Spring 2001

Marginalia no. 10

Merrill-Cazier Library
Utah State University
The first day of April is a day when order is reversed, power is shifted and pranks abound. Experts believe the custom has its roots in the 1582 change from France’s Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar, shifting New Year’s Day from 25 March to 1 January. However, this official policy was slow to change vernacular custom, and many continued to exchange calls and gifts on April 1st, the previous New Year’s Day, making them Europe’s first “April Fools!” April Fools’ Day is also known as All Fools’ Day and in Scotland, as Huntingdon’s Day, from the custom of sending the gullible on “gowk-hunting” missions, similar to a snipe hunt in the U.S.

At school, work and home, individuals participate in pranks, “innocent” fibbing and practical jokes on April Fools’ Day. Mild pranks and acts of deception, such as salting the sugar bowl, gluing coins to the sidewalk, placing “kick me” signs on friends backs, posting computer warnings of a bogus virus and phoning telephone gags are the order of the day. Folklorist Tad Tuleja posits that the mild mayhem of April Fools’ Day is a vernacular form of “symbolic inversion,” which, like Halloween, “operates under an unwritten protocol that periodically tolerates the impermissible.” The impunity of the joker, who when he signals with the formula “April Fool!” must be treated nonaggressively because folk wisdom claims that loss of temper will bring bad luck. Thus, although April Fools’ Day is a day of disorder there are rules of conduct, but it is the recipient that must follow the rules not the joker, yet another “inversion!”

—Randy Williams
Director, Fife Folklore Archives
This semester takes us back to the roots of hometown America, 1960's style. In the book, *Travels with Charley: In Search of America*, John Steinbeck takes the reader from Deer Isle, Maine to San Francisco; from an encounter with bears in Yellowstone, to the racial hostility and demonstrations in New Orleans.

During the journey Steinbeck is accompanied by his French poodle, Charley. They travel in Steinbeck’s three-quarter-ton truck Rocinante, named after Don Quixote’s horse.

The book evolved from Steinbeck’s desire to rediscover the America he had written about for most of his life. The reader is projected through 38 states on this 10,000-mile adventure. While on the journey from September 1960 to January 1961, Steinbeck was never once recognized and said of the people who saw his cabin on wheels, ‘they looked courteous curses at me because I could go on and they could not.’

“Everywhere frantic growth, a carcinomatous growth. Bulldozers rolled up the green forests and heaped the resulting trash for burning. The torn white lumber from concrete forms was piled beside gray walls. I wonder why progress looks so much like destruction.”

*Excerpt from Travels With Charley*  
Published, 1961

This short, thoughtful book is to be read “slowly for its savor” said Edward Weeks. The book is available at the University Book Store and the Merrill Library has a number of copies. The call number is E 169.02 S83.

Each semester under the Academics Vice President of ASUSU (student body officers) a book is highlighted and sold ‘at cost’ by the University Book Store.

The novel, *The Poisonwood Bible*, by Barbara Kingsolver was selected last fall as the Book of the Semester. The political turmoil of post-Colonial Africa of 1959 is explored by a family of missionaries in the Congo. Kingsolver projects the attitudes and biases of the time through the five members of the family who act as narrators.

—Peter Dawson  
ASUSU Representative  
Friends of the Libraries
Once again the Friends of USU Libraries sponsored a very successful Libraries Make a Difference phonathon campaign with pledges totaling over $100,000.

Between November 30, 2000, and February 3, 2001, student callers in Old Main telephoned parents of current USU students as well as those who have given to the Libraries through the phonathon during the past two years. Parents were asked to donate the cost of two books.

The average cost of an academic book is $58, journal subscriptions average $430, and electronic databases cost from $50 to thousands of dollars. During the past three years parents and family members of students have contributed more than $200,000 to help purchase these resources. These contributions help provide the best library service possible to the students of USU.

Individual support such as that received through the phonathon is essential for the continued growth and improvement of USU Libraries.

—Trina Sheldon
Library Staff Phonathon Coordinator

never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

friends...like you...

This past year the Friends of USU Libraries contributed over $8,000 and helped to cover the cost of items not included in the regular budget.

Friends Funds....

....will underwrite Cache Valley History Day in conjunction with USU Libraries' Special Collections.
....sponsor activities, mailings and other associated expenses of the Friends' organization.
....will pay for the design and installation of floor directories for the Merrill and SciTech libraries.
....contributed toward the purchase of the William B. Preston journals for Special Collections.

Thank You!
Remember when libraries offered books—just books? If the librarian were energetic, perhaps she provided a "vertical file" of pamphlets, articles, and newspaper clippings as well. When I was a graduate student at a state university in Kentucky, the library provided the only copy machine on campus available for student use. Later, as a public library librarian, I proudly voted to provide a computer—that's one computer—for patron use. It was equipped with a coin box that charged a quarter for 30 minutes' use. Obviously, this arrangement pre-dated the days of lengthy web surfing. For that matter, it pre-dated the web. But then, at that point we still had a card catalog, too. The first computer I was assigned at Merrill Library in the mid-1980's was equipped with a whopping two meg hard drive.

Really, I'm not that old. Many of today's students have never laid eyes on a text-based (as opposed to graphically-based) software program, much less laid fingers on a typewriter keyboard or even seen a sheet of carbon paper. We've come a long, wonderful way—and in a very short time.

Today USU Libraries not only provide dozens of computer terminals for patron use, but also remote electronic access from the dorm rooms, homes, and offices of USU students, staff, and faculty members. And just what is it they can “access” compliments of the Libraries? How about a complete online catalog that performs complex searches far beyond the scope of the author-title-subject searches of its card catalog ancestor? How about more than 100 databases of journal citations, many including the full text of the articles they cite? Not to mention over 1,600 electronic journals online—right on your computer screen—from Immunology and Cell Biology to Studies in Educational Evaluation.

Expanding beyond books and journals, the Libraries' home page (www.usu.edu/library) provides direct links to "Internet Reference," a wide array of information sources organized by subject area, and "Research Assistance," putting you in touch with a librarian whose expertise matches your informational needs. Students and teachers alike benefit from the electronic "Course Reserves" system that displays scanned readings so that many course materials can be accessed from remote locations. Students no longer have to physically visit the library to borrow class readings, and teachers don't have to subject important course materials to heavy student use. Patrons who use the "Other Catalogs" link from the Libraries home page can browse library catalogs around the world, from Brigham City to Sri Lanka, while other links allow users to request a book or an article via interlibrary loan or suggest the purchase of a book, video, or other material.

Electronic resources are not the only changes in libraries today. In addition to plenty of copy machines and computers in each building, a wide variety of equipment is available for check-out by USU faculty and staff. Audio-Visual Services provides the traditional film projectors, record players, and tape recorders, but today instructors can also check out video cameras and projectors, LCD computer screen projectors, laser pointers, and even conference telephones. Students, faculty, and staff can check out laptop computers, and data ports are provided in Cazier Sci-Tech Library for student laptop use within the building. In 2001 our audio-visual collections include CDs and DVDs in addition to the familiar videos, films, and audio cassettes.

Libraries have simply outgrown their ancient roots: Greek biblio and Latin libr meaning books. Perhaps we're due for a name change: maybe "Resource-O-Rama" instead of "Library"? O.K., now I am showing my age.

One way to catch up on all the current offerings of the USU Libraries is to explore the home page at www.usu.edu/library. You'll be amazed. Oh, yeah—and we still have books, too—almost a million and a half of them.

Jan Anderson
Campus Services Librarian

This year's National Library Week, April 11 - 17, celebrates the freedom to "Read! Learn! Connect!" It's a freedom that is easily taken for granted. We walk into a library expecting to find information on almost any conceivable topic—no questions asked. This freedom to seek and receive information without restriction undergirds our democracy.

Libraries are an American value, born of the notion that a free people should have free access to information. In practice what that means is that libraries give us access to a full spectrum of information and ideas that allows us to learn what we want, explore many points of view and make informed decisions.

As we race headlong into a technological age that's sure to surprise us in ways we can't even imagine, it's important to remember that libraries will remain the solid foundation from which information will flow. But only if we, the citizens who use and benefit from libraries, support them as the keepers of our freedom to read, learn and connect.

From the American Library Association.
VIRGINIA PARKER: A PASSION FOR PRINT

The love of books and learning has stayed with Virginia Parker throughout her life. A Cache Valley native, Virginia Parker earned her library degree from Berkeley and she has worked in a variety of libraries, museums and historical societies including the Historical Society in San Francisco and the California Book Club. After many years she returned to USU and completed an M.S. in American Studies. Parker began working part time as a staff assistant in Special Collections and Archives in 1996. She is also the archivist and a former director of the Cache County Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum.

On Friday, 17 November, USU Libraries hosted a reception celebrating the opening of San Francisco Fine Press Printing 1916-1976: Samples From the Collection of Virginia C. Parker.

The exhibit, featuring books, broadsides, and ephemera from Virginia’s personal collection, was an engaging chronicle of her lifelong passion for books and beautiful printing.

Catered by Le Patisserie, the highlight of the evening was Virginia Parker’s talk on her love for fine print intertwined with memories of her fascinating and distinguished career in the field of Librarianship. A CD recording of that talk will be available for borrowing from the Art Book Room in the Merrill Library. Thanks to Bill and Suzanne Lowry for the recording and for photographing the event.

Robert Murdock, Deputy Director of USU Libraries, welcomes guests (above). Parker greets Dean Barbara White & Asst. to the President at USU, Craig Peterson (below).

All Photos Courtesy Suzanne Lowry

“to my thinking, a great librarian must have a clear head, a strong hand, and above all, a great heart... and I am inclined to think that most of the men who will achieve this greatness will be women.”

— Melvil Dewey
Andrew Joseph Russell, Union Pacific Photographer

Between 1868 and 1870 Andrew Joseph Russell (1829-1902) photographed over 800 glass-plate negatives along the Union Pacific Railroad line in Nebraska, Wyoming, and Utah. Some of these images are classics of Western Photographica. In fact, he took what is perhaps the most famous western image (for years misidentified as a C.R. Savage photo) of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific locomotives coming together at Promontory, Utah. Russell’s photographs convey movement and power. They are not only important historical documents, but they also evoke awe of the momentous undertaking that was the building of the transcontinental railroad. Within the Special Collections and Archives Department there are many second generation copies of Russell images, but what many people may not realize is that we also house a copy of the rare 1870 book Sun Pictures of Rocky Mountain Scenery with thirty original Russell albumen prints.

Russell was the natural choice when the Union Pacific decided it needed to photographically document “the Work of the Age” in early 1868. During the Civil War he was the official railroad military photographer for the Union Army. After the war he returned to New York City to resume his work as a portrait photographer and artist. The lure of capturing the building of a transcontinental railroad on glass, however, was too great an opportunity to let pass. In early 1868 he set out for Omaha, Nebraska. Russell caught up with the railroad in Cheyenne. He followed its construction across Wyoming and into Utah and finally to the joining of the rails at Promontory Point on May 10, 1869.

After the joining of the two railroads the Union Pacific published The Great West Illustrated in a Series of Photographic Views Across the Continent (of which only a handful survive). The next year geology professor Ferdinand Hayden utilized Russell’s prints in a cheaper volume entitled Sun Pictures of Rocky Mountain Scenery. Hayden was in charge of the U.S. Geographical and Geological Survey and he wanted to capitalize on interest in visual images of the West and to promote the study of geology. As Hayden himself explains in the book:

“The Pictures have been arranged... with the view that the book may be used as a guide by those who will avail themselves of the grand opportunities for geological study, which a trip across the continent affords to every intelligent mind.”

The photographs in Sun Pictures of Rocky Mountain Scenery are not the dramatic images that document the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad; instead they are scenes of geological interest. Here Russell shows his flexibility as an artist. Most of these photographs were taken after the joining of the rails when Russell had more time to pick and choose his subjects. In these photographs nature is not an obstacle to be overcome, but a source of interest to the traveler. In 1870 Russell finished up his work with the U.P. and returned to New York City. He spent the rest of his career working as an artist and photographer for Leslie’s Illustrated.

— Daniel Davis
USU Special Collections
Photography Archivist
Library is the heart of an educational institution, and the heart of the USU Libraries is our Friends organization — a diverse group of special people who share a distinct interest in the pursuits of the intellect and are devoted to books, letters and libraries. The Friends enjoy many benefits while they help USU Libraries through contributions of funds and library materials to develop its world-class collections. Your help is important and it can really make a difference.

Membership benefits include our newsletter, Marginalia, published twice yearly and invitations to all Friends’ sponsored events. Contributors giving $25 or more also receive book borrowing privileges at USU Libraries and an invitation to a special preview evening of our annual Booksale. To join, simply fill out the form below and send to USU Libraries.

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Select one category and send check and this form to:

Friends of Utah State University Libraries
3000 Old Main Hill
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Yes, I (or my spouse) work for a matching-gift company.
If yes, please enclose matching-gift form.
(Or inquire about alternate USU employee payment plan)

Thank you for your support!

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<tr>
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