipient for 2020.

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**Kurt Metzmeier** (University of Louisville Law Library) published *Trial Courts as Constitutional First Responders: A Historical Case Study of the Role of the Franklin County Circuit Court in Kentucky’s Biggest Legal-Political Controversies* in 48 NORTHERN KENTUCKY LAW REVIEW 95 (2021).

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**Nicholas Mignanelli** (Yale Law Library) assumed the role of Research & Instructional Services Librarian at Yale Law School’s Lillian Goldman Library in January 2021. Nicholas’ article *Legal Research and Its Discontents: A Bibliographic Essay on Critical Approaches to Legal Research* was recently published in 113 LAW LIBRARY JOURNAL 101 (2021). This summer, Nicholas was named one of the 2021 Fastcase 50, an award which honors the law’s smartest, most courageous innovators, techies, visionaries, and leaders.

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**Fred Shapiro** (Yale Law Library) has published *THE NEW YALE BOOK OF QUOTATIONS* through Yale University Press. This is a significantly expanded version of the original *YALE BOOK OF QUOTATIONS* (2006), which has been described in the WALL STREET JOURNAL as the second most essential of all reference works. The NYBQ has a special emphasis on quotations about law, and is therefore the most accurate and thorough legal quotation book.

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**Jaime Valenzuela** (University of Arizona Law Library) produced an online exhibit in summer 2021 called “Rising from the Red: The HOLC, Tucson Title Insurance Company, the Fair Housing Act and Redlining.” Jaime also published a July 24, 2021 blog post for the Legal Information Preservation Alliance on the use of Google Slides to highlight archival material online.

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**Karen Wahl** (Supreme Court of the United States Library) has left George Washington University as of June 2021 to serve as Reference Librarian at the Supreme Court of the United States Library. ■
Members of LH&RB come from different backgrounds and work in a variety of settings. The LH&RB Member Spotlight interviews members to learn more about their roles in law libraries, their interest in legal history and rare books, and how they utilize these sources in their day-to-day activities. The hope is that readers will not only get a chance to learn more about a fellow LH&RB member, but that the interview will foster new ideas for how members can incorporate legal history and rare books into their work. For this issue, Meredith interviewed Austin Williams, Interim Director of the Law Library at Georgetown.

**Q: What made you decide on law librarianship?**

**A:** I wish I could say that as a child I always dreamed of being a law librarian. While my entire post-college career has been in academic law librarianship, I will admit that I stumbled into the profession instead of seeking it out. As my undergraduate career came to a close, my honors thesis advisor recommended that I consider law school. Even though I did not aspire to become a practicing attorney, I thought that a law degree could open additional opportunities for me. It was during 1L orientation that my path to law librarianship began. As part of the library portion of orientation, the library director noted that North Carolina Central University (NCCU) was one of the few schools that offered students the ability to pursue a dual degree in Law and Library Science. Intrigued by the opportunity, I immediately applied for the Library Science program, and in three years’ time, I graduated with a J.D. and an M.L.S.

**Q: What has been your favorite legal history/rare books experience in your law librarianship career?**

**A:** Early on in my time as the Assistant Law Library Director at NCCU, I attended a few sessions of the Triangle Legal History Seminar. As a law librarian, I was fascinated not just by the discussion topics, but also by the research methods and sources utilized by the authors. For me, this was the turning point where I started to get more involved with the LH&RB-SIS.
Q: Last year you wrote an article for this newsletter titled Special Times for Special Collections about special collections and rare book practices during COVID, especially as many of us began working at home for extended periods of time. Catch us up on some of those projects—did the work from home model continue to work for your library?

A: I’m happy to report that we were able to make progress on some long-term projects while many staff continued to work remotely. We had a number of collections that had paper inventories that we were able to enter into ArchivesSpace. We also were able to get through the backlog of rare book cataloging by using photos of the title pages and title verso pages to create a basic cataloging record. In addition, we completed the processing of over 127,000 digital photographs that were transferred from the Communications Department to the Law Center Archives. Furthermore, we were able to provide remote instruction for a Law Center course that has students conduct archival research, and we provided remote access to materials for several research requests. In spite of all that we achieved remotely, we did learn that there are many aspects of the services we provide that we were not able to accomplish without some onsite support. Several members of the Special Collections Department did start coming onsite periodically in the past year to scan materials for research requests.

Q: What elements of working from home, especially regarding special collections, do you think your library will continue as many of us return to being in person full time at libraries?

A: Even though we are bringing all of our staff back to campus for the fall semester, we did learn that there are aspects of Special Collections work that can be done remotely, such as processing and cataloging scanned materials, as well as transcribing oral histories, legacy inventories, and finding aids. As we assess this coming year how we might provide a mix of onsite and remote work when all students and faculty are back in person, I think we will look back on what we were able to accomplish at home and determine what can be done remotely while still meeting the needs of in-person researchers and caring for rare materials that must remain onsite.

Q: As Interim Director of the Georgetown University Law Library how do you make special collections and rare books a priority?

A: As Interim Director, I’ve sought to make sure that Special Collections has the resources necessary to thrive, is visible to decision-makers and stakeholders, and is included in important library conversations. To provide adequate resources, I’ve continued to ensure that funding is available to invest in rare and unique materials, and I’ve worked to maintain staffing levels within the department. In addition to resources, I’ve tried to highlight Special Collections’ contributions to our Law Center leadership by sharing my Special Times for Special Collections article with them and highlighting the department’s contributions in the Law Library’s Annual Report to the Dean. Furthermore, I’ve sought to include Special Collections in key library conversations, recognizing that Special Collections crosses over many other
departmental functions, like acquisitions, cataloging, research and reference, and access services.

Q: We’ve all had a long 2020/2021 with many of us staying in lockdown conditions in our homes. During this time did you learn any new hobbies, read any good books, or watch any great shows/movies while staying at home during COVID? (feel free to focus on one or all!)

A: Like everyone this past year, I watched more television than I did pre-pandemic. As a soccer (“football”) fan, I was grateful that many of the European leagues restarted in June 2020, so I have watched my fair share of matches this past year. In addition, my wife and I went back and watched all of the Star Wars and Marvel movies in timeline order. We also picked up a few new shows this past year, including Ted Lasso, Mythic Quest, and Succession. To stay active and get out of our apartment, we started a weekend tradition of walking to the Lincoln Memorial and over to Georgetown (weather permitting!). I will admit that I also jumped on the Peloton bandwagon early on in the pandemic. ■
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