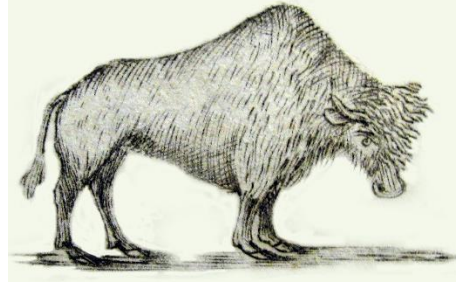


LH&RB



Newsletter of the Legal History & Rare Books SIS of the American Association of Law Libraries

Volume 31 Spring 2024

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From the Chair



Ryan Greenwood

The 2024 AALL Annual Meeting in Chicago will be a great opportunity, as always, to reconnect with our friends and colleagues. We have another excellent slate of programs this year, with many thanks to everyone, and particularly Laura Ray, chair of the education committee, for making these happen. Many thanks also for their great ideas and organizing to Christine George and panelists; John Moreland and panelists; and Ajaye Bloomstone, Caroline Walters and their panelists from the profession and the industry. To one and all, please come out and support your colleagues at the programs, they promise to be extremely informative and enjoyable. We'll also look forward to some great new connections and ideas for next year to emerge from this year's meeting.

Though we have no formal reception this year, similar to last year, I hope some folks may be interested in a dine around after the Sunday or Monday programs that end in the evening. We'll try to organize a group that may want to share a good meal and connect not too far from the conference center.

The LHRB Business Meeting will be held online again this year and prior to the meeting, as we did last year. You will note that there is a scheduled LHRB News & Business Meeting on Monday, July 22 at 5:45pm. As last year, it would be good to turn this into a LHRB News and Roundtable Discussion. We could discuss issues common to attendees. We could also perhaps talk about future directions and ideas for growing membership for the SIS.

There is also a new issue in preparation of *Unbound: A Review of Legal History and Rare Books*. Christine Geoge, in addition to her many other roles, has taken up the responsibility of editor from Mark Podvia, who guided the publication expertly for so long. I'm sure everyone shares the sentiment of sincere appreciation to Mark for his incredible service, and great appreciation to Christine for taking the helm.

The Morris Cohen Student Essay Competition received a number of good entries this year. Linda Tesar has released the results for the winner and runner-up. The winning essay, "Consuming Abortion: Abortion Rights as Consumer Rights After Roe v. Wade," was written by Christen Jones, a 2027 PhD candidate at the University of Pennsylvania. The runner-up, "Punishment, Penal Reform, and the Potential of Alternatives to Incarceration in Durham, North Carolina, 1869-Present," is by Michael DeLuca, a 2025 JD candidate at Duke University. Both authors have been invited to publish their essays in *Unbound*. As Linda wrote, we hope Christen will present her essay via webinar in late August or early September.

For LHRB programming in Chicago this year, please see Laura's full guide in the newsletter for events and program panels. At a glance, here is a brief recap below:

SUNDAY, JULY 21ST

LHRB-SIS Rare Book Cataloging Roundtable

12:45 – 1:45 p.m. (San Francisco Room)

Demonstrating Library Value through Archival and Special Collections Exhibits

3:15 – 4:15 p.m. (Regency Ballroom B)

- Moderated by [Christine Anne George](#), with speakers [Randi Flaherty](#), [Heather Kushnerick](#), and [Jaime Valenzuela](#).
- Don't miss it - panelists will show and discuss examples of anniversary events they participated in, detail how they worked within a budget, share tips and tricks for smooth planning (or what to do when the unexpected occurs), and demonstrate how to best exhibit your material.

Lincoln's Library: The Books, Papers, and Ephemera of a Prairie Lawyer

5:30 – 6:30 p.m. (Grand Hall J)

- Moderated by [John L. Moreland](#), with speakers Professor [Michael H. Hoeflich](#), Professor Emeritus [Mark E. Steiner](#), and [Daniel Worthington](#), all leading experts in 19th-century American law and Lincoln.
- Don't miss this either - this fascinating program will explore Lincoln's law library, how he used it in the daily practice of law, how the library compared

with other mid-century prairie lawyers, and generally examine the development of law and legal information in antebellum America.

MONDAY, JULY 22ND

LHRB-SIS Archives Roundtable (San Francisco Room)

12 p.m. – 1 p.m.

LHRB News & Business Meeting (Michigan 3 Room)

5:45 – 6:45 p.m.

- Informally, this is a LHRB News and Roundtable Discussion.

TUESDAY, JULY 23RD

A History of Legal Publishing: Let's Review the Past to Safeguard Our Future

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. (Grand Hall LMN)

- Coordinated by [Vincent Vessalo](#), with moderators [Ajaye Bloomstone](#) and [Caroline Walters](#), and speakers [Richard Leiter](#), [Jean O'Grady](#), and [Steve Roses](#).
- This thought-provoking program will review changes in publishing formats and trends over the past 150 years. Topics will include what led to the changes, how libraries adapted and continue to adapt, pros and cons of today's more concentrated publishing field, how has this affected different types of law libraries, and how these and other new developments might impact the future direction of legal publishing.

As Laura also advises, rooms can sometimes change, so be sure to check the [Annual Meeting Schedule](#). We hope to see as many of you as possible in Chicago! ■



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From the Editor

Kasia Solon Cristobal

Please enjoy this issue that includes a preview of events at the upcoming AALL Annual Meeting. Will Chicago of 2024 be a recurrence of the same riotous behavior exhibited by law librarians back in 1968? Oh wait, that was the Democratic National Convention, but one can always dream what that would have looked like.

I am having my own flashbacks from being at the AALL Annual Meeting in Chicago in 2016. I was there in part to facilitate that year's SIS panel on presidential libraries and joked about how HUUUGE a Trump presidential library would be. Dark humor aside, I am sorry to miss LHRB programming and members this year as it should be fun and interesting as usual.

In this particular issue, we have some returning appearances from LHRB stalwarts Laura Ray on upcoming events in Chicago and Laurel Davis on a current exhibit in Boston. We also have some enjoyable newsletter debuts from the likes of Rebecca Altermatt, Christina Jurusik, and Jacob Nunnally.

Thank you as always to the volunteers and contributors! Having cut back from two issues to one per year, I tend to wonder whether the newsletter still serves any purpose. But there seems to be some worth in having an annual shoutout to everyone in the SIS and hearing back everyone's news as an annual check in. I welcome any comments or feedback on the newsletter:

kcristobal@law.utexas.edu. ■

Annual Meeting LHRB Preview

The Legal History & Rare Books SIS is providing several programs at the AALL Annual Meeting in Chicago.

Get ready, because Sunday July 21, will be crazy busy! Things get started with the 12:45pm-1:45pm *LHRB-SIS Rare Book Cataloging Roundtable* in the San Francisco room. Then our independently produced program *Demonstrating Library Value through Archival and Special Collections Exhibits* will take place 3:15pm-4:15pm in Regency Ballroom B. This program will be moderated by [Christine Anne George](#), Associate Director for Research & Scholarship, NYU Law Library. The speakers will be [Jaime Valenzuela](#), Archivist & Scholarly Communications Lead, University of Arizona College of Law Library; [Randi Flaherty](#), Head of Special Collections and Law School Historian, University of Virginia Law School Library; and [Heather Kushnerick](#), Special Collections Librarian & College Archivist, South Texas College of Law Library. “Anniversaries and other institutional events are an ideal time to show the value of the library and create interdepartmental partnerships.” This program’s panelists will show and discuss examples of anniversary events they participated in, detail how they worked within a budget, share tips and tricks for smooth planning (or what to do when the unexpected occurs), and demonstrate how to best exhibit your material.

Ending the day on Sunday, our “host city program” *Lincoln’s Library: The Books, Papers, and Ephemera of a Prairie Lawyer* will take place 5:30pm-6:30pm in Grand Hall J. This program will be moderated by [John L. Moreland](#), Student Services Librarian, Indiana University Maurer School of Law Library. The speakers will be [Daniel Worthington](#), Papers of Abraham Lincoln Director, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, and [Michael H. Hoeflich](#), John H. & John M. Kane Distinguished Professor of Law, University of Kansas School of Law. While Abraham Lincoln is generally known to have been a ferocious reader, little has been discussed about his law library. This program will explore the contents of Lincoln’s law library, how he used them in the daily practice of law, how they compared with other mid-century prairie lawyers, and generally examine the development of legal information in antebellum America.

Hang in there – Monday and Tuesday will be less hectic. Monday July 22, the *LHRB-SIS Archives Roundtable* will take place 12noon-1pm in the San Francisco room, and our *LHRB News & Business Meeting* will be 5:45pm-6:45pm in the Michigan 3 room. (Given the earlier, online business meeting, this will be repurposed for an open discussion on common topics of interest.) Tuesday July 23, finishing up the AALL Annual Meeting, *A History of Legal Publishing: Let’s Review the Past to Safeguard Our Future* will take place 11:15am-12:15pm in Grand Hall LMN. This program is being

coordinated by [Vincent Vessalo](#), Senior Director, Gale Primary Sources Program, and the moderators will be [Ajaye Bloomstone](#), Acquisitions Librarian, LSU Law Center Library, and [Caroline Walters](#), Manager of Collection Development, Harvard Law School Library. The speakers will be [Richard Leiter](#), Director, University of Nebraska College of Law Library; [Jean O’Grady](#), Director of Research & Knowledge Services, Venable LLP; and [Steve Roses](#), Sales Director, William S. Hein & Co. & HeinOnline. This program “will review the many changes in formats and publishing trends over the past 150 years.” Questions to be explored include what led to these changes, how have libraries adapted (and continue to adapt) to these changes, what are the pros and cons of the more concentrated publishing field, how has this affected different types of law libraries, and how may these and other new developments impact the future direction of legal publishing?

Rooms can sometimes change, so be sure to check the [Annual Meeting Schedule](#). Looking forward to seeing you in Chicago!

Laura Ray

Chair, LHRB-SIS Education Committee



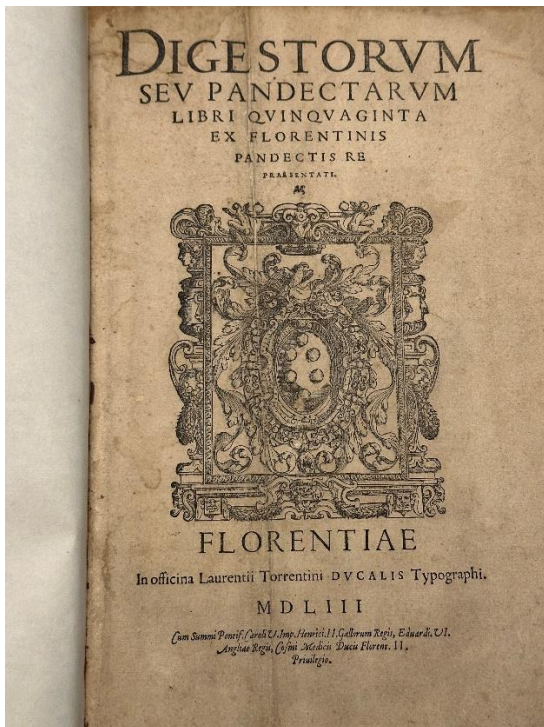
LEAD • INNOVATE • TRANSFORM
AALL 2024
July 20-23 / Chicago, IL

The Dan Coquillette Gifts: Treasures from a Dean, Scholar, & Teacher

By Laurel Davis
Legal Information Librarian & Lecturer,
Law Library, Boston College Law School

A new rare book exhibit that I curated is now on display at the BC Law Library: [The Dan Coquillette Gifts: Treasures from a Dean, Scholar & Teacher](#). The exhibit features a small sampling of the hundred of books donated over the years by Professor Daniel R. Coquillette, a former BC Law Dean and longtime book collector.

Professor Coquillette started collecting when he was a Fulbright scholar at Oxford in the late 1960s. He had a substantial "use it or lose it" book stipend that he quickly put to use in local bookshops. The exhibit includes some of his earliest acquisitions, such as a beautiful 16th-century printing of *The Canterbury Tales* and the famed 1553 Florentine or Pisan Pandects, a Roman law treasure (with a great acquisition story!). He quickly realized that law books were more affordable than many other book genres and set out to build a collection of books that working lawyers in England would have owned in the 16th–18th centuries.



Left: [The Pisan or Florentine Pandects] Digestorum Pandectarum, Florence (1553); Right: Book of Hours, Italy? (c. 1400)

Many of the working lawyer books are featured (statutory compilations, yearbooks and case reports, abridgements, treatises, etc.), along with works by Francis Bacon and Thomas Hobbes and a lovely Book of Hours. Professor Coquillet's many donations comprise the core of BC Law's Rare Book Room holdings and are used regularly for exhibitions and class visits. Many of the gifts came under the curatorship of KB Beck, now retired but formerly Curator of Rare Books at BC Law and Manager of Historical & Special Collections at the Harvard Law Library.



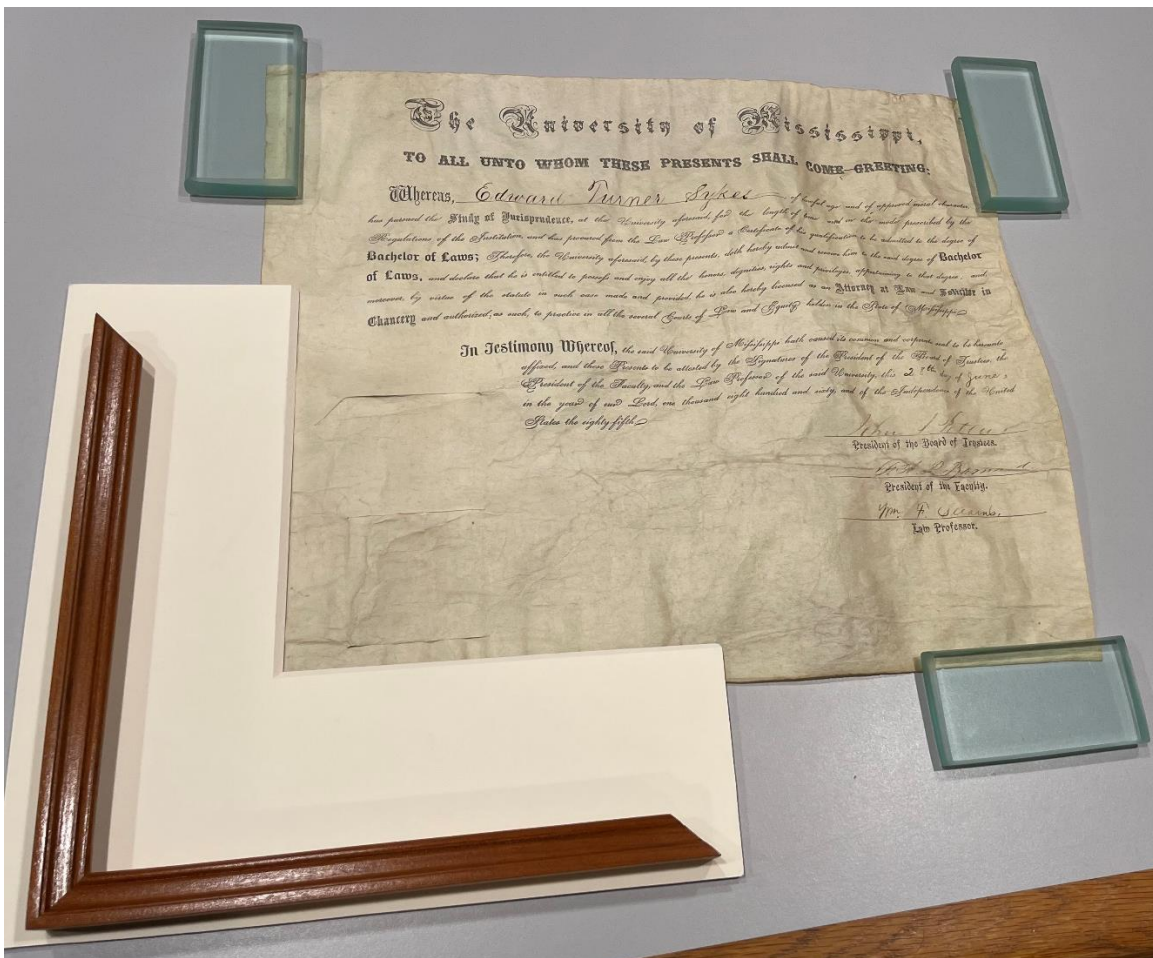
Laurel Davis, Professor Daniel R. Coquillet, KB Beck

Feel free to visit the exhibit in person, or browse [the exhibit website](#), which includes a carousel of some favorite examples and a digital copy of the catalog. For those interested in watching a conversation with Professor Coquillet, please check out this video interview at <https://tinyurl.com/rbr-coquillet>. ■

Serendipity in the Archives

By Christina Jurusik
Public Services Law Librarian
Grisham Law Library, University of Mississippi School of Law

In the fall of 2023 an amazing discovery was made in the archives of the University of Mississippi School of Law. Inside a cardboard shipping tube addressed “To the Law Librarian” was a Bachelor of Laws diploma awarded to Mr. Edward Turner Sykes of Columbus, Mississippi. It was dated 28 June 1860, shortly before the University closed due to the American Civil War in 1861. The diploma is one of twenty-two Bachelor of Laws diplomas awarded that year and was one of the first fifty-five Bachelor of Laws diplomas awarded since the School of Law opened its doors in 1854. It is the oldest Bachelor of Laws diploma that we have in our collection. The next oldest is dated 1873.



On this diploma are signatures from two important members of the School of Law and the University of Mississippi. One is that of Mr. William Forbes Stearns, the first Professor of Governmental Science and Law at the University (precursor to the Dean of the School of Law) and it is one of two diplomas held in the University Archive that have his signature. The other signature is that of Mr. F.A.P. Barnard, the third President of the University of Mississippi (1856-1858), who then became the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi from 1858 to 1861. The diploma came back to the School of Law through the efforts of Ms. Augusta Sykes, Mr. Sykes' youngest daughter, who was an assistant librarian at the Mississippi State College for Women from 1919 to 1953. Based on the postage, the diploma was sent to the law school sometime in the 1940s.

I will note that Mr. Sykes was from the South, which means he served in the Confederate Army in the Civil War. He survived the war and went on to have a fairly substantial political career and was involved in getting the Mississippi Industrial Institute and College, now known as Mississippi University for Women, built in Columbus, Mississippi in 1884. ■



Creating a Digital Library Gallery with the Tools You Have in LibGuides

By Meredith Weston Kostek
Research, Instruction, and Engagement Librarian
Boley Law Library, Lewis and Clark Law School

Do you have a small art collection in your library? Perhaps you want to highlight a special collection or a limited duration rare book exhibit. LibGuides has several tools you can use to create a visually interesting guide.

Start by creating a guide in LibGuides:

Create New Guide

Hover over ⓘ icons next to each label, and be sure to check out the right column boxes for useful tips.

Choose Layout or Reuse ⓘ Start fresh

Select one of the available templates to apply to this guide. Tabs Layout templates display the pages/tabs at the top, while Side-Nav Layouts display the tabs on the side. If unsure, pick the System Default - you can always change the template later.

Tab Layout - boley prod

Guide Name ⓘ Art at Boley

Guide Description ⓘ A guide to the art in and around Boley Law Library

Guide Type ⓘ General Purpose

Group Assignment ⓘ Do not assign to a group

Password ⓘ

Share Guide Content? ⓘ No Internal Community

Create Guide Cancel

To create a gallery, create a new box. Instead of a “standard” box, set it to “gallery”:

Add New Box - Column 1

Create New Box Reuse Existing Box

Box Name Gallery

Type
✓ Standard
Tabbed
Gallery
Profile

Position

Floating Box
 Display box without borders, padding, or box title. The title will appear on the Guide Edit screen so you can get to the Edit menu / Delete button, but will not appear in public view.


Draft Mode
 If this option is checked, the box will be hidden from the public view. Make the box "live" by unchecking this option later on.

Save Cancel


Here are variations between having 2 slides per row and 1 slide per row

Art at Boley: Home

A guide to the art in and around Boley Law Library



Oil City by Megan L.E. Kirkwood
Part of the Orphan Wells of Caddo County, Louisiana Collection



Totem Pole by Chief Lelesooka
On loan from the Kosteritz Family

Art at Boley: Home

A guide to the art in and around Boley Law Library



Pump Jack by Megan L.E. Kirkwood
Part of the Orphan Wells of Caddo County, Louisiana Collection

Ready to try even more? I highly recommend the tutorial video from Springshare titled “Build a Virtual Art Exhibit with LibGuides and LibAnswers”.

<https://training.springshare.com/friendly.php?s=libguides/build-a-guide-art-gallery>

The tutorial explains adding artist overviews, creating an FAQ in LibAnswers to feature artists and paintings, options for your gallery look and feel and so much more.

Looking forward to seeing everyone’s legal history and rare book digital displays. ■

Presidential Databases: Selected Resources

By Jacob Nunnally

Assistant Director of Access and Collections Services
Law Library, Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University
(This article first appeared on the [CRIV Blog](#) on March 5, 2024.)

I just finished reading Roy Morris Jr.'s intriguing book *Fraud of the Century: Rutherford B. Hayes, Samuel Tilden, and the Stolen Election of 1876*, so a blog post on presidential databases—in an election year at that!—seemed fun. Instead of listing several, I thought I would focus on two in particular that have captured my interest.

The [American Presidency Project](#), hosted by University of California, Santa Barbara, claims to be “the only free online searchable database including all of:

- Donald Trump’s Twitter 2015-2021.
- The Messages and Papers of the Presidents: 1789-1929.
- The Public Papers of the Presidents: Since 1929.
- The Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents: 1977-2009.

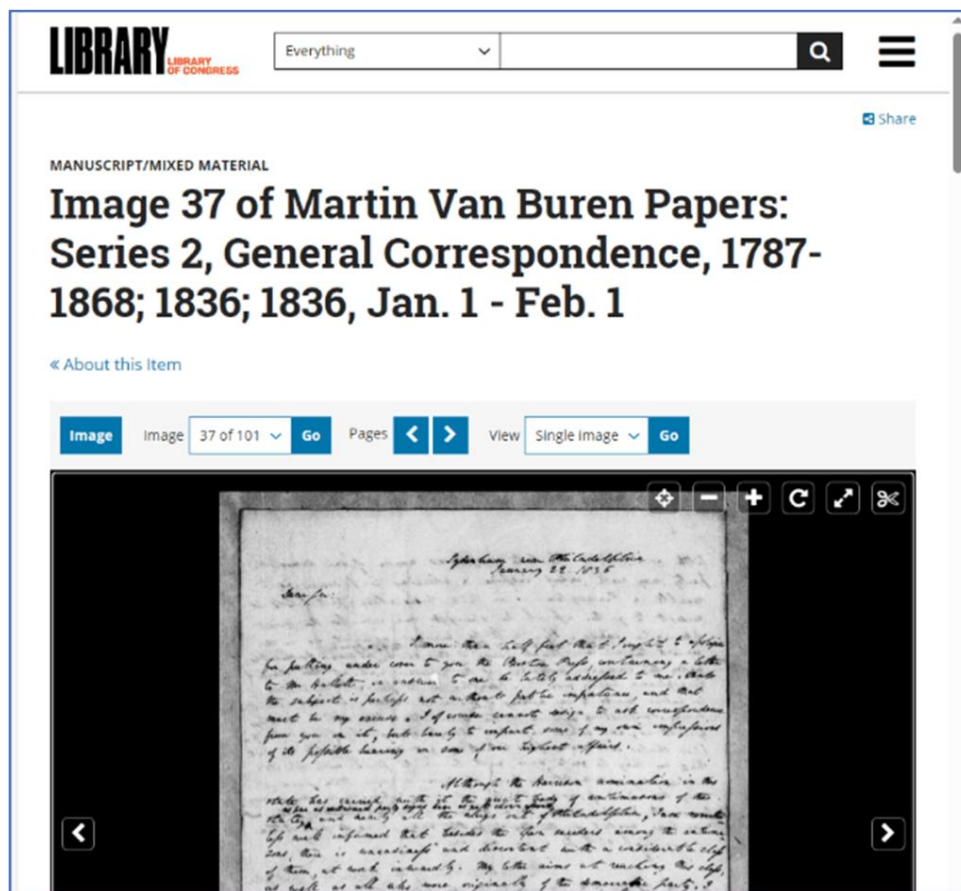
The “nonprofit and non-partisan” site has an intuitive, easily-navigable layout and a powerful search feature. For example, I performed a basic keyword search for “smallpox” that retrieved 172 records. Each instance of the keyword is displayed in a results list that is conveniently sorted by date from oldest to newest. It even provides a snippet of context for each record:

Date	Related	Document Title
Jan 27, 1837	Abraham Lincoln	Address Delivered Before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois existence by the plague or smallpox , honest men would perhaps ...
Feb 14, 1877	Ulysses S. Grant	Veto Message and being in great fear of smallpox , which had become very prevalent ...
Dec 08, 1885	Grover Cleveland	First Annual Message (first term)
Aug 04, 1886	Grover Cleveland	Veto Message and died in the service, of smallpox , May 11, 1865. His father ...
Jan 18, 1889	Grover Cleveland	Veto Message February 19, 1852, and died of smallpox August 2, 1864, at his home ...
Jul 24, 1899	William McKinley	Executive Order of cholera, yellow fever, smallpox , bubonic plague or Chinese ...
Sep 20, 1900	William McKinley	Executive Order of cholera, yellow fever, smallpox , bubonic plague, or Chinese ...
Dec 08, 1908	Theodore Roosevelt	Eighth Annual Message
May 10, 1909	William Howard Taft	Message to the Congress on Affairs in Porto Rico island has been vaccinated and smallpox has practically disappeared ...

President Taft’s “Message to the Congress on Affairs in Porto Rico” in 1909 mentions the eradication of smallpox on the island in the context of several other improvements the United States government had made since 1899, such as the construction of roads, public schools, and other accomplishments. President Taft lists these accomplishments in an attempt to convince Congress to pass “an amendment to the Foraker Act,” which he believed would solve an ongoing legislative “emergency” in the island’s local government. This kind of search in “APP” shows how it can be helpful for historical research in a variety of academic fields.

The Library of Congress’s [Presidential History: A Research Guide](#) is another resource I have been enjoying in preparing this post. It hosts a wide variety of digitized primary sources such as paintings, photographs, broadsides, and correspondence. The collection in this guide that I focused on is devoted to New York’s own Martin Van Buren, the seventh President of the United States.

The Van Buren Collection “contains more than 6,000 items dating from 1787 to circa 1910.” One of the sections of his correspondence contains a letter he wrote early in 1836, the year he was elected President:



It’s a challenge to read mid-nineteenth century cursive, but this letter contains Van Buren’s thoughts regarding the Pennsylvania legislature’s nomination of William Henry Harrison for President: “Although the Harrison nomination in this state has carried with it the great body of antimasons of the state, and nearly all the Whigs out

of Philadelphia, I am nonetheless well informed that besides open seceders among the antimasons, there is uneasiness and discontent with a considerable class of them, at least [?] inwardly. My letter aims at reaching this class . . .” This letter shows him reaching out to as many constituencies as possible in the runup to the election later that year.

As you can see, there’s one major difference between the American Presidency Project and LOC’s Presidential History site—the former has transcribed documents, whereas the LOC site hosts the scanned primary materials without transcription.

I selected Taft’s message that mentioned smallpox from an interest in medical history, and Van Buren’s letter because he was not only a fascinating New York politician, but I have also visited his NPS National Historic Site! ■





Member News

Julie Randolph

Joel Fishman, Associate Director Emeritus, Duquesne University Kline Law Library/Allegheny County Law Library, has the following publications:

BOOKS:

- Fishman, Joel. *Bibliography of Pennsylvania Legal Treatises (2d ed. Hein 2024)*.
- Fishman, Joel & Steven B. Fishman. *Wiretapping: A Legal Research Guide* (Hein 2023).
- Fishman, Joel. *Lotteries: A Legal Research Guide* (Hein 2023).
- Fishman, Joel. *Pardon and Parole: A Legal Research Guide* (Hein 2023).
- Fishman, Joel & Steven B. Fishman. *Jury Instructions: A Legal Research Guide* (Hein 2024).

ARTICLES:

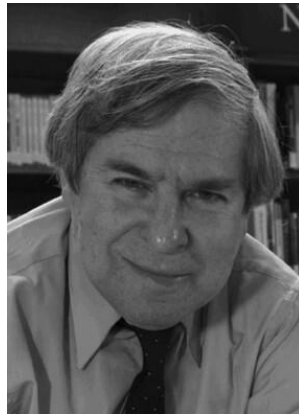
- *Horace Binney (1780-1875): A Philadelphia Legend*, XCIV Pa. B. Assn. Q. 163-76 (2023).
- *The Judicial Opinions of Chief Justice Max Baer (2004-2022)*. 62 Duquesne L. Rev. 75-96 (2024).
- Fishman, Joel, Lori Hagen, Elizabeth Post. *Bibliography of the Writings of the Justices of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania*. 14 Unbound 37-149 (2023).
- *Bibliography of Family Law Publications of the Pennsylvania Bar Institute (1971-2023)*, 45 no. 1 PA Family Lawyer (2024): 19-47.
- *Menstruation and the Law: A Short Bibliography*. Voices and Views Newsletter 8-15 (Fall 2023).
- *303 Creative v. Elenis, 600 U.S. ____: A Bibliography*, Open Court (Fall 2023).
- *Domestic Violence: A Selected Bibliography*. Voices and Views Newsletter 19-28 (Spring 2024)
- *African-American Judges of the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas (1950-2024)*. Houston's Legacy 5-10 (Spring 2024).

ELECTRONIC PUBLICATIONS:

- *Index to Journal of Supreme Court History Volumes 1-48 (1976-2023)*. Supreme Court Historical Society
- *Index to Pennsylvania Bar Association Quarterly Volumes 1-95 (1929-2024)*. PBA Website
- *Index to Voices and Views Newsletter (1998-2024)*. PBA Women in the Profession Commission, PBA Website.

- *Index to Houston's Legacy (2015-2024)*. PBI Minority Bar Committee, PBA Website.
- *Index to Open Court Newsletter (2010-2023)*. LGBTQ+ Committee, PBA Website.
- *The Majority Judicial Opinions of Chief Justice Debra Todd of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania (2008-2024)*, PBA WIP Website.

John L. Moreland, currently Student Services Librarian at Jerome Hall Law Library at Indiana University Maurer School of Law, will be the new Special Collections Librarian at Stanford Law School starting in August.



And a farewell message from **Fred Shapiro**, Associate Director for Collections and Special Projects and Lecturer in Legal Research at Yale Law School:

I am planning to retire from the Yale Law Library at the end of 2024. I have not been active in the business of the Legal History and Rare Books SIS, but I have been a member since my colleague, the late, great Dan Wade, founded the SIS. And I think that I have been a significant supporter of legal history and rare law books through my work at Yale and my articles and books and Making of Modern Law databases.

As we plunge further into the turbulence and upheavals of the twenty-first century, it becomes even more important than ever to preserve and study the lessons of the past. The culture of print has been a rich one, and the wonders of technology, dazzling as they are, should not cause us to forget the wonders of that print culture. At Yale, I think our historical collections are in good hands with our special collections team of Kathryn James (rare books), Linda Hocking (archives), and Caitlyn Lam (digital collections, most of which are historical in nature). Our director Femi Cadmus appreciates the importance of special collections. We have other librarians, such as Steven Mitchell, Nicholas Mignanelli, and John Nann, who have very strong historical interests. I expect that Harvard Law Library will always be a leader in this realm. But, even in an era of budgetary tightening, it is important that libraries beyond Harvard and Yale safeguard and continue their own traditional activities. The LHRB-SIS is a natural focus for those activities, and a great group of people. I wish it well! ■

LHRB Member Spotlight: Rebecca Altermatt

Meredith Weston Kostek, Contributor
Research, Instruction & Engagement Librarian
Boley Law Library, Lewis and Clark Law School
mkostek@lclark.edu

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 use 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 Rebecca Altermatt, the Archives and Special Collections Research Librarian at the University of Connecticut School of Law. Rebecca is a career archivist and prior to her position at UConn worked at institutions such as Pratt & Whitney and Citibank. Rebecca received her BA from the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota, where she majored in the Humanities and French. From there she received her MLIS from the University of Texas at Austin. Find out more about how Rebecca highlights archives and legal history in her work at the Thomas J. Meskill Law Library.

Q: What made you decide on becoming an archivist?

A: As an undergrad I took a tour of the [Hill Monastic Manuscript Library](#) at my alma mater and was struck by the beauty and history of the illuminated manuscripts. The idea of reading and touching something that someone from 600 years ago had worked on is a feeling I think many researchers understand. And I also loved history and reading and I am curious by nature which serves one well in this profession because you are always learning a new subject. If I hadn't been an archivist I think I would have been a journalist.

Q: Tell us a little about your job at the Thomas J. Meskill Law Library at the University of Connecticut School of Law.

A: I manage the Archives for the Law School which includes the institutional records such as those from the Dean's office, Faculty minutes and research and personal papers, and student materials such as the student newspapers, law reviews and organizations and activities. We also have manuscript collections mostly from former faculty and some alumni as well as some collections pertaining to certain topics such as insurance.

Q: How do you integrate legal scholarship into your archival and special collections work?

A: Since most of what I have is related to the legal profession, I often am researching the cases mentioned in the collections and writing up summaries of those for the finding aids, which are descriptions of the collections. The Archives also holds historical legal works, treatises and statutes of Connecticut so I have to be aware of what those are and how researchers may find them useful.

Q: What are you currently working on (book/project/exhibition/paper) that has you excited about your area of expertise?

A: Currently I am working on putting together a panel on the topic of a collection from one of our alumni that even though happened in the late 1980s/early 1990s resonates today. I like the connections Archives can make between the past and present and how this can provide new information and knowledge to relate to what is going on today. They say history repeats itself and it often does; issues that were thought established and solidified come back around due to changes in technology and society.

Q: What is one collection at the Thomas J. Meskill Law Library you wish were used more or more people knew about and why?

A: Course catalogs! I find them so useful and full of information, especially the older ones. This Spring I uploaded all of the ones we have in print to the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA) and I hope people will look at them if they are looking for the historical background of the law school, when and what faculty taught, what the fees and tuition were for certain years and the list of graduates for certain years. They contain a wealth of information and can provide an avenue to further research.

Q: When you work on the reference desk for the law library, what questions do you find particularly challenging/rewarding with your archivist background? What tools or techniques do you use to help answer those types of questions?

A: I participate in the reference desk rotation so I am constantly reading up on how to better use Lexis and Westlaw! I read a lot of legal research guides and have taken the Library of Congress Orientation to Legal Research webinars which are very useful. I also have a great set of colleagues in the Reference department who are very generous and patient with me! I have to educate myself on the tools and resources they use as I do not have a J.D. But since I have been an archivist for many years I also know which Archives and archivists may be able to assist with some of the questions since I am more adept at searching for historical materials and information.

I love getting questions related to old articles and documents that are best suited for my archival skills. Especially incomplete or incorrect citations! We had one last Spring for a French medical dissertation from the early 1900s which I was able to locate and procure a digital copy! From another Archives.

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

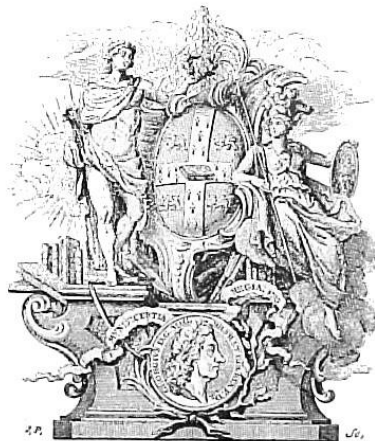
A: I think the one I just described above - it's so rewarding to find something that you think is going to be impossible to locate and the faculty are so appreciative when we do. I also love reading the oral histories of past deans. They provide a great amount of information on what might seem like insignificant events or happenings that often provide me with 'aha!' moments. And getting a shout out in a publication the law school did on [Women at the Law School](#) from the author and editorial staff.

Q: If someone were to come to Hartford, Connecticut, what one thing do you think they should do or try?

A: A Yard Goats game!

Q: Is there anything you wish someone would ask you in a Q&A like this that you'd love to answer? What is it and what is your answer?

A: What is the most interesting collection(s) you have worked on? I would say a few - I really love business records and have been lucky enough to organize Citibank's Archives, work as an Archivist for HSBC, and work on an anniversary project for Goldman Sachs. I also was the archivist for Pratt & Whitney for a few years as a contractor and really loved that collection. It's funny because I had to google what they did (I am not from CT) and thought it might be a bit boring but they were anything but. I also really loved the Archives of Irish America I worked on at NYU. Mostly what makes these jobs great were the people I met while working in these collections. ■



LH&RB

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