

## Written Records in Medieval England

The revolution before the printing press

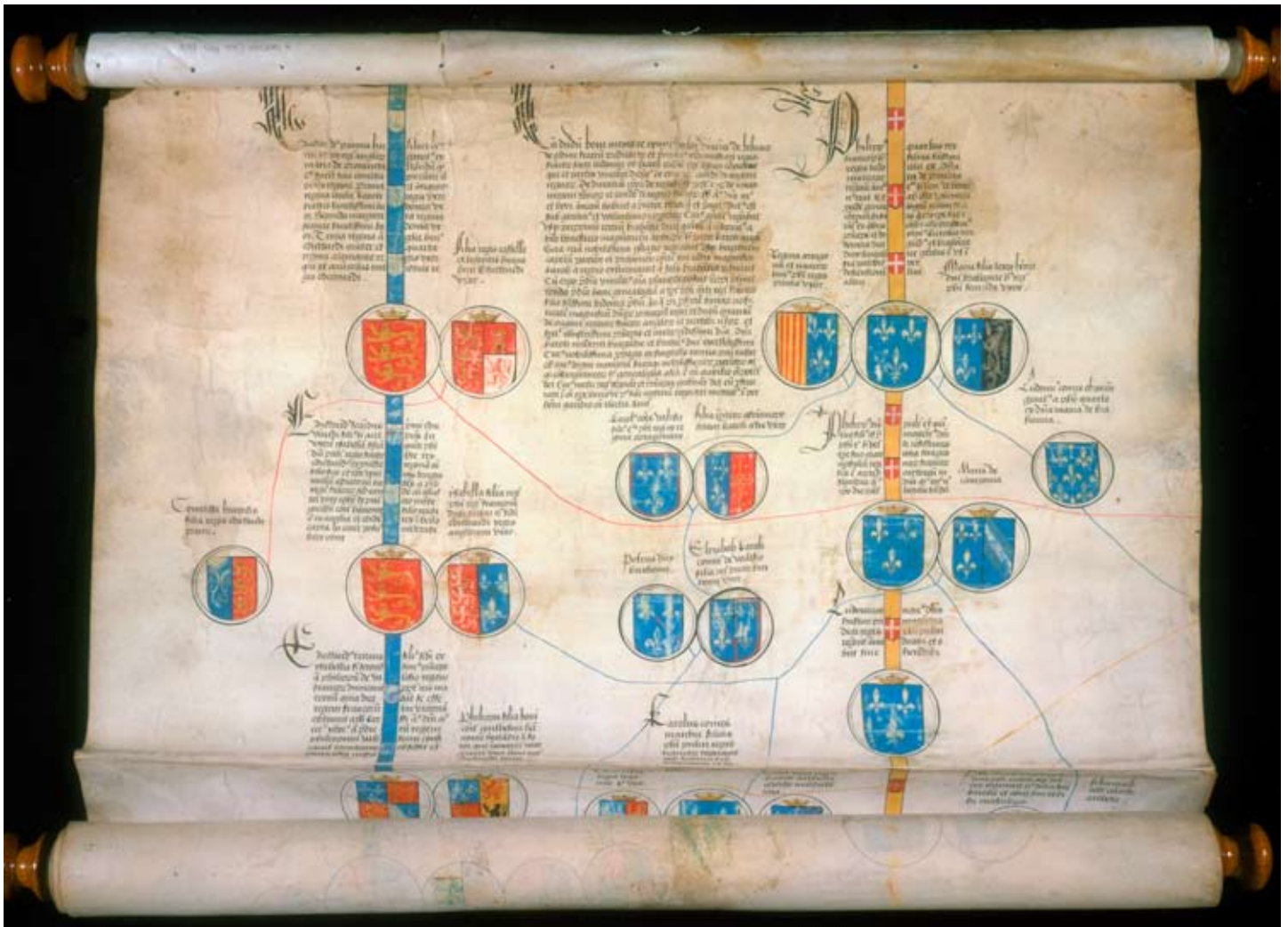


Figure 1 (see text, page 7). Roll of ca. 1465, tracing the genealogies of the kings of England and France. Newberry Library MS 166. Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

Historical reigns referred to in this article:

- William I: 1066-1087
- Henry I: 1100-1135
- Henry II: 1154-1189
- John: 1199-1216
- Henry III: 1216-1272
- Edward I: 1272-1307

Philip Liebson

### INTRODUCTION: BEFORE THE NORMAN CONQUEST

This article describes the development of writing and archival records in late medieval England. The increasingly widespread use of writing in the years immediately following the Norman Conquest ultimately set the stage for the invention of the printing press in the mid-1400s. The ensuing “print revolution,” however, was less a matter of technological advances than the spread of a written culture – especially through records and archives – through

all classes of society, replacing oral tradition with the beginnings of a general literacy. The period of this change encompasses the late 11th to early 14th centuries.

But let us set the stage yet again, to a time immediately before the Norman invasion of England in 1066. Literary culture was limited essentially to royal monasteries, where the scribes wrote on parchment. Historical data from various areas of the kingdom were obtained primarily through the oral remembrances of elders and others with strong recollections of past events.<sup>1</sup>

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### WRITTEN RECORDS, from page 1

For periods of more than 100 years, personal memory can hardly provide a reliable form of witness. Yet memories were sometimes called upon to determine the legality of land charters of an even earlier date. Disputes over land ownership were conventionally settled by a jury of a dozen knights who gave oral testimony.<sup>2</sup>

Charters and chirographs – which recorded agreements between two parties – derived from the traditions of the Roman Empire, but were used only sparingly before the Norman Conquest.<sup>3</sup>

Titles to property were symbolized by objects such as swords, staffs cut from the land in question, and rings conveyed upon the issuance of title. A sword representing Anglo-Saxon victory over the Scots in 937 was employed as an adjunct to title until at least the late 12th century.<sup>4</sup> When Edward I needed a symbol to reflect this 10th century triumph, but without an authentic sword from the battle available, he relied for historical precedent on a fissure in a rock, presumably made with the sword of an Anglo-Saxon predecessor. The exchange of wedding rings was simply another example of this ongoing use of symbols.

Charters that were written, of which there were few, were signed with crosses<sup>5</sup> – only the king had an official seal. [Figure 2] By Edward the Confessor's reign (1042-1066), documents could be authenticated only by a seal in the king's possession. Affirmation was accomplished by the parties with a cross for each signature. (Only after the Reformation did signing with a cross imply illiteracy.) In any case, few charters were ever again consulted after their signing. Oral communication between parties was the main source of witness.

Anglo-Saxon (or Old English, or “the vernacular”), of which there were many dialects, was the language of the people, including at this time the king. It derived from a specific dialect from Wessex, and was used generally by monastics as well as within the hierarchy of royals.<sup>6</sup> As for the rest, most of the common people could not read.

Most written records, whether in Latin or Old English, were charters and declarations of the king or grants from the bishops. Such records as existed were stored in the king's portable chests, a tradition that endured for several centuries more.<sup>7</sup>

### CHANGES AFTER THE NORMAN CONQUEST

Although some Latin was used in written records in the late Anglo-Saxon period, the vernacular was more common. Perhaps this was why laws “under the Norman yoke” were often written in French (the Conqueror's vernacular) – though royal writs, charters, and other documents were mainly produced in Latin. Latin was the most familiar language of writing for royal clerks and the clerks of

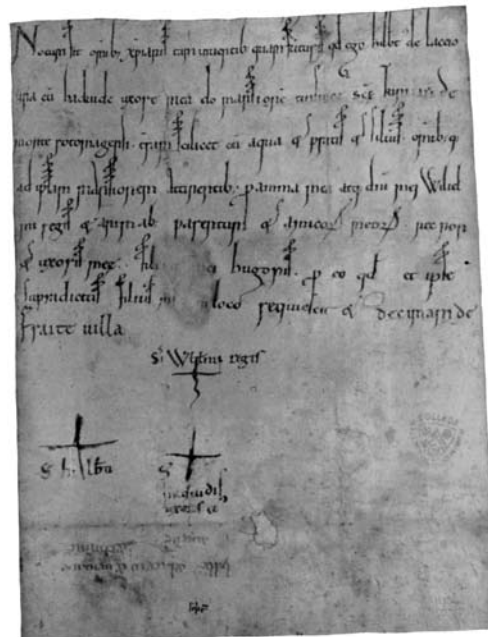


Figure 2. Charter of one of the Norman knights recording a gift. The knightly seal of brown wax was attached to the charter and the crosses indicate authentication by the participants. From Plate I, M.T. Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, Blackwell Publisher. With permission.

Canterbury's archbishop, the Italian Lanfranc. But as Norman leadership extended its grip, the recourse to French increased. By the time of Magna Carta (1215), though the final version was in Latin, at least some copies of the charter were sent out to local sheriffs in French translation.<sup>8, 9</sup> (Norman French would today be unrecognizable anywhere in France.) Language usage became even more complex after the Conquest, with Latin, French, and English vying with one another as written forms. Even Hebrew was in occasional use – specifically in documents pertaining to Jews, who began arriving in England during the 12th century.<sup>10</sup>

William I issued writs to provide instructions or enjoin individuals, as well as title deeds using writs with the royal seal, replacing the writs' Old English with Latin. Clerks of the realm were reasonably versed in the Latin of documents and scholarship, and “illiteracy” at the time meant unfamiliarity with this written version.<sup>11</sup> Latin was also the language of record in continental Europe. After the Conquest, Latin began to be used for business purposes,



Figure 3. St. Matthew depicted as a scribe dipping his quill at an inkstand. Newberry Library MS 47 fol. 17r. Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

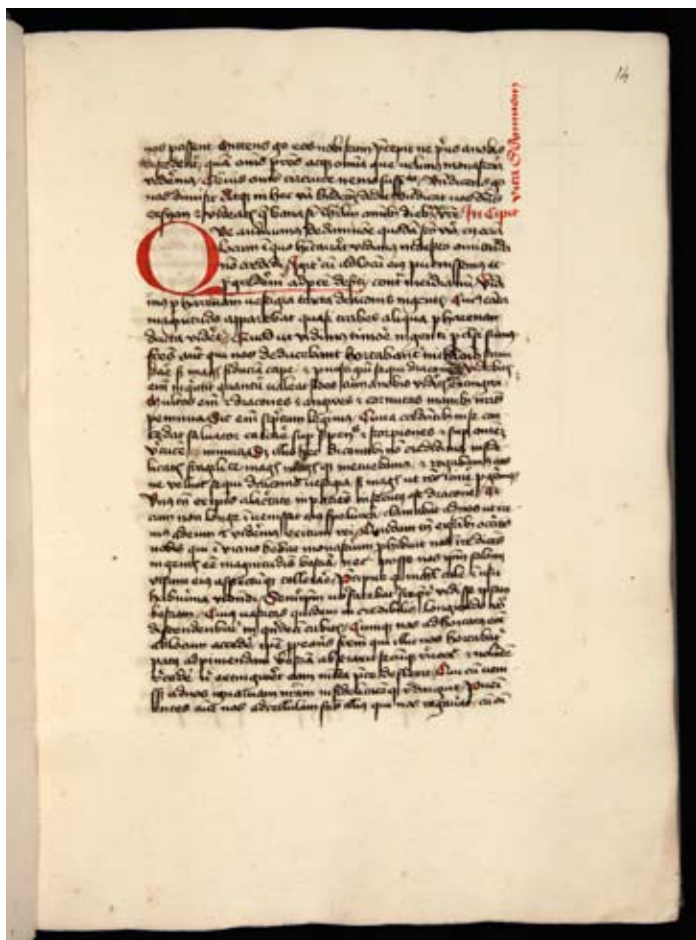


Figure 4. A rubricator continuing a tile along the edge of the text. Newberry Library MS 66.1 fol. 14r. Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

though levels of uniformity increased after the Conquest as documentary procedures became more common. Initially most charters set forth property rights. What was important about Domesday was its novelty as an instrument of administration sited within a royal archive. In this it was somewhat analogous to the documentary records of monastic houses.<sup>16</sup>

Thus by the opening years of Henry I's reign, a series of remarkable changes had begun to take hold – in the spread of a writing culture, the use of archives and documents, and the development of more formalized approaches to documentary legality. To put it briefly, the importance of written records was coming to be accepted through all levels of society.

#### TYPES OF DOCUMENTS

Between the Conquest and the beginning of the 1300s, the variety of records proliferated, primarily in the form of parchment or wood, if only later on paper.

Charters were used to safeguard property, generally in the form of public letters issued by donors. Chirographs, as already indicated, recorded agreements between two parties. Such agreements might have diverse objectives, including loans, marriage settlements, and matters of state, such as international treaties. Each party to an agreement received his own copy, along with the seal of the other party. Still another copy was consigned to an archive. Sometimes copies were cut in half so their alignments could be checked, if forgery were suspected or in any way proclaimed.<sup>17</sup>

Certificates were public statements by individuals, analogous in some ways to contemporary comments on Facebook. Such statements could include testimonials or announcements intended for public notice.

Letters were intended for posterity, composed in a certain style, though not necessarily directed to particular correspondents. Writs were forms of written command from one person to another, brief and straightforward, most commonly issued at the king's behest. Responses encompassed petitions to the king and assorted requests for redress. Memoranda of fines found their way into the pipe rolls of the exchequer, which kept track of the royal treasury or *fisc*. Such tied-together rolls of parchment included lists of pleas, hitherto communicated orally by the parties effected, that itinerant judges could consider in more orderly fashion as they completed their rounds.<sup>18, 19, 20</sup>

Detailed dialogues were found in year See *WRITTEN RECORDS*, page 4

books. These were reports of court cases containing comments made in court, the facts of a case, and points of law – usually in Latin or French, although litigants and lawyers may have spoken the local vernacular. Unlike plea rolls, which set out the procedural stages of cases, year books served as educational materials for law students and lawyers. Begun at the end of the 12th century as a continuing series of records, year books also provided a stimulus for continuous record-keeping in nonlegal informational contexts.<sup>21</sup>

Monastic houses kept their own series of chronicles, listing events throughout the year, including the actions of kings, notable deaths, and memoranda relating to the monastery. Because of the uncertainty of monastic property entitlements after the Conquest, especially during the civil wars following Henry I's reign, records were kept in the form of cartularies, which collected groups of documents in a single book. Cartularies were used to justify deed origins and property rights should any challenges be brought against them.<sup>22</sup>

Both the exchequer and chancery kept day-by-day registers of outgoing documents and royal letters.

Although many of the documents described were in the form of individual parchment rolls, increasingly documents were flat and bound between covers. These could be considered “books,” despite their containing at times a variety of unrelated materials. Unremarkably, a single bound selection could include learned discourses, cooking recipes, glossaries, and treatises.<sup>23</sup>

Books, in the sense we use the word today, were still uncommon, especially as owned by specific individuals. In the 13th century, a great scholar might have between 50 and 100 books. Church libraries, however, contained not only Bibles and liturgical works but histories and Latin classics. With the upsurge of Scholasticism in the 12th and 13th centuries came the *summa* (Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* is the illustrative example). Summae analyzed contrary statements, serving as encyclopedias of focused scholarly, theological, or legal issues, as well as authoritative, organized discourses on drafting charters, law court procedures, and financial accounting. Some books even began to display glosses – abbreviated scripts that commented on textual materials, most of them written in Latin.<sup>24</sup>

Books were expensive despite early univer-



Figure 5. English cursive documentary script, ca. 1300. Adoption of protogothic book hand incorporating quasi-cursive features for rapid writing. Newberry Library MS 147. Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

sities' need to supply reading materials to students at a relatively low price. Most of these books were in law or theology and not contemporary romances or belles-lettres. The book supplier had to receive approval from the university, which also set the price.<sup>25</sup> Although monasteries produced liturgical books, they were generally forbidden to copy and produce secular works such as law books. But because of the growing demand for secular texts, the two centuries immediately preceding the development of printing saw a notable increase in the number of independent booksellers.

Holy writing and liturgical books reflected the word of God. When we use the word script or scripture, we invoke a term that originally referred to such writings. Perhaps the most impressive of medieval records were the gospel books, psalters, texts of psalms, and the Book of Hours – many of these designed for the laity with brilliant illuminations. Such texts

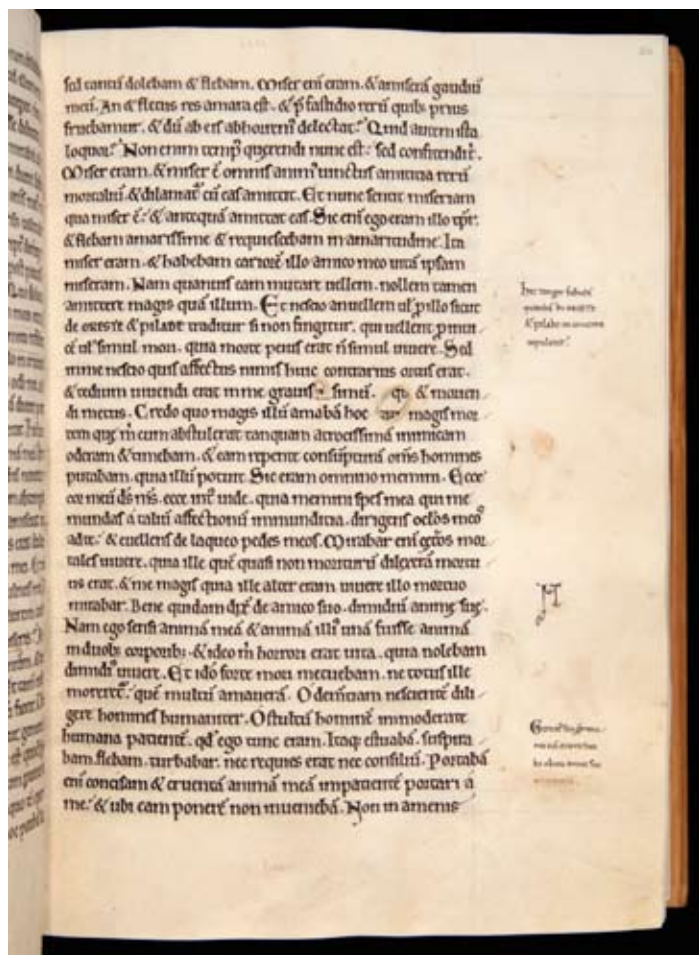


Figure 6. English protogothic book hand, 11th century. Derived from clarity of letter forms of Caroline minuscule. Newberry Library MS 12.7 fol. 22r. Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

became familiar from their repeated use in churches.<sup>26</sup> Well into the 13th century, increasing numbers of works were being written in vernacular languages, whether French or English, rather than in Latin. Nevertheless,

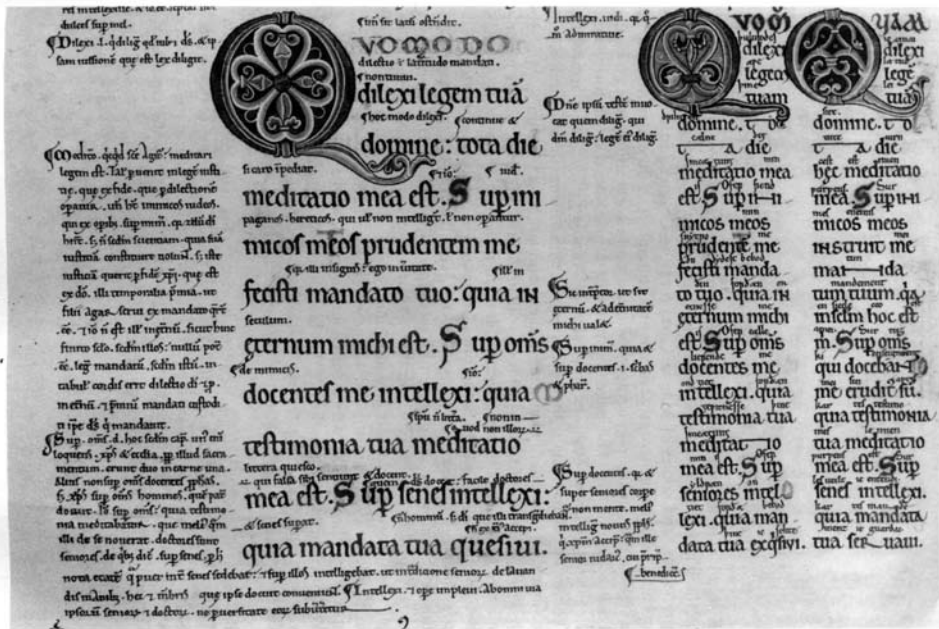


Figure 7. From the Canterbury Psalter demonstrating the main text with incorporated glosses in various types of minuscule. The main text is in book hand. From Plate XIV in M.T. Clanchy: Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307, Blackwell Publisher. With permission.

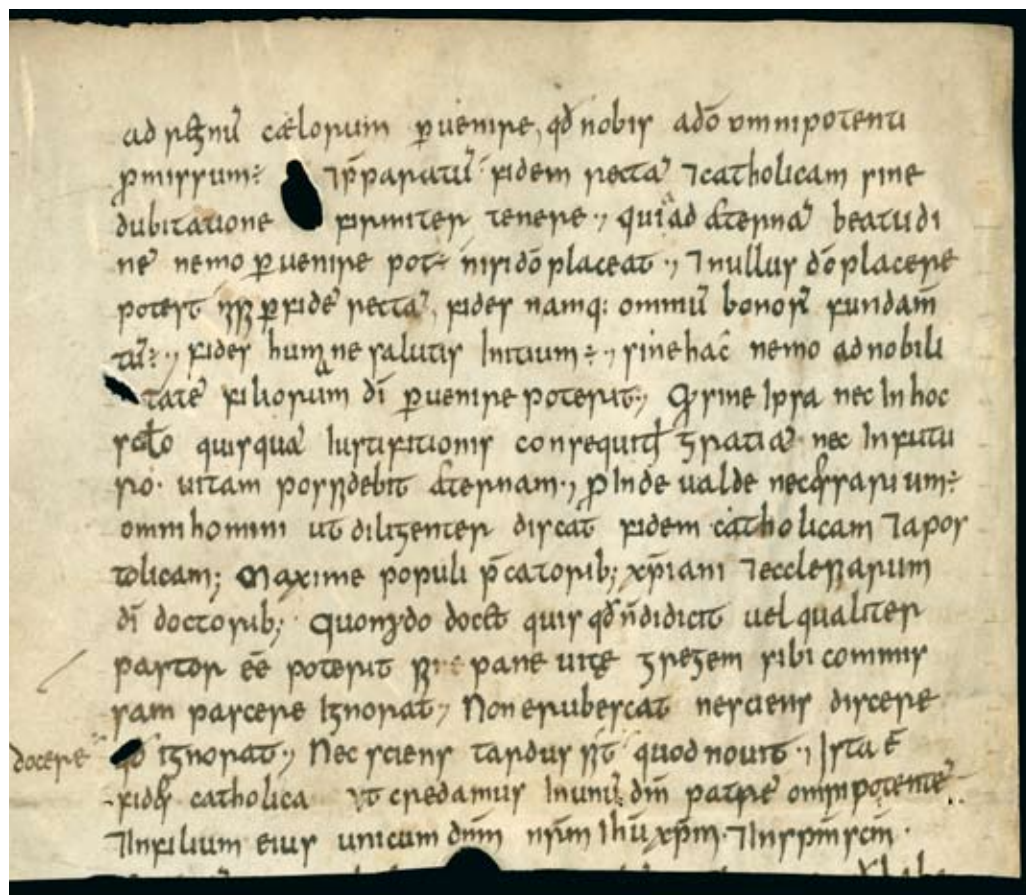


Figure 8. 7. Insular minuscule script from the 9th century in Latin from Anglo-Saxon England. Newberry Library MS 1.5 no. viii verso. Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

Latin prayers would remain in common usage well beyond this time frame.

### THE EFFORTS OF A SCRIBE

Among medieval schoolmen, scribes were

an especially venerated group; the Apostles were often depicted in illuminations as scribes [Figure 3]. Among the variety of skills they possessed was the ability to write on parchment. Before the 12th century, most scribes

were found in monasteries where manuscripts were collected. But with the ever-increasing numbers of royal letters and charters, monks began training scribes from the laity, who would ultimately be dispatched to work in the royal chancery or exchequer, as well as in local communities. Such scribes “from afar” might be used in monasteries for producing missals and books. Typically they developed skills in reading, writing, and comprehension, although transcriptions from existing records would not necessarily require an ability to understand the text. Even so, the basic ability to read was needed in order to transcribe dictation.

Scribes might also be expected to provide research on laws and other matters involving royalty and nobility. It helped if the scribe had a background in history, or was in fact a writer, such as a poet. Most commonly, scribes were of noble origin and would have acquired their skills in the libraries of religious abbeys.

With the rise of universities in the 13th century, guilds and workshops for scribes were instituted where writing materials would be available. Scribes at the universities might be clerks or students, and gradually more books were being produced outside the monasteries. Some scribes were women, usually nuns. In the royal chambers, as the demand for documents grew, scribes were required to write more rapidly, perhaps one of the reasons for gothic script eventually evolving into cursive. As many as 60 sharpened quills might be necessary when a scribe began his work.<sup>27, 28, 29</sup>

Suppose that you were a scribe for the king’s exchequer in the 12th century. Your efforts would first involve writing a draft, then producing a “fair copy,” then executing a permanent record. Your chair, perhaps elaborately carved, would likely sit alongside a tall writing desk. An official requesting a document might dictate a rough draft to you. Or he might provide you with sufficient information to produce the document required. As a scribe you’d be expected to demonstrate proficiency in writing,

paragraphing, spacing, capitalization, and glosses.

A scribe’s writing equipment typically included a wax tablet or a slip of parchment for the draft, a quill pen, penknife, inkhorn, various colored inks in receptacles, a regular knife or razor, pumice, and a goat’s or boar’s See WRITTEN RECORDS, page 6



Figure 9. Tally stick from the 14th century. The top writing indicates the party, with date on the side and county above the notch. Newberry Artifact 268. Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

WRITTEN RECORDS, from page 5

tooth; on damp days, there might even be a coal fire nearby. The tablet for preparing the draft, in the form of a diptych, would be of wood with a colored wax covering.<sup>30, 31, 32</sup>

Once the wax copy was finished, it might be shown to the patron or customer for approval, at which time the “fair copy” would be ready for writing on parchment. The parchment was specially lined. The scribe would prick small holes on the sides of the leaves to guide horizontal and vertical rulings. The parchment would be scraped with a knife and pumice to smooth it, with the animal’s tooth on hand to polish the gilding.<sup>33</sup>

A scribe would begin his writing task with quill pen in one hand and a penknife in the other to erase letters when necessary. Space had to be left on the draft for illuminations as well as the large lettering that was the special talent of illuminators. Rubricators, other than illuminators, were specialists at fashioning a script’s colored initials. [Figure 4] Hot coals would be used to dry the ink on damp days.<sup>34, 35</sup>

A scribe copying a manuscript would generally write down a word based on his memory of how the word was spoken, without any visual clues or images to guide him. In practice, this meant reading a few words aloud from an original source, then transcribing them from memory, a procedure that continued to the conclusion of the text.<sup>36</sup> Often the result of this approach was to change the spellings of words to have them conform with their vocalized usage.

Most manuscripts contained more than one text. Each text began with an opening title and ended with a concluding one. Latin manuscripts began with the word *Incipit* (it begins) and ended with the word *Explicit* (it unfolds).<sup>37</sup>

Transcribing dictation generally required rapidity, a reason for the change from “book hand” print to cursive in reproducing texts.

This came about in the 12th century, as speed became an increasingly important factor, especially for business correspondence and communication between royals. Book hand was symmetrical and closely written, whereas cursive was flowing and more free. It was sometimes called court script, deriving from the chancery where court scribes produced the majority of documents. [Figures 5, 6]<sup>38, 39</sup>

Book hand persisted into the 16th century when the printing press definitively replaced it. A special type of script, gloss hand – intermediate in form but smaller than book – was used for commentaries adjoining the text. Glosses were introduced in the 12th century as marginal comments, originally from the habit of medieval scholars of making explanatory notes in unused space. [Figure 7]<sup>40</sup>

A monk was not likely to employ a scribe “from afar,” since he himself would have been trained in a scriptorium. His own work tended to follow accepted standards of spelling and grammar because of his more fully rounded education. Also, a scribe who was merely a copyist would often be unfamiliar with specialized word definitions and concepts; as a result, his transcriptions would be neither as literate nor as knowledgeable as the monk himself could produce.<sup>41</sup>

#### ART AND TECHNOLOGY PRODUCING THE TEXT

Ancient Roman writing employed two common letterforms: capitals (as in inscriptions on walls) and a script more akin to what we would call “cursive.” During the period under consideration, both forms, in most parts of Europe, were gradually being replaced by Carolingian minuscule. [Figure 8] Unlike conventional Roman practice, however, words in medieval texts were inscribed separately from each other.<sup>42, 43</sup> (This topic lies outside the present article’s scope, though the world authority on it is fellow Caxtonian Paul Saenger. See the *Caxtonian* of December

2004 for a review of his seminal book, *Space Between Words*.)

The conversion of script to Carolingian minuscule was very important, and except for the tall s, the general forms of all its letters are still in use. This newer form of writing first appeared in the late 700s. The letters were easier to inscribe than capitals and easier to read than cursive. Abbreviations tended to be fewer, and the number of ligatures (letters joined together) was considerably reduced as compared with previous styles.<sup>44, 45</sup>

Still, in many cases, the recordkeeper, often of local provenance, used wood to produce what seemed at the time to offer a more permanent record than parchment. Wooden tallies were considered more convenient than parchment, both to make and to store. The expertise of the tally cutter was required to produce them, however, which developed into an area of subspecialization for ambitious craftsmen. Ironically, parchment records from the time have held up better than wooden ones, which are easily burned and subject to infestation by insects.<sup>46</sup> (Because it was typically inscribed with a pen, Carolingian minuscule was not used on wooden surfaces.)

Wooden tallies were rectangular and used in much the same way as chirographs – for records including receipts or payment obligations. [Figure 9] Notches representing value were cut into a rectangular wood piece, which then was split lengthwise down the center. Each party to the transaction received a section of the tally. The interlocking halves provided immediate evidence of forgery if they failed to line up properly. Tallies were the foundation of royal finance in the 12th century and ultimately were adapted for use by accountants in local administrative areas. They continued to be used in England as late as the early 19th century.<sup>47</sup>

Specialists produced parchment from sheepskin, though goat, rabbit, or squirrel might also be employed. Calfskin was so



Figure 10. English devotional roll ca. 1400 containing the Middle English Stations of Rome. Newberry Library MS 32. Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

desirable that it had its own name: vellum. Scraping could conceal the kind of skin being used, but without ever approaching the quality of vellum. Turning a skin into parchment required a thorough cleansing and removal of all remaining hair. After washing, the skin was dried on a frame to prevent shrinking. When thoroughly cleaned and dried, the fresh parchment was removed from its frame and cut into sheets. Each sheet was folded in half to form a bifolium. Several bifolds folded together in turn would then form a quire – the scribe’s basic unit of writing.<sup>48, 49, 50</sup> (The term eventually acquired a variety of meanings, sometimes referring simply to a convenient grouping of sheets, other times to 24 sheets specifically – or even occasionally 25!)

Until the beginning of the 14th century, paper in England was scarce and had to be imported. During the reign of Edward I, some paper records were sent from Italy to the king’s royal bankers, and early records in paper were made at seaports along the English coast.<sup>51</sup>

More extensive kinds of writing were done on parchment rolls or in books. Administrative bodies started using official rolls in the 12th century – though on the Continent, including the papacy, records of any importance were primarily stored in books.<sup>52</sup>

Introduced at the time of Henry I under the royal exchequer, pipe rolls were annual lists of accounts that became the prototype for government records in general. By the late 12th century, the exchequer commonly employed such rolls for record-keeping purposes. There was also the genre known as devotional rolls [Figure 10], and from the 13th century on, continuous rolls were used to record the history of English kings as well as the whole history of Britain from the (largely imaginary) time of the Trojans.<sup>53</sup> [Figure 1]

Aside from royal records, rolls were used for legal and managerial textbooks and by lay landowners who might otherwise be unfamiliar with books. On a lighter note, some rolls were used to demonstrate skills at language improvement. Rolls kept records of songs for minstrels, who would carry them around in their pouches. Such rolls could be quite extensive, up to two feet long<sup>54</sup> but no more than a few inches in width. Knights and minstrels and other laypersons used rolls that contained religious texts, inscribed in the vernacular rather than in Latin.<sup>55</sup>

Outside the king’s exchequer, rolls as records were employed by the chancery as well as itinerant justices, though most of these uses came only later. Nonetheless, an early roll exists from the late 11th century mandating

the obedience of bishops to the archbishop of Canterbury. In general, rolls were easy to store and convenient to send as messages.<sup>56</sup>

In synagogues, rolls were, and still are, the repositories of Jewish law. In the 12th century, Jews in England swore oaths “on the roll” as Christians might on a gospel book. In medieval illustrations, Christ figures conventionally hold a book, unless the Old Testament is being cited – in which case they’re given a roll!<sup>57, 58</sup>

The exchequer roll was known as a *rotulus*, meaning that words ran at right angles to the length rather than parallel to it, as was the case with scrolls. A single roll might consist of several parchment membranes stitched together, usually to a length of somewhat less than six feet. At the end of a year, account records collected from different areas of the kingdom would be piled on top of each other as secured by cords, or stitched head to tail in continuous length. Since membranes tended to be of different sizes, stitching them together was easier than piling them up.<sup>59, 60</sup>

Medieval books, as opposed to rolls, were composed of parchment folded into folios, producing leaves of several sizes – two large ones making four pages, four small ones eight. Books were bound between wooden boards, covered with leather, and sometimes encrusted with jewels. [Figure 11] Quires were sewn with needle and thread into supports attached to the book covers. [Figure 12]<sup>61, 62, 63</sup>

Originally large and rather bulky, books became noticeably smaller during the 13th century, with compressed script on thinner parchment leaves. One reason for the change was the increasing use of books by students and laypersons. Monks also found it easier to carry them around in pouches and to read from them for daily meditations. In other words, rather than being left on bookstands in elaborate display, books had started to become functional. Still, these smaller books – Bibles, textbooks manuals – were quite heavily ornamented. By the end of the 13th century, books were replacing rolls as records, especially as bishops’ registers, in order to conform to papal and continental practices. The books now being produced in English monasteries had fewer illuminations in proportion to text than their old Anglo-Saxon counterparts. The large increase in the absolute numbers of books, as well as the strengthening of their content – not to mention the amount of time expended in producing illuminations for them – goes a long way toward explaining the reasons for these changes.<sup>64, 65, 66</sup>

See WRITTEN RECORDS, page 8

The use of seals on documents became increasingly important for the authentication of records. [Figure 2] Seals were circular waxed disks embossed with the owner's identification and attached to the document by strips of parchment. The owner's name was engraved by hand on the seal template. From at least the 13th century, the authentication of property conveyances by laypersons had become commonplace. In fact, by the early 1300s, even serfs were using seals as a means of authentication.<sup>67, 68</sup>

### THE ORGANIZATION OF WRITING

Despite increasing secularization in England during the 12th century, permanent writing facilities for nonclerical persons were still possessed only by the king. The center for such activities as there were was the king's exchequer, actually a square table in London that was the seat of the treasury. Accounts were received and audited on large parchment pipe rolls and receipts recorded on wooden tallies. Organization of the treasury revolved around a clerk in charge of the scriptorium who sat at the exchequer's table alongside the treasurer. The scriptorium head supervised the scribes, who produced the writs and rolls. Some clerks were specialists of one or another kind, others simply writers, others still composers. Special scribes were sometimes employed by royal beneficiaries, presumably to compose drafts of the final "fair copy" or the final copy itself.<sup>69, 70</sup>

Nearby sat the chancellor's scribe who copied to the pipe roll for chancery, supervised by a chancery clerk. An archdeacon, part of whose job may have been to make certain that the treasurer stayed awake, supervised the pipe rolls.

Plea rolls and chancery rolls were introduced in the early 13th century under King John, with records of transactions now being placed in the treasury. Over the next century, the authentication, archival retention, and transcription of documents into rolls reached beyond the exchequer and chancery and out into the provinces, usually as pipe rolls stitched together to produce a long scroll. Eventually, by the end of the 13th century, such document registers were recorded in books.

The development of written documents spread gradually from the royal courts and monasteries to the laity. For example, a representative from the papal curia assigned to England received a £20 annuity from the king and the bishop of London. To insure the perpetuity of his annuity, the *curiale* needed



Figure 11. Book cover showing central boss of binding mounted over leather strap of the clasp mechanism. Newberry Library MS 64. Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

two charters from the king (initially Henry II) and his heir, two from the bishop, others from sheriffs and the exchequer, several official transcripts, and affirmations from papal ministers, with an additional letter to his agent.<sup>71, 72</sup>

Language varied in the undertaking of inquests, which often were issued in Latin after an initial draft in French. Replies to such inquiries, however, had to be done orally in the local vernacular. Responses on parchment were rarely written in English. Parchment was used primarily to indicate a permanent record, for which Latin was the appropriate language – the language of literacy.<sup>73, 74</sup>

During the 12th and 13th centuries, executive orders to sheriffs and bailiffs were increasingly put in writing. Letters from the king increased sixfold from the time of Henry I to Henry II's reign. This was part of the expansion in written records, with attestations by seal reaching out to all social classes, thereby anticipating the revolution that ultimately came with the invention of the printing press. By the early 14th century, under Edward I, royal writs were being distributed around the countryside. From the 11th through 14th centuries, charters as property titles spread from royalty and the monastic houses down to the knightly class and thereafter to the lay

population. Even serfs were sometimes required to have seals authenticating documents of property rights. By the early 14th century, documents had almost completely replaced the oral recollections of the old and learned to legitimize property claims.<sup>75, 76</sup>

The Domesday Book of the late 11th century set a standard for comprehensive surveys, despite rarely being consulted before the 13th century. By this later period Edward I had developed a *quo warranto* survey to record property rights. Both strategies served to distinguish the king's rights from those of his feudal subordinates. As with the Domesday survey, *quo warranto* administrators from each county had to list all towns, hamlets, and tenements to settle questions of ownership. Even so, at least till the beginning of Richard I's reign, exceptions were being made for properties conveyed by oral testament only.<sup>77</sup>

Edward was interested in what franchises or privileged jurisdictions some of the great landowners held,

particularly during the reign of his father, Henry III. Initially, written proof in the form of charters was requested, but eventually – because of strong resistance – the justices accepted other evidence of rights that had been exercised since the 100th anniversary of Domesday (i.e., 1189, as judges came to rule).<sup>78</sup>

### THE USE OF DOCUMENTS AND ARCHIVES

That parchment in contrast to papyrus allowed for a permanent, or at least long-lasting, record was not lost on medieval administrators, monastics, and scribes. Many parchment documents were for remembrances in perpetuity or addressed to God rather than to contemporaries. Monastic documents reflected the best light on a situation and not necessarily the reality. Charters could be created *de novo* to alter a conveyance in the most acceptable terms. Such charters could thus support legal claims on property.<sup>79</sup>

As indicated previously, the Domesday Book was initially not very often consulted; it was considered a document of remembrance, similar in that sense to the monastic concept of records. Archiving documents for practical or regular use began with the reign of Henry I. Pipe rolls were repositories for writs authoriz-





Figure 12. Quires sewn into the supports of a book. Newberry Library MS 37.4. Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

ing expenditures but only infrequently were consulted as records. Books were considered precious objects, and important items were often emplaced inside liturgical volumes. Jews used the leaves of prayer books for recording memoranda, frequently in Arabic with Hebrew lettering. Charters would be inserted in sacred books, as also in shrines. Although some liturgical books might be hidden away in monasteries, others were located more conveniently – in a cloister chest, for example – for private reading by monks.<sup>80, 81, 82</sup>

Some royal documents were kept in multiple locations for reasons of security. Copies of Henry II's will were stored in three different places: Canterbury, the Winchester treasury, and in the king's own possession. Archival storage of royal records was introduced in the late 11th century, initially in various churches.<sup>83</sup>

With the proliferation of records and books, libraries began to emerge as places for book storage. Also at about the same time, the monastic cataloging of books began. At first, such catalogs did not indicate the locations of the items described and were intended primarily for the librarian's use. In the late 13th century, Dominican friars instituted what can be thought of as an operational library. A librarian was responsible for the safekeeping of stored volumes, with knowledge of their location by subject; for keeping them secure and waterproof; and for ensuring adequate ventilation. Books most commonly used were kept chained in a reference section, whereas those in less common usage could be loaned out with the loaner's name recorded. One important task of the librarian was issuing a book to each of the supporting monastery's friars on the first Monday in Lent. For the next year each friar was expected to read passages from the book to himself, speaking the words aloud and contemplating their meaning.<sup>84, 85, 86</sup>

Unlike friars and monastic houses, the king did not own many books. King John was the first British monarch to use books after the Norman Conquest, and subsequent kings typically would display little more than a smattering of liturgical texts and popular romances.<sup>87</sup>

The government's first central archive may

have been the Winchester treasury, which held the Domesday survey from the time of William I. Documents were later removed and disbursed in portable chests among the royal palaces, the Tower of London, and assorted hunting lodges and fortresses. But Domesday, the exchequer, and charters stayed in Winchester. The initial definition of thesaurus referred to the treasures kept within these chests. During Henry III's reign, documents began to be stored in archives at Westminster, the Tower of London, and the New Temple (the London home of the Knights Templar). Since the main archival custodians were Templars, concerns over adequate archiving and security after the order's dissolution by papal decree in 1312 led to the creation of a central repository for documents, the White Chapel in the Tower of London, in 1320. In the hinterlands, some archiving might also have been done by local sheriffs, who often were entrusted with collections of rolls.<sup>88, 89, 90</sup>

During the 13th century, royal archiving was not so well organized as to allow rapid access to documents, other than those of recent origin whose date of issue was known. Documentary searches were generally limited to those affecting property claims or litigation that involved the royal court. Some information was accessible from the religious houses in cartularies and chronicles, since monasteries were always watchful about royal court proceedings. For example, one book of monastic records from the 13th century comprised a collection of 90 official documents, including pipe rolls, commentary on Domesday, and writs and pleas from the reign of Edward I.<sup>91</sup>

Books from this period seldom had tables of contents, and their users would try to memorize the locations of various sections from the lettering and ornament on the pages. For example, the image of an index finger pointing toward a specific location quickly allowed the reader to find his place. By the early 14th century, indices had begun to be alphabetized. Still, medieval elites considered alphabetizing incompatible with their traditional sense of hierarchy. (This view would be prevalent for centuries. As late as the 1700s,

Yale College listed students not by alphabetical order but by the status of their families.) However, the Franciscan and Dominican houses developed alphabetical systems for the documents in their care.<sup>92, 93</sup>

## THE USE OF LANGUAGE

In 13th century England, as indicated previously, four different languages were variously in use; these were, in order of written importance (and excluding oral vernaculars like Cornish and Welsh), Latin, French, English, and Hebrew. French was the oral language of the gentry and the royal court. Latin was the language of literacy and learning, as well as much of the written record. Forms of Latin varied, from the simple Latin of monastics, to the ornate, antiquarian forms of the rhetoricians, to the precise legal language of Domesday and Magna Carta, to the songs of wandering minstrels. Outside the gentry, Old English was predominantly spoken, though far less frequently written down. Hebrew was mainly confined to Jews, who, before their official expulsion a century later, began to arrive in the 1100s. Even so, several noted Christian biblical scholars were competent in Hebrew, including Roger Bacon. Knights and landowners primarily wrote in French, whereas scholars, monastics, and members of the royal administration typically employed Latin.<sup>94, 95, 96</sup>

In the late 12th century, the language of literary aspiration had been French. It was the language of contemporary romances (a usage that derives from the word's etymological roots rather than popular passions). Although vernacular authors were considered vulgar, and often apologized in their writings for using French instead of Latin, Henry II nonetheless commissioned histories of England and France in French. The Plantagenet son of Geoffrey of Anjou, Henry straddled the English Channel as king of England and count of Anjou; as with the first line of kings following the Conquest, he retained loyalties to both England and France.<sup>97, 98</sup>

Latin continued as the language of literacy, but inroads were being made by French as well as English. Between the 11th and 13th centuries, an English king wishing to contact an official outside London would have spoken French to his commissioners, who were predominantly appointees from Norman France, have his spoken message written down in Latin, then have the Latin version read out to the official in English. In courtroom proceed-

See *WRITTEN RECORDS*, page 10

ings, the chief clerk would read out presentations in French (translating the writ from Latin as he read), which a spokesman then would translate into English for the jurors. Thus there was a considerable disconnect between what might be done orally and what had to be submitted in written form.<sup>99, 100</sup>

Beginning in the mid-1200s, French began to replace Latin in writs and petitions. From late century on, court year books recorded conversations in French. Romantic literature was written in French, frequently under a great lady's commission and typically concerning a quest in some talismanic location that would most often be Celtic. The common language of the people continued to be Old English, but written language derived mainly from monastic and royal authority and the social status of its writers and readers.<sup>101</sup>

The Magna Carta (1215) was officially issued in Latin, but following a baronial rebellion

in the middle of the century, proclamations were sent out in the king's name in English and French as well as Latin. Notwithstanding, Latin did not disappear. The Latin mass persisted, as did Latin and French phrases in law records. And in medicine, many of the old Latin terms remained unchanged.<sup>102</sup>

#### SUMMARY

The revolution in writing between the 11th and 14th centuries in England consisted primarily of the establishment of permanent written records and archives, as well as the dissemination of writing to all levels of society. This became the runway for the eventual emergence of printing. Although traditional techniques of medieval writing and recording largely disappeared with the invention of the printing press, with paper replacing traditional parchment, wooden tallies continued to be used in England till the early 19th century, and calligraphy on parchment has persisted as an

art form until the present day. Nor can we forget the exchange of rings between partners at a wedding, which provides a continuing symbol of what human promises and vows can mean.

§§

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## CAXTON ON THE MOVE:

# What lucky Caxtonians will see in Iowa City

Chef Szathmary's collection, zines, vaudeville, book arts, and extensive personal libraries in law and medicine

### *Szathmary Culinary Manuscripts*

Former Caxtonian Louis Szathmary, who died in 1996, along with his wife Sada, collected more than 20,000 culinary items and over 100 German, Czech, Irish, English, and American manuscript recipe books. Among the miscellaneous items is a group of manuscripts related to food that were written by Nelson Algren!

Szathmary immigrated to the United States from Hungary in 1951 and started working as a short-order cook. In 1959, he moved to Chicago to work for Armour & Company where he developed frozen food lines for Stouffer's and other frozen food makers. From 1963 to 1989 he operated his own very successful restaurant called "The Bakery."

The collection at Iowa includes an inventory of the manuscripts compiled by Chef Szathmary and his assistants and preserves Szathmary's distinctive voice as well as indications of his interest in each item. Descriptions of similar materials acquired by the University of Iowa Libraries after Szathmary's original gift have been added to the inventory.

### *Zines and Fanzines*

The collection of zines and fanzines at Iowa is among the best in the world. It is too large to count and too wayward to describe completely or even summarily, but is indexed in 25 separate collection guides. It occupies over 600 feet of shelf space.

The term "zine" (derived from the word "fanzine") refers to a small, often informal, and always nonprofessionally produced publication. Other common characteristics include small edition size, distribution via subscription or informal personal connections, and an underlying rationale that stresses free expression over profit.

These zines have been acquired by Special Collections at various times and from various donors. The zines cover a wide variety of subjects and concerns. Many are perzines, that is, "personal" zines that describe the author's own experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Others are anthologies of stories or poetry or consist of comic or other types of art. Still other zines are designed as outlets for political or social expression. Many encompass more than one type or style, reflecting the fluidity of the zine as a product of creative endeavor.



*Miniature printed bible in Special Collections, University of Iowa.*

### *Keith / Albee Vaudeville Collection*

Benjamin Franklin Keith and Edward Franklin Albee became partners in the late 1880s to produce a brand of "high class" vaudeville. Crude remarks and risqué costumes were censored from performances, and the two even attempted to prohibit rude behavior by audiences. Keith was the financial head of the circuit, while Albee was the general manager and owner of several theaters. The collection primarily details vaudeville programming in Rhode Island between 1894 and 1935, but it includes a unique series of managers' reports

### *Artists' Books and the Iowa Center for the Book*

The university has one of the largest academic collections of artists' books in its Special Collections Library and also has an MFA degree-granting program in the book arts. The Center for the Book is a unique program that conjoins training in the technique and artistry of bookmaking with research into the history and culture of books. The center is staffed by artists, scholars, critics, and craftworkers and has dedicated studios in letterpress printing. See *IOWA VISIT*, page 12

*A corner in Arthur Bonfield's private library of early printed books.*





At work in the letterpress shop at the Center for the Book.

IOWA VISIT, from page 11

bookbinding, and papermaking.

During the trip the Center for the Book will have installed the thesis exhibition for the spring MFA graduates. This year the show will include work by two Caxton Club grant recipients, Matt Runkle and Candida Pagan.

*Private Library: Professor Arthur E. Bonfield*

Arthur Bonfield is the Allan D. Vestal Chair and Associate Dean Emeritus of the Iowa Law School, and has an extensive personal library, which he describes below:

“During the last 55 years I have collected about 1,000 volumes printed and published between 1492 and 1800. A very large portion of these books are folios or large quartos because of my perhaps-irrational love of large books. My collecting has focused on several subjects, primarily but not exclusively, in the following areas: books in the English language, books published in England, and books about England or the English. The subjects include: voyages, travels, explorations, and geographies; dictionaries of the arts and sciences; chronicles or histories; political philosophy; and herbals. Some examples of books I own are the 1589 and 1599 first and second editions of Hakluyt’s collection of voyages, the follow-up Samuel Purchas 1625 collection of voyages, Sebastian Munster’s Latin 1554 *Cosmography* and 1552 Ptolemy, Ramusio’s 1563 collection of voyages in Italian, Philemon Holland’s first English edition of Camden’s *Britannia* 1610, Montanus’ *America in Dutch* 1671, and Ogilby’s *China and Africa* 1669 and 1670; the 1493 Latin *Nuremburg Chronicle*; John Harris’ *Lexicon Technicum* (said to be the first English alphabetic encyclopedia), Ephraim Chambers *Cyclopaedia* 1728, Diderot’s French *Encyclopedia*, 1751, and the first, second, and third editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1771, 1778, 1797; Gerard’s herbal of 1597; the first and second

editions of Holinshed’s *Chronicle of England, Scotland, and Ireland* 1577 and 1586, and the first English edition of Froissart’s *Chronicle* translated by Lord Berners 1525.”

*John Martin Rare Book Room*

John Martin (1904 - 1996) was born in Keithsburg, Illinois, and received his Bachelor of Science degree from the Lewis Institute of Chicago in 1930. He attended Northwestern University Medical School earning his MS in 1934 and his MD the following year. He went on to study neurophysiology and received a PhD in 1941. He came to the University of Iowa as a clinical professor of surgery at the College of Medicine in 1978. He published some 50 scientific papers and gave over 75 presentations on subjects ranging from anatomy to clinical neurology and neurosurgery.

Dr. Martin began collecting rare and valuable medical books in 1947. His first purchase was a first edition of Andreas Vesalius’ *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, published in 1543. He continued to collect these books whenever he could afford to do so and often when he could not. In 1971 he gave his collection to the University of Iowa.

This collection constitutes the core of the John Martin Rare Book Room in the Hardin Library for the Health Sciences, which contains nearly 6,500 volumes of original works representing classic contributions to the history of the health sciences from the 15th through 21st centuries. The collection numbered over 3,000 entries at the time of Dr. Martin’s death and continues to grow thanks to his generous endowment. He considered this collection as the work for which he would be remembered as making a difference. Dr. Martin died in Iowa City, Iowa, at the age of ninety-one.

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## CAXTON ON THE MOVE: *Iowa City: Practical Matters*

**Thursday April 30**

OPTIONAL SIDE TRIP...

National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library  
1400 Inspiration Place SW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

This is the leading American institution collecting, exhibiting, and preserving Czech and Slovak history and culture, and its own story embodies the themes of our April Symposium on conservation. In 2008 a disastrous flood sent eight feet of water through its museum and library, but the institution has recovered through the assistance of the Chicago Conservation Center and the University of Iowa Libraries’ Conservation Lab. Its building has been moved back from the Cedar River, elevated and expanded to hold a variety of treasures including the largest collection of folk costumes ( *kroje* ) outside Slovakia and the Czech Republic with some dating to the 16th century. There is plenty to see if you arrive early including a new exhibit, “Beer, Please,” exploring the rich history of Bohemian brewing.

**2:00 PM.** Dave Muhlena, Director of the Library, will conduct a behind-the-scenes tour of the Museum’s library and discuss its remarkable collection and conservation challenges.

Cost: \$8 for our group members, payment at the door to the museum but we will need your preregistration so they know whom to expect.

### THE IOWA CITY ADVENTURE

*Staying overnight:*

Hotel Vetro, 210 S. Linn Street, Iowa City  
Phone 800-592-0355

2 queen beds or one king bed at \$149 per night

Mention the Caxton Club to receive this rate. We are also being offered a \$10 breakfast coupon (regularly \$13) for those who wish a full breakfast.

**6:30 PM.** Cocktails and dinner at the Motley Cow Cafe, an easy walk from our hotel. Our assembled group will be joined by some of our many Iowa friends. View menu at [www.motleycowcafe.com](http://www.motleycowcafe.com).

### Friday, May 1

**9:00 AM.** Tour of Special Collections Library

**12:30 PM.** Box lunch at Special Collections with our University of Iowa tour guides.

Boxed lunch (your choice of sandwich; preorder required):

Turkey breast, Roma tomato, swiss cheese, avocado on pain au levain with fresh fruit salad.

Zucchini, yellow squash, roasted sweet peppers, eggplant, Roma tomato, swiss cheese, and pesto on olive bread with fresh fruit salad.

Roast beef, provolone cheese, roasted peppers, tomato on sourdough with fresh fruit salad.

Bottled water

1:30 PM. Tour of the Iowa Center for the Book and MFA Exhibition

Mid-afternoon coffee and cookies.

5:00 PM. Return to hotel.

6:30 PM. Iowa City Gathering of Book Lovers Dinner at Joseph's Steakhouse, 212 S. Clinton Street, near our hotel.

Appetizers: Bruschetta and cheese plate

First Course: Choice of seafood bisque, French onion soup, or house salad (with choice of dressing)

Main Course: Choice of beef tenderloin, wild King salmon, prime rib, or mushroom tortellini

Family style sides of creamed spinach and Boursin potatoes

Dessert: Choice of key lime pie or carrot cake

Menu as shown is included in the trip price. Wine service included in the meal. Cocktails are available at an additional charge.

## Saturday, May 2

9:00 AM. Bus to John Martin Rare Book Room, Hardin Library for Health Sciences.

12:30 PM. Bus to lunch at Stella, Iowa City. Online menu [www.stellaiowacity.com](http://www.stellaiowacity.com).

2:00 PM. Bus to Arthur Bonfield home to tour his private collection.

5:00 PM. Return to the hotel\*

\*This concludes the official On the Move event, but we do have hotel rooms available at the Caxton rate for those wishing to stay Saturday night in Iowa City.

Cost for this event which includes the box lunch in the library, the Iowa City Gathering of Book Lovers Dinner, and bus transportation to the Saturday events: \$150.00 per person.

Reservations are required with advance payment no later than 21 April.

Send to: Jackie Vossler: 401 E. Ontario, #3601, Chicago, IL 60611. 312-266-8825. [jv.everydaydesign@rcn.com](mailto:jv.everydaydesign@rcn.com)

All checks made payable to the Caxton Club.



Zine display.

# And don't forget the 2015 Symposium on the Book Preserving the Evidence: The Ethics of Book and Paper Conservation Friday, April 17, and Saturday, April 18.

The Caxton Club, the Bibliographical Society of America, and the Newberry Library will host a two-day symposium on the current state of conservation ethics. It will kick off Friday morning with small group tours by bus for members and guests. Friday evening will be a gathering of book lovers, offering the chance to meet and dine with members of other clubs and the symposium speakers. **Friday events require reservations and advance payment.** The Saturday program is free and open to the public, and no reservations are required, except for the optional boxed lunch. *Details below.*

## FRIDAY, APRIL 17

We will tour four Chicago conservation centers for behind-the-scenes looks at the challenges and projects facing each of these institutions and the approaches they have taken to solve them. We will visit the Conservation Center at the Art Institute, the University of Chicago, the Graphic Conservation Company, and the Newberry. Our tour will be followed by an evening social gathering at the Newberry.

### Bus Tour, 8:30-4:45

8:30-9:00. Meet at the Newberry for departure. Bus leaves promptly at 9:00 AM.

9:30-11:00. Tour the Conservation Center at the Art Institute of Chicago.

11:45-1:00. Break and box lunch at the University of Chicago.

*The box lunch is included with the bus tour. See the March Caxtonian or the website for menu details.*

1:00-2:15. Tour the conservation lab at the University of Chicago's Mansueto Library.

2:45-4:00. Tour the facilities at the Graphic Conservation Company, conserving and restoring works on paper for museums, historical societies and private clients.

4:45. Arrive at the Newberry for a tour of the conservation department. Tours will continue throughout the social hour so that others joining us only for dinner can participate.

*Cost for the bus tour and lunch is \$68 per person. Space is limited. Please note that due to the number of stops, parking logistics, and time schedule, all participants must travel by bus. We have arranged for a kneel-down bus to allow easy access. Please make your reservation and lunch selection by phone or e-mail with Jackie Vossler and send payments to Jackie Vossler's address below. Payments for this event must be received by April 8.*

## Evening Gathering of Book Lovers

*For members of the Caxton Club, the Newberry, BSA, our symposium speakers, and guests*

Location: the Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, IL 60610.

5:30-6:30. Social hour, cocktails \$5.

During the social hour, Newberry staff will lead tours of the library's conservation lab.

6:30. Welcoming remarks.

6:45. Buffet dinner.

*Cost for the Evening Gathering is \$60 per person. Reservations and advance payment are required and must be received by April 13.*

## SATURDAY, APRIL 18

### Preserving the Evidence: The Ethics of Book and Paper Conservation

*Sponsored by Caxton Club / Bibliographical Society of America / Newberry Library*

8:30-3:00. The Newberry, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, IL 60610

FREE and OPEN to the PUBLIC

Experts in the book world will address a broad range of ethical issues confronting collectors of books, manuscripts, maps, and other works on paper or parchment. Speakers will also outline the challenges of preserving the evidence of our past, sometimes in the face of conflicting interests of buyers, sellers, scholars and other readers, binders, curators, and conservators.

8:30-9:00. Coffee and juice.

9:15-9:30. Opening comments.

9:30-10:40. Session 1.

Keynote Speaker: **Jeanne Drewes**, Library of Congress, "Should It Stay or Should It Go? Critical Decisions for America's National Patrimony."

**Marcia Reed**, Getty Research Institute, "To Have and/or to Hold: Conservators and Curators Communicating as Long Term Partners."

10:40-10:50. Break.

10:50-11:20. Session 2.

**Sherelyn Ogden**, Minnesota Historical Society, "Cultural Heritage Preservation: Conservations at a Crossroads."

11:30-12:30. Lunch break.

Join the speakers and panelists with a prearranged box lunch, or lunch on own.

*See the March Caxtonian or the website for menu details.*

12:45-1:15. Session 3.

**Michele Cloonan**, Simmons College, "Education for Preservation and Conservation"

1:20-2:45. Panel discussion

"Ethics in the Marketplace for Books." **Bruce McKittrick**, principal, Bruce McKittrick Rare Books, Philadelphia; **Paul Ruxin**, Chicago collector; **Scott Kellar**, Chicago book binder and conservator; **Russ Maki**, principal, Graphic Conservation Co., Chicago.

2:45-3:00. Closing comments.

*All reservations and payments for both days should be sent to:*

Jackie Vossler  
401 E. Ontario #3601, Chicago, IL 60611  
312-266-8825

[jv.everydaydesign@rcn.com](mailto:jv.everydaydesign@rcn.com)  
*Checks should be payable to Caxton Club.*

CAXTONIAN, APRIL 2015

# Book- and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by Lisa Pevtzow

(Note: on occasion an exhibit may be delayed or extended; it is always wise to call in advance of a visit.)

Northwestern  
Block  
Museum /  
Modernity  
TOULOUSE-  
LAUTREC, L'ANGLAIS  
AU MOULIN,  
ARISTIDE BRUANT.  
COLLECTION OF  
ANDRA AND IRWIN  
PRESS



**Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-443-3600:** “**Burning the Night: Baroque to Contemporary Mezzotints from the Collection**” (mezzotint prints, books with mezzotint illustrations, and other works on paper from the permanent collection from the 17th century to the 20th century), through May 31. “**Eldzier Cortor Coming Home: Recent Gifts to the Art Institute**” (words by Chicago printmaker and member of the Harlem Renaissance), through May 31. “**Spreading Devotion: Japanese and European Religious Prints**” (explores the rich printed traditions fostered by devotional practices in the East and West), April 4 to June 21.



Chicago Botanic / *Orchidelirium*  
CATALEYA DOWIANA.

**Chicago Botanic Garden, Lenhardt Library, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-8202:** “**Orchidelirium**” (illustrated Orchidaceae), through April 19. “**Keep Growing**” (Chicago Horticultural Society’s 125 anniversary exhibition), April 25 to August 16.

**Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago, 312-266-2077:** “**Railroaders: Jack Delano’s Homefront Photography**” (the federal Office of War Information assigned photographer Jack Delano to take pictures of the nation’s railways during World War II), through June 10.

**Columbia College Center for Book and Paper Arts, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, 312-269-6630:** “**Simultaneous: Seripop and Sonnenzimmer**” (Chicagoans Nick Butcher and Nadine Nakanishi and Montréal-based Yannick Desranleau and Chloe Lum exhibit screen-printed work that investigates the relationship between fabric and paper), through April 11.

**Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State Street, Chicago, 312-747-4300:** “**Journey to Empowerment: 110 Years of the Chicago Defender**” (images and memorabilia that show the impact of journalism on the African American community), through June 28.

**Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, 312-943-9090:** “**Love on Paper**” (collection items, from proclamations and pictures to cynical put-downs and comical send-ups of love), through April 4.

**Northwestern University Block Museum, 40 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, 847-491-4000:** “**Toulouse-Lautrec Prints: Art at the Edges of Modernity**” (posters, illustrated books, theater programs, privately circulated portfolios from the last decade of Toulouse-Lautrec), through April 19.

**Northwestern University Library, 1970 Campus Drive, Evanston, 847-491-7658:** “**William Hogarth’s Modern Moral Subjects: A Harlot’s Progress and A Rake’s Progress**” (prints from an 1822 edition of Hogarth’s works), ongoing.

**Oriental Institute of Chicago, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, 773-702-9520:** “**A Cosmopolitan City: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Old Cairo**” (documents and artifacts from Old Cairo’s multi-cultural society, 7th to 12th centuries AD), through September 13.

**Pritzker Military Museum and Library, 104 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, 312-374-9333:** “**SEAL The Unspoken Sacrifice**” (features photographs from Stephanie Freid-Perenchio and Jennifer Walton’s 2009 book and artifacts on loan from the Navy SEAL Museum), ongoing.

**University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library Special Collections Research Center Exhibition Gallery, 1100 E. 57th Street, Chicago, 773-702-8705:** “**Closeted/Out in the Quadrangles: A History of LGBTQ Life at the University of Chicago**” (examines the range of experiences lived by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer students and faculty on the University of Chicago campus), through June 12.

**University of Illinois at Chicago, Richard J. Daley Library Special Collections, 801 S. Morgan, Chicago, 312-996-2742:** “**Visualizing Uncle Tom’s Cabin: Pictorial Interpretations of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Novel**” (representations of the characters and events in various editions of the book, film stills, and posters, and other popular culture artifacts), through April 30.

**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, 346 Main Library, 1408 W. Gregory Drive, Urbana, 217-333-3777:** “**A Nation in Tears: 150 Years After Lincoln’s Death**” (books, photographs, documents, and other artifacts related to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and its aftermath), through May 4.

Send your listings to [lisa.pevtzow@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lisa.pevtzow@sbcglobal.net)

University of Chicago / *Closeted/Out*  
COUPLES AT WEDDSTOCK 1992.



# Caxtonians Collect: Robin Rider

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

Robin Rider's path from Cheyenne, Wyoming, to Madison, Wisconsin, involved learning a lot and having a lot of fun in the Bay Area of California. It happened this way:

She was born and raised in Cheyenne. "It was a great place to grow up," she says. "It was small enough to feel safe and comfortable, but large enough to have some interesting things going on." Cheyenne is the state capital, and it has a major air force base. She was the child and grandchild of jobbing printers and owners of small weekly newspapers, so printing and graphic arts were always in the picture. But she also intuited that there were bigger worlds out there, where she could learn more than was available in Cheyenne.

So she applied to and was accepted at Stanford. Though she majored in mathematics, she managed to take courses from many different departments while earning her BS. When she migrated across the bay to Berkeley, she studied first in the mathematics department, where she earned her master's. She also worked at the Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley's special collections library. There she ran into and fell in love with the artifacts of the history of science. Something about studying a great scientist's work in original manuscripts or printed copies that appeared during his lifetime made a difference.

Universities do not all agree in which department the history of science should be taught. Some put it in history (Berkeley, for example) and some put history experts in each of the science departments. As a result, Rider's PhD was minted by the history department at Berkeley, resulting in a string of degrees that reads mathematics, mathematics, and then history. It looks a bit surprising on her c.v.

A happy opportunity opened at the Bancroft in 1981, a year after she had received her PhD: they sought a new head of the History of Science and Technology Program (it was by then about ten years old) at the Bancroft and she was offered the position, an appointment that did not require a library degree. She stayed for a dozen years, helping to expand and promote the Bancroft's collections while deepening her understanding of both libraries and the history of science.

The 70s and 80s were a heady time to be in Berkeley. "There was always something going on," she says, referring not only to politics but to such things as food, art, and music. Her

peers in the programs there have gone on to populate the management of much in American intellectual life.

In 1993, she reversed her direction of Bay travel, and went back to Stanford to work in Special Collections with an adjunct teaching appointment in the Program for the History and Philosophy of Science. She moved eastward in 1996 to take an appointment as a triple threat at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where she remains today. She is not only Curator of Special Collections, but also has a teaching appointment in the Department of History of Science, and is bibliographer for the history of science. (Strictly speaking, she had only the first two positions upon arrival; they waited a few years to add her bibliographer's duties.) UW-Madison has a vigorous tradition of scholarship in the history of science, reinforced by strong library collections, as displayed at last year's symposium there co-sponsored by the Caxton Club and the Bibliographical Society of America.

So her present job is a pleasant combination of administration, collection building, and teaching, with a little research on the side. Right now the research topic that most interests her is the intersection between 18th-century scientific authors and the publishers they worked with. She located in a Paris library a French mathematical manuscript with markings she believes show the intent of the author as well as the instructions of an owner or master printer for the compositor who was going to do the typesetting.

During this period, there were widely varying levels of sophistication in the results produced, depending, one imagines, upon the materials available to the printer and his own expertise. One book, produced by a specialized printer, might almost be as "perfect" to the modern eye as anything achieved by current

phototypesetting, while another, produced by a more general printer, might create the mathematical sign for *less than* by rotating a capital V to point left. The best indication of the care taken, however, is in the spacing: most printers of the period had most of the required symbols, but not all managed to place the symbols correctly in relation to the others. It goes without saying that the compositor himself rarely had any idea of the full meaning of equations.

Rider sees a bright future for special collections on the academic scene, even as general library collections face economic and physical pressure. Older materials, when analyzed physically, tell stories beyond the words of the text. She can also picture the usefulness of "special collections" – a person's or organization's assembly of materials around a topic – even when the monetary value of the books doesn't merit locking them behind special doors. A good example might be textbooks: a series of textbooks on a single topic over

the years may teach a great deal about changing concepts in a field.

She also sees more cooperation as inevitable and desirable. At Wisconsin, that means working within the University of Wisconsin System and as part of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), an academic consortium consisting of the Big Ten universities plus the University of Chicago. Often the agreement to allow a single institution to be the main repository for materials on a subject will develop informally, but other times it will be the result of careful multi-institutional planning.

And most special collections libraries will continue to rely on both outside and in-house expertise to help with the frequently complex problems their materials pose. Conservation of paper materials will remain a problem. But libraries, individually and in concert, will also continue to wrestle with challenges presented by "born digital" assets, which must somehow remain accessible as technologies change.

Robin joined the Club in 2014.

§§



photograph by Robert McCamant



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# CAXTONIAN

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## Bookmarks...

No Luncheon in April!  
Attend the Symposium on April 18 instead.  
Better yet, add the tour on April 17.

Our annual Symposium returns to the Newberry this year, as it does in all odd-numbered years. This time, the topic is "The Ethics of Book and Paper Conservation," and the speakers include Jeanne Drewes of the Library of Congress, Marcia Reed of the Getty Research Institute, and Michele Cloonan of Simmons College. A concluding panel includes Bruce McKittrick, Paul Ruxin, Scott Kellar, and Russ Maki. Saturday (April 18) is **without charge and open to the public, no reservations required**, though if you wish a box lunch (instead of going out to lunch) you will need to reserve.

For those who can spare time on Friday, there are two additional opportunities: an all-day bus tour will take you to see conservation in action at the Art Institute, the University of Chicago Library, and Graphic Conservation Company. The day will cost \$68 and requires reservations. Then on Friday evening, there will be a social hour and dinner at the Newberry Library (including a tour of the Newberry's conservation facilities) for \$60. See page 13 for instructions on how to reserve – you must do so by Monday, April 13.

See the March Caxtonian for absolutely complete details, or page 13 for slightly abbreviated information. If you have misplaced your March Caxtonian, it's here: [caxtonclub.org/reading/2015/mar15.pdf](http://caxtonclub.org/reading/2015/mar15.pdf)

### Beyond April...

#### MAY LUNCHEON

Our tastes in documents run to rare. But if we really had our druthers, we'd love our documents to be in the OKCC, which stands for Only Known Copy Club. On May 8, James M. Cornelius, curator of the Lincoln Collection at the Lincoln Library and Museum in Springfield, will reveal OKCC materials and regale us with their stories.

#### MAY DINNER

On May 20 at the Union League Club, Christopher de Hamel, of Corpus Christi College at the University of Cambridge, will speak on "Coella Lindsay Ricketts materials from the Lilly Library."

#### JUNE LUNCHEON

On June 12 you'll be taken on a lavishly illustrated journey to the inner sanctum of the special collections at the Chicago Public Library. Caxtonian Glenn Humphreys, who serves as head of rare books and manuscripts at special collections, will reveal the origins, holdings; and unexpected treasures that lie within.

#### JUNE DINNER

On June 17 at the Union League Club, Arnold Hirshon, University Librarian at Case Western, will speak on the 150th anniversary of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. His talk is titled "Alice at 150; Artistic Visions as Visual Translation." Reverse program: social hour at 5, presentation at 6, with dinner to follow.

Dinner: Wednesday, April 15, Union League Club  
Nick Wilding on  
"The Forgery of Galileo's *Sidereus Nuncius*"

Nick Wilding, of Georgia State University, will discuss his discovery of the forgery of Galileo's *Sidereus Nuncius*. This forgery, perhaps the biggest book scandal in the last 150 years, was covered by *The New York Times* and became a featured article in *The New Yorker*. Wilding will explain how his detective work uncovered the forgery that fooled the experts, and he will explore the scope of the fraud and its impact on the world of book collecting. This story continues to reveal itself as the details concerning those involved are exposed. Following the presentation, copies of Professor Wilding's latest book, *Galileo's Idol*, will be available for sale and signing.

April dinner: Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Boulevard. This will be a reverse program. Timing: spirits at 5, program at 6 with dinner to follow. Drinks are \$5-\$9, dinner is \$48. **Reservations are essential to attend either the program only or the program and dinner combination.** For reservations call 312-255-3710 or e-mail [caxtonclub@newberry.org](mailto:caxtonclub@newberry.org). Please reserve by April 10 at 5 PM.