

Opening Up the “Closed” Stacks: What Archives & Special Collections Can Do for You & Your Patrons!

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VLA Annual Conference

Richmond, VA

October 22, 2015



Archives & Special Collections

- A little bit of terminology:
 - Archives
 - Special collections
 - Primary sources
- A little bit about archives & special collections (generally):
 - Missions and goals
 - Commonalities and differences
 - Crash course in our activities

In other words, some of what we do is going from this...



...and this...



...to this...



...and this...



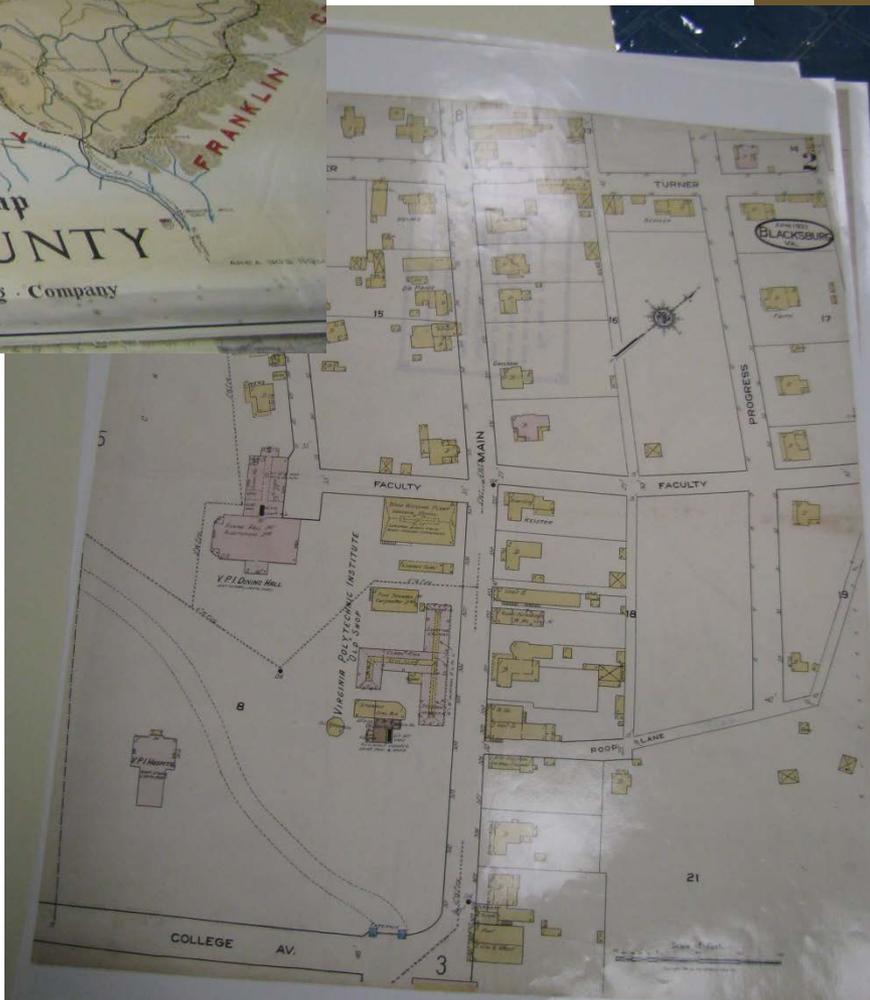
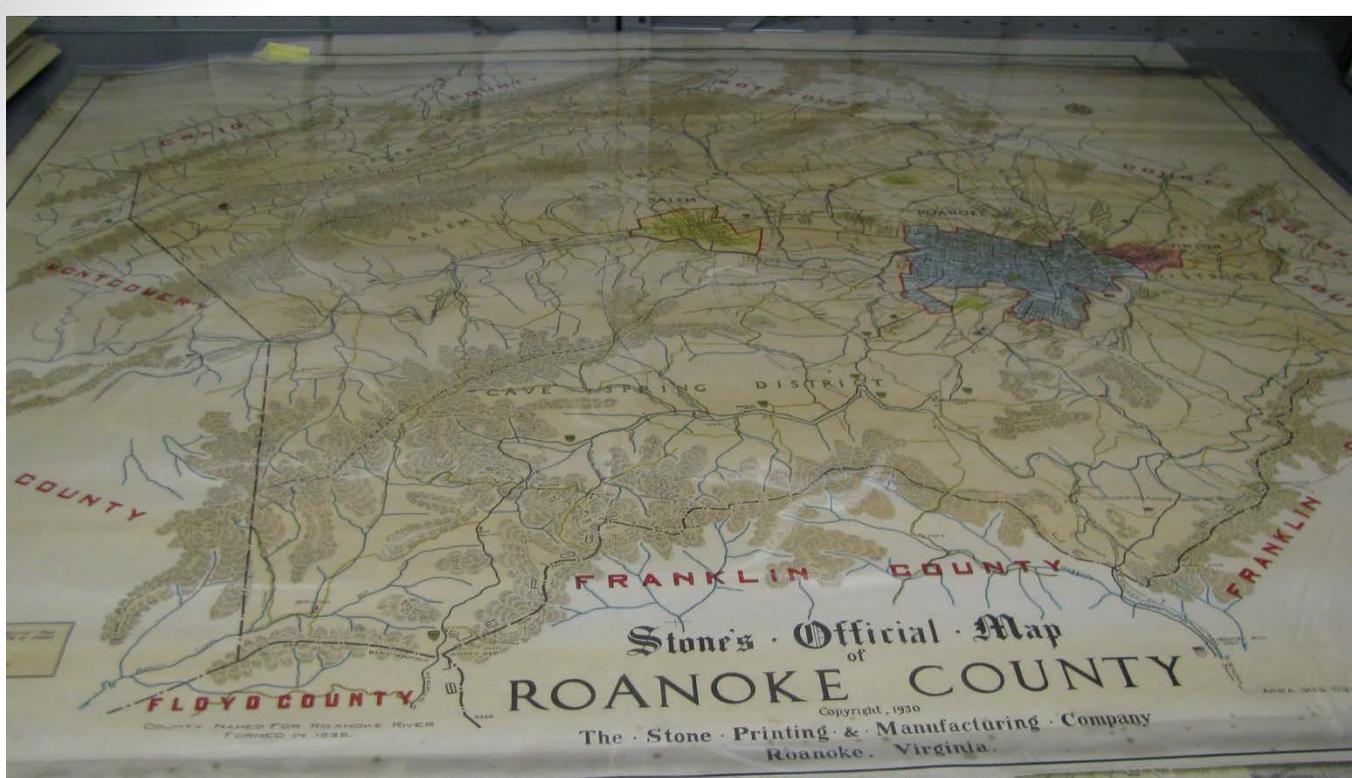
...and this!



What Will You Find on Our
Shelves?

Any ideas?







Why Should You (or Your Patrons) Care?

- Who are our patrons in academic archives?
 - Students (K-12, undergraduate, and graduate)
 - University faculty/staff
 - Alumni
 - Researchers/scholars of all ages & skill levels
 - The public
- Why do they contact or visit us?
 - Research
 - Curiosity
 - Donations
 - Serendipity

“Typical” Services

- Reference
- Instruction
- Reproduction/digitization
- Outreach/tours



Discovering Resources

- Tools for discovery
 - Finding aids
 - Catalog records
 - Discovery systems
 - Subject/resource guides
 - Asking your friendly special collections librarian or archivist (trust me, we LOVE to talk about our collections!)

Discovering Resources

- Example Institution or State Discovery Tools
 - Virginia Heritage (state-wide finding aid consortium with 36 members)
 - Virginia Tech Special Collections LibGuide
 - Virginia Historical Society Catalog
- Example National or Global Discovery Tools
 - ArchiveGrid (OCLC discovery tool for finding aids and catalog records of manuscript materials)
 - WorldCat
 - Social Networks and Archival Context (SNAC) (Note: this is an in-development project that is laying the groundwork for a sustainable international cooperative program for archival description.)

Hey, it's not ALL analog!

- A FEW sample digital collections (and there are a LOT more!)
 - Special Collections Online (Virginia Tech)
 - Virginia Memory (LVA)
 - DigitalNC
 - Los Angeles Public Library Menu Collection
 - Digital Public Library of America (DPLA)
 - National Archives and Records Administration's Access to Archival Databases (AAD)

Why Collaborate?

- Partnerships, whether project-based, education-based, or otherwise, can help libraries, staff, and patrons learn more about available resources and community needs
- Plus, archivists and special collections librarians aren't just those weird people hanging out in the basement—we're actually pretty fun!



So, You Wanna to Partner Up?

- How do you find partners?
 - Ask your colleagues! (If they don't want to work with you, maybe they know someone who does)
 - Get out there, literally and virtually! (on campus, in the community, in your organization)
 - Establish relationships when you can. Even if you don't have something in mind, take opportunities to cultivate relationships with community groups, campus groups, instructors...Keep people in mind for down the road.
 - Serendipity! (if you're lucky, some people might find you)

We've Got Partners, Now What?

- What can we do together?
 - Instruction
 - Displays/exhibits
 - Digital displays
 - Open houses
 - Community events



Traveling NEH Lincoln Exhibit in Newman Library, Fall 2013



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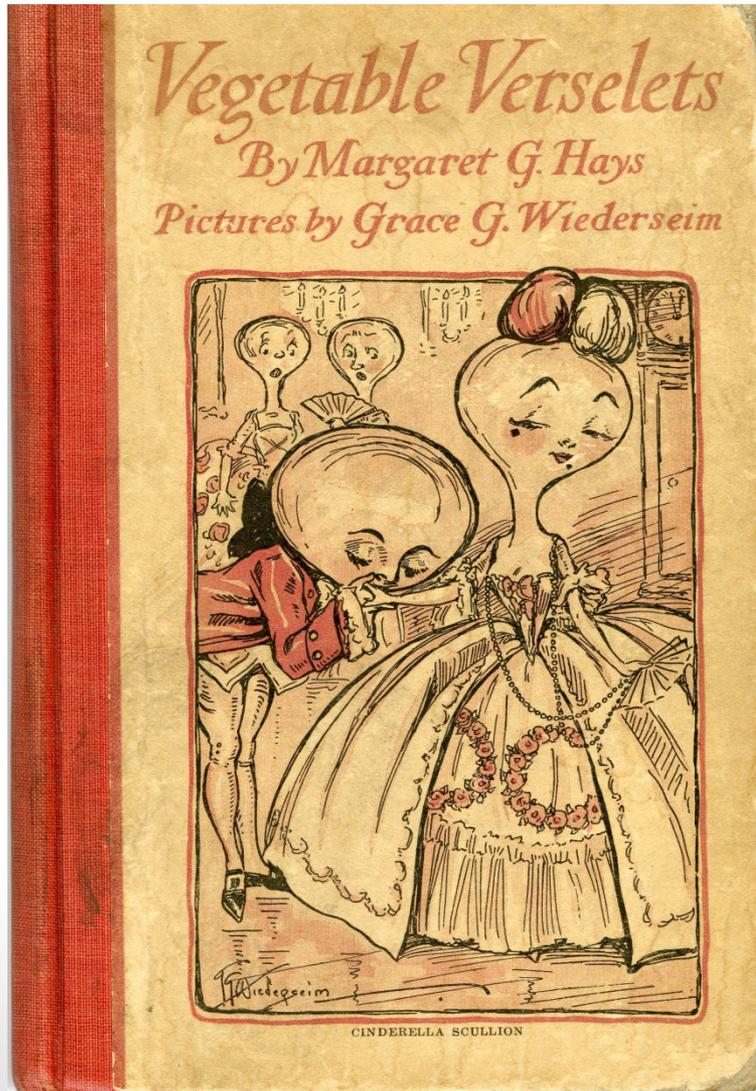


Blacksburg Middle School students visiting Special Collections to go “hand-on” with Civil War history, 2014



Blacksburg Middle School students visiting Special Collections to go “hand-on” with Civil War history, 2014

Vegetable Verselets: A Song Cycle



*Vegetable Verselets for
Humorous Vegetarians*
by Margaret G. Hays; with
illustrations by Grace G.
Wiederseim.

Philadelphia; London: J. B.
Lippincott, 1911.

(Yes, it out of copyright and available in
its entirety online!)

How a Song Cycle is Born

Serendipity

- + An archivist and a pianist
- + A composer and a soprano
- + A bunch of people with a great sense of humor
- = “Vegetable Verselets” (A Song Cycle)



Visitors to the Special Collections reading room during the Vegetable Verselets reception, 2012



Soprano Caroline Worra and composer Daren Hagen at the Vegetable Verselets reception, 2012



2013 Contest Website: <http://tinyurl.com/aebc2013>



2013 Contest Website: <http://tinyurl.com/aebc2013>



2014 Contest Website: <http://tinyurl.com/aebc2014>



2014 Contest Website: <http://tinyurl.com/aebc2014>

Got Any Advice for New Collaborators?

- Educate your partners about what you bring to the table!
- Brainstorm ideas!
- Know your limitations (time, people, money, space, etc.)...
- But think big (or at least, think BOLD)!
- Plan, plan, plan (in order words, be organized)...
- But be ready to adapt!
- Have a sense of humor! (I CANNOT stress this one enough!)

In Conclusion...

Questions? Comments?

Ideas for the group?

Link to the presentation & resource guide:

<https://goo.gl/15ChpK>

Contacting Me!

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