Library Presentations during the Spring Semester

During the spring semester, the Clarke will sponsor four programs. We hope you will join us. If you miss an event, be sure to check our blog, Clarke Library News and Notes, www.clarkehistoricallibrary.org, for a summary of the talks.

Wednesday, February 16
Park Library Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.

In this richly illustrated, deftly narrated volume, the author evokes the northern Michigan that a young Ernest Hemingway experienced in the early years of the twentieth century. Federspiel captures the land and people that served as inspirations for some of Hemingway's most memorable and enduring works. Federspiel is a professor at CMU and president of the Michigan Hemingway Society.

**Tuesday, March 1**
Park Library Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.
Larry Massie, author of Two-Tracks to Michigan's Past (Allegan, Mich.: Priscilla Press, 2009), will be the speaker.

A prolific researcher, author, and storyteller, Massie has traveled both peninsulas of his beloved state to share his enthusiasm for Michigan's colorful heritage. Two-Tracks to Michigan’s Past is the most recent in a long series of volumes Massie has written about Michigan history. In his presentation, he will draw upon this deep well of experience as he tells stories about Michigan's past. He is a former Booth newspaper columnist and a frequent contributor to numerous magazines.

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Keeping in Touch

The Library has created two blogs that we hope you will access and find useful. Clarke Library News and Notes (www.clarkehistoricallibrary.org) is a quick way to keep up with Library events. The blog offers news of future presentations and summaries of past activities, as well as interesting stories about the Library's holdings. If you want to know about speakers who will give talks at the Library, find summaries of past presentations, or just need a quick fix of interesting history, visit Clarke Library News and Notes.

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Keeping in Touch

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engineer in the Civil War. In 1861 he entered the army as a first lieutenant. By the war’s end he had been promoted to the rank of brigadier general. Poe served in a number of campaigns, but he is most often remembered as the engineer who accompanied Sherman on his “March to the Sea” as it swept through Georgia.

After the war, Poe’s considerable engineering skills were applied to public-works projects in the Great Lakes. Many of the lakes’ most remote and technologically challenging lighthouses were designed and constructed by Poe. He ended his career working as an engineer at the Soo Locks. In 1896 his crowning achievement was opened—the largest lock in the world at that time, which measured an astounding 800 feet long by 100 feet wide. The lock was named in honor of General Poe, who had died the preceding year.

In addition to these two blogs, Marian Matyn, the Library’s archivist, has a blog called Archivist Rising (http://archivistrising.blogspot.com/) which offers a personal view of a fascinating discipline.

Whether you are interested in events at the Library, Michigan history, or an archivist’s thoughts and reflections, we hope you will visit one or all of these blogs, click on the “subscribe” button, and enjoy.

Library Presentations during the Spring Semester

Continued from Page 1

Monday, March 21
The Baber Room, Park Library Building’s First Floor, 7:00 p.m.

Krista Prout, quilter, will talk about the art of quilt making. She comes from a long line of quilters, going back several generations on both sides of her family. She will also bring several antique quilts to illustrate her presentation.

Tuesday, March 29
Park Library Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.


In this book Charles Hyde rescues American Motors from obscurity and brings to life the engaging stories of engineers, managers, and stylists who needed all the wit and resourcefulness they could muster to battle Detroit’s Big Three automakers. Although the company’s efforts ultimately failed—Chrysler purchased American Motors in 1987—Hyde proves that even the losers in the auto industry made important contributions.

Charles Hyde is Professor Emeritus of History at Wayne State University. He has written widely on the automotive industry.

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Norman E. Clarke, Jr.
1925-2010

Dr. Norman E. Clarke, Jr., son of the Library’s founder, passed away on November 17. Beginning in 1985 Dr. Clarke, Jr., served as the family’s representative on the Library’s Board of Governors. When he became the family’s official representative he was already well versed in Library activity, having accompanied his father to Board meetings since 1975. Dr. Clarke, Jr.’s, careful reading of the Library’s founding documents, his knowledge of his father’s wishes, and his own keen insight sharpened by years of experience helped guide the Clarke. His loss will be greatly felt by those of us in the Library.

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Norman E. Clarke, Jr.
John Cumming
1915-2010

John Cumming enjoyed doing many things, but collecting, printing, and writing were three of his great loves. Although the path he traveled led him to the Clarke Historical Library only after many years of work elsewhere, once he arrived at the Clarke, John knew he had found his place. John was so enthusiastic about the Library that he once remarked that coming to the Clarke each morning was like having Christmas every day. He loved his position as the Clarke's director because of what that position allowed him to do. He also loved the unfolding story of the Library and always wanted to “read the next chapter.” Although John is no longer with us to read and experience that next chapter, we can look back and share with others highlights from the chapters that comprised his long and productive life.

John Cumming was not a Michigan native. Born in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, in 1915, he grew up in nearby Worcester. As a boy John developed a love for books. His mother was an avid reader who passed her enthusiasm for this activity to her son. When his job as an office boy provided John with a bit of money, he frequently spent it in Boston's long-closed but still remembered Goodspeed's Book Shop.

Even as a young fellow John's discerning eye, whether for a good book or a good deal, was remarkable. For a newspaper reporter he recalled a windfall he discovered at Goodspeed's itself. At the time Goodspeed's had two shops. The storefront “on the hill” was for upscale customers, while those of more modest means frequented the establishment’s location on South Church Street, where the “lesser” books were sold. One day, while looking through the ten-cent table at the Church Street location, John stumbled upon a book of considerable value that the staff had somehow overlooked. He promptly purchased it for a dime and marched up to the Goodspeed's “on the hill” where he sold the book back to the store for fifteen dollars.

John worked for several years for the Worcester Telegram & Gazette as a sports' reporter. Newspapers were very much in the young man's blood. Both John's father and grandfather had worked as type engravers until their craft was replaced by newspapers' use of photographic reproduction. When not covering an event for the Telegram, John devoted much of his time to athletics, excelling in track-and-field events. It was his athletic skill that first brought John to Michigan.

Offered a track scholarship at what is today Eastern Michigan University, John packed his bags and traveled from Worcester to Ypsilanti.

After he graduated, John eventually found employment in the Detroit Public School system. He taught journalism for several years and subsequently became a high-school counselor. During his years in Detroit, John obtained a master's degree in English Literature from the University of Michigan. During the same years John began to collect books seriously. He became well known in collecting circles, and his path frequently crossed that of Dr. Clarke. Dr. Clarke would later describe John as “an antiquarian and collector of books as far as his means permit.”

In 1961 Dr. Clarke recommended John be named director. Although not completely certain that he should give up his counseling position at Ford High School, John was persuaded to become the director of the recently established Clarke Historical Library, which had been founded in 1954. In his years as director, John played many roles and assumed numerous responsibilities. Perhaps his greatest accomplishment as director was building the Library's nascent collection. Dr. Clarke’s gift to his alma mater provided a generous beginning for the Library, but it was not a comprehensive body of material. There was much work to be done. John rose to the challenge. He was determined to acquire the important but hard-to-find volumes that the collection needed, and he took considerable delight in the chase.

In one speech John gave when he was the Clarke Library's director, he talked about his collecting activities. He saw himself as something of an underdog: “Wealthy, competent, aggressive collectors were amassing materials of this type for Detroit and Ann Arbor long before Central Michigan University was ever conceived.

Continued on Page 4
One would think then that little would
remain for a newcomer to collect.”
John, however, was not discouraged.
He was convinced that there
remained much to find—if one were
willing to do a little digging.

And dig John did. He
once estimated that
he traveled 28,000 miles every year
chasing down leads. He spent time
listening to people. As John noted,
“Some days I stand around at a farm
auction for hours, waiting nervously
for a box of books to come under the
hammer. There may be one item that
we want and it may be worth waiting
for. We wait nervously, hoping that
nobody else recognizes it. Seldom,
however, do we find any rare books
at farm auctions, but we do meet
people there who have things that we
want.” Seldom, indeed. John once
said that in fifteen years of visiting
farm auctions he had come upon five
rare books.

John once shared with an audience
that one of his most thrilling
experiences as a young man had been
catching a three-and-one-half pound
tROUT in northern Ontario. After
describing his elation at this catch,
John remarked, “My fishing these
days is for old books, letters, and
diaries, and other items of historical
interest. But the thrill is just as intense.”

In the final annual report he wrote
as director of the Clarke, detailing the
Library’s activities in the 1981-1982
academic year, John allowed that,
“Since there will be no more annual
reports from this director, he may
indulge himself in a few backward
glances.” These
ran to seven tightly
packed pages of
reminiscences, in
which John returned
over and over again
to the pleasures of
collecting. Twenty-
one years of
acquisitions and
the stories behind these finds
revealed repeatedly the joy John
experienced while collecting items
for the Library.

In this “indulgent” essay, John
expressed great pride in the large
number of pre-1851 Michigan
imprints, a traditional definition of
“antiquarian” Michigan books, that
the Library had acquired. Beyond
expressing satisfaction with broad
groups of material within the collection,
John also listed a few items that he
was particularly proud of obtaining.
One of these items was the second-
known copy of a broadside published
in Detroit in 1809 addressed to President
James Madison, which listed the
alleged shortcomings of General
William Hull. Another find was the
Laws of the Territory of the United States
North-West of the Ohio, which was printed
in Cincinnati in 1796 and is the first
book published in the Old Northwest
Territory. A third treasure mentioned
by name was a rare daguerreotype
of the polygamist James Jesse Strang
with his second wife, who was
disguised as his “male” secretary.

Surveying the wilderness was
among the most important tasks
set out for the American government
of Michigan. The orderly
settlement of land required the
ability to write clear legal
descriptions of the land. Such
descriptions required detailed
land surveys. Thus, for much of
the nineteenth century, surveyors
walked the land, taking careful
measurements that were first
recorded in field notebooks.
These measurements formed the
basis which established the boundaries
for virtually every parcel of land
in the state. The Clarke Historical
Library contains various writings
and many of the original field-
survey notebooks of Douglass
Houghton, among the best
remembered of these surveyors.
John’s favorite among his found treasures however, was the surveyor notes of Douglass Houghton. In October 1972, John and Clarke staff member Bill Miles were in New York City, attending the annual meeting of the Manuscript Society. As was the society’s custom, an auction was planned for the close of the meeting. John and Bill took a few minutes to examine the items to be auctioned. Moving from one lot to the next, John happened to follow a man who had just looked at an otherwise untouched and poorly described group of unidentified “Michigan surveyor notes.” With his keen eye and wonderful knowledge of state history, John soon reached an amazing conclusion. He leaned over to Miles and in a hushed tone said, “They’re Houghton’s.” John had unearthed a great treasure, Douglass Houghton’s daily survey notes from 1838 until his death in 1845. These notebooks represent some of the most important field-surveying notes in the state’s history. John quickly followed his initial declaration with a more forcefully whispered question, “Who was that other guy?” Fortunately for John, “that other guy” had not recognized the treasure lying before him. At the auction, after a token bid or two, he dropped out of the bidding and the auctioneer awarded the lot to John. One of the Clarke’s greatest treasures came home with him that day.

This fortunate acquisition illustrates John’s view of collecting as a joyful, yet capricious, hunt. “One does not start the year with a plan to acquire certain basic items during that period, simply because the rare books desired may never appear in that year or subsequent years. That element of chance adds to the excitement and interest of the searcher. As with luck in most circumstances, one can help it along and sometimes unearth a rare book which might have remained undiscovered without the hunter’s efforts.”

John’s greatest pleasure as director came in the search for a volume rather than in showcasing that item in the Library. His eye was always looking toward the next acquisition.

John’s greatest delight was in collecting, but collecting was not his only source of enjoyment nor his sole contribution to the Library and to Michigan history. John played a pivotal role in preserving Michigan’s newspaper heritage. Like many other local historians, John realized that newspapers are the single most important source for local history. Unlike his colleagues, John took the time to think about how this resource should be preserved. He soon discovered that these invaluable sources of local and rural history were rapidly being lost by accident or through neglect. Realizing that this was a crisis that needed to be addressed, John developed a project in 1963 that would begin preserving the state’s newspapers on microfilm.

Money was hard to raise. The Kresge Foundation offered $20,000, but only if John could raise an additional $30,000 in three years. Despite an intense effort, John was $8,000 short as the deadline approached. A last-minute gift of $5,000 from the McGregor Fund, as
well as “closing gifts” from several private philanthropists amounting to $3,000, made the project possible. In September 1966 the Clarke was able to purchase two microfilm cameras and embark on a pioneering project to film Michigan newspapers. John emphasized preserving the small-town weeklies found in so many rural communities. He was not exaggerating when he observed that “this is one of the most important efforts at historical preservation ever undertaken in the state.” In launching Michigan’s first newspaper-microfilming project, John’s only mistake was to underestimate the need; he believed that the project, still ongoing, would be completed in about five years.

John also loved children. He recognized the need to capture the imagination of young minds, and he intuitively understood the power of history to do so. In 1963, two years after arriving at Central, John was doing a television show seen in 243 Michigan schools. “The only place history is unpopular is in the schools,” he said. He delighted the children with tales that they would remember for years. Bill Miles recalled doing a presentation for a group of Boy Scouts. As he talked about a particular item, one youngster waved his hand for recognition. Given the floor, the child asked Bill to repeat himself. After listening to Bill’s second explanation, the boy said, “Well, that’s not what that old fat man told us last year,” and went on to report what had been said by John in his presentation. John enjoyed this story tremendously. He was pleased at the boy’s detailed recollection of his talk, although John did take some umbrage at the adjectives “old” and “fat.”

In 1982 John retired as director of the Clarke, but not without a final flourish. The University, as it still does today, had an official “gift list” of presents from which a retiring employee with long service might select. When asked to pick something, John, without looking at the list, said, “a watch.” He was informed by those who decided such matters that a watch could only be awarded to someone with twenty-five or more years of service and certainly not to someone who had worked a mere twenty-one years in the University’s employ. John persisted. He went so far as to take advantage of the fact that CMU’s president’s is an ex officio member of the Clarke Library’s Board of Governors. John wrote then President Harold Abel to get involved, pointing out that watches were not his responsibility.

John was persistent, but so were the University’s bureaucrats. The conversation went on for days and became famous around campus. To each of John’s requests for a watch the answer returned was “Select an item from the approved list.” When the day of John’s retirement party arrived, the situation was still an impasse. John refused to pick an alternate gift, and the University officials in charge of the matter refused to give him a watch. When it was Harold Abel’s turn to speak at the celebration he rose and with a sly smile said simply, “I don’t have much to add to what has already been said except, John, here’s your watch.” It was a touching gesture of respect and gratitude from the University’s most senior officer.

During his years at the Clarke, John was active in several professional associations. He served as president of the Michigan Archival Association. He was also a director of the Historical Society of Michigan. He was perhaps best known as an effective speaker, crisscrossing the state to share his love of history with audiences throughout Michigan.

Although busy for twenty-one years both at the Library and attending meetings of various professional associations, John found time to cultivate a number of hobbies, the most lasting of which involved his printing press. Using a nineteenth-century Chandler & Price platen press, John became a small publisher of considerable renown. It took John two to three hours to handset every page of type, which meant that each of his many books required approximately one year to complete. These books were usually printed in runs of from three hundred to five hundred copies. Originally John also bound his books. In later years, however, they were bound at a commercial bindery, John having concluded that binding was a far-less-enjoyable hobby than printing.

John’s parents gave him his first press when he was seven years old, and John tinkered with printing on and off for the rest of his life. Taking his role as a printer seriously, John worried greatly about the technical details of his publications. As John expressed it, “To me, it’s a work of art.” John haunted old print shops, not only looking for additional typefaces to add to his collection of fonts but also for old borders, printer’s ornaments, and cuts and engravings. Ultimately John’s type collection included more than six hundred fonts plus innumerable other items. All this type and a careful eye for the printer’s
craft, coupled with John's considerable skill, helped him to create works that compare favorably with those of a master of the printer's craft.

Although John's small press did indeed preserve the art of hand printing, many of his patrons were drawn to John's books because of John's ability to unearth a "good read." The volumes that rolled off John's press invariably told fascinating tales. The diary of Basil Austin is an example of this type of book. In 1898 Austin joined thousands of other men seeking their fortunes in the newly discovered Klondike gold fields. Eventually Austin and a companion netted a few thousand dollars profit. He and his partner decided to celebrate in Dawson, but their trip continued until they returned home to Detroit. Unlike many of others who went to the Klondike, Austin was a good writer who kept a detailed diary. It was just the kind of story John loved. Printing the story by hand, however, was a very tall order. As John himself noted, "It is really too big a job for a home print shop. I print two pages at a time, fold the pages, and insert them into sixteen page signatures. By Monday I have stiff muscles. . . . Now that it is just about done, I am glad that I did it. It is just too good a story to remain unpublished."

The captivating, firsthand narratives of men seeking their fortunes in rough-and-tumble boomtowns often found their way into John's beautifully produced books. John's press, however, never made John any money. As he noted, the only accounting ink he ever saw was red. John persisted in printing books, however, and in 1982 the Historical Society of Michigan recognized "the printer of Mount Pleasant," with an award of merit.

When he was not collecting or publishing books, John was busy writing. The "printer of Mount Pleasant" has also been described as the city's principal historian. This Place Mount Pleasant and The First Hundred Years: A Portrait of Central Michigan University, 1892-1992, define the history of both Isabella County and one of its most important institutions. In 1976 John distilled much of what he had learned about writing local history into the aptly named book, A Guide for the Writing of Local History.

John also had a passion for travel, one he shared with his bride of more than 70 years, Audrey. Together they traveled to all but two of the fifty states. They also traveled outside of the country, including a cruise through the Panama Canal and a second cruise to Greenland to better see the Northern Lights.

Collector, printer, author, and traveler, all of these words describe John, but they leave out one important aspect of the man: his sense of humor. In his early years at Central, University cars were emblazoned with the state seal. When using one of these cars, John often indulged in a lunchtime pizza. After he had been served his pie and eaten a piece or two, he would ask to speak to the manager. Proclaiming that he was the "state pizza inspector," John would express his concern over the establishment's substandard pepperoni. If the manager had the temerity to suggest that he or she had never heard of the alleged legally enforceable pepperoni standard, John would simply point to his state vehicle, parked with considerable calculation so that it would be in plain view.

He delighted in efforts to "catch" staff members. One of his most famous "gotchas" took place on a live radio show he moderated with Bill Miles. The day's show was on Michigan place-names. Miles listened while John waxed poetic about the possibilities of visiting Paris or Paradise. John suddenly ended his comments with, "And you Bill Miles can go to Hell." He meant Hell, Michigan, of course. The line had the desired effect; it left Miles speechless.

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Thank You!

During 2010 the following individuals and organizations have supported the Library. Both the Library’s Board of Governors and the staff are deeply grateful for this support. Without it, much of the work accomplished by the Library would not be possible.

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With each passing second of dead airtime, John’s grin got bigger.

Although always respectful of the many contributions made to the Library by its founder, John was not above having some sport even at Dr. Clarke’s expense. A memorable incident occurred one day when Dr. Clarke sought entry into the Library’s stacks. Dr. Clarke had been emphatic that his Library was to be a closed-stack library and that no researcher, absolutely no one no matter his or her status, would be allowed to wander through the stacks. This unbending rule was bound to have unforeseen consequences. One day, as Dr. Clarke attempted to enter “his” Library’s stacks, a new staff member (it is still a matter of debate whether she knew the identity of the man to whom she was speaking) physically blocked the door and informed the good doctor that “no one, absolutely no one” could enter the stacks.

Furious at the youngster’s impudence, Dr. Clarke stormed into John’s office. Savoring the moment, John slowly lit a cigar, this event occurring in the era before smoking was banned in University buildings, and reminded the Library’s chief benefactor that the young lady was merely following the repeated instructions given by Dr. Clarke himself. Indeed, John went on to add thoughtfully, perhaps the young lady should be commended for her determined enforcement of the rules. Staff lore does not recall Dr. Clarke’s response, but in relating this story John allowed that his comments did not appear to reflect the sentiments Dr. Clarke wished to hear.

The printer of Mount Pleasant and the longest serving director of the Clarke Library always had an eye for a good book and an ear for a good story, coupled with a writer’s talent and the ardent desire to share his books and stories with others. But the life story of the printer himself is equally full of good books, good stories, and more than its share of mischief. Just as John’s press preserved and shared tales of lives well lived, lives too full of energy and accomplishment to pass unnoticed, so too John’s story is one of energy and accomplishment and tales too rich to be left untold. Those of us privileged to carry on John Cumming’s work in the Library now take this opportunity to pause for a moment, to remember, to thank, and to salute a man whose vision and zest for life enriched not only the Library but also those of us who were privileged to know him.

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Moving Toward the Precipice: Michigan in the Years Before the Civil War

The Civil War was a watershed in American history. The war both ended one side’s vision of the nation and gave birth to a new understanding of the Union. It ended slavery, but failed to establish racial equality. The rebellious South was forced back into the United States, but Reconstruction left Southerners feeling less than equal partners with their Northern neighbors.

The Civil War wrought many changes. But the war did not begin because of a sudden, unanticipated crisis. Rather, the conflict developed slowly, in full view of the American public. Over many years the American people and their leaders came to moral conclusions and made broad political decisions that created sectional tensions and deepened regional divides, which ended in armed conflict.

The exhibit, Moving Toward the Precipice: Michigan in the Years Before the Civil War looks at antebellum life in Michigan. It enumerates the people who lived in Michigan, how they made their living, how their children grew up, and the religious and political environment in which they participated. The exhibit sets the stage for the great events that will be remembered during the Civil War sesquicentennial. It sketches the nature of the actors, some deeply concerned with the fate of the nation and others wholly indifferent to the escalating political conflict, who, regardless of their pre-war activity, would soon be required to take roles in an unfolding national tragedy.

We hope you will visit the Library to see this fascinating exhibit, which will open in March.
A Final Word

"Don't You 'Trust Me?'"

Special-collection librarians are sometimes asked this question by people who use items found in these libraries and are put off by the many rules and regulations they are asked to follow. The simple truth is that long experience has forced the staff of special-collection libraries to be wary.

On Tuesday, January 25, 2011, the Washington Post ran a long article relating the sad story of a well-respected, experienced researcher who allegedly succumbed to temptation and broke the rules.

According to the published account, a researcher who has long used the National Archives in Washington to explore Civil War topics confessed to changing the date on a military pardon signed by Abraham Lincoln. The pardon spared the life of a soldier convicted of desertion. The modified document appeared to have been signed on April 14, 1865, the day of Lincoln's assassination. The dramatic contrast between the killing of Lincoln and a kindly president giving a convicted soldier a second chance was obvious. The pardon was prominently displayed within the archives and its contents were often woven into published narratives of the assassination. In the small world of professional researchers, the discoverer of the pardon became famous.

There was just one problem, the story wasn't true. The document had actually been signed by Lincoln on April 14, 1864. According to the newspaper account the "discoverer" of the pardon had quietly taken out a fountain pen and with ink similar to that used by Lincoln, written over the final digit of the year and shortly thereafter announced his "discovery." Authorities cite a signed confession from the researcher to prove their allegations. The researcher claimed that he was forced to sign the confession. Because the statute of limitations for the crime has expired, the matter will never go to court.

Whoever altered the pardon, the newspaper article highlights the tension that exists in all special-collection libraries between ease of use and security. We collect, we describe, and we make accessible materials in the hope and belief that someday these items will be consulted. But every time a patron requests to use an item, a security risk is created. Some materials have financial value, and clever thieves have visited many archives and stolen such articles. Even more challenging than thieves are those researchers who are driven by the need to find evidence that supports their own beliefs; often they are not above asking for or making a few changes in the documentation to achieve that goal.

The results of such a "need to prove" are often the stuff of archival legends. I was once approached by an irate researcher who, after finding his grandfather in the federal census, demanded I change the entry, because what it said was not consistent with family lore. Exactly how I was supposed to make this change was a bit unclear. Another archivist I know related to me the story of how he ruined the day of a man who believed his ancestor had personally commanded Union troops at Gettysburg. The question being debated in family circles was whether the ancestor had been a colonel or a major. He, and I presume his family, were not pleased to learn that the regimental history listed the ancestor as a private, who seems to have deserted from his unit a few days before the critical battle.

Amusing as these stories are, the danger is that disappointed researchers may decide to "set the record straight." They attempt to modify records to tell the truth as they believe it, remove records they find troublesome, or even slip in newly created records that prove their point, in order to "find" them a day or two later.

Because of threats such as these the Clarke, like most special-collection libraries, has a series of security checks. We require users to present picture identification. We use closed-circuit television cameras to oversee the room where researchers use our materials. We attempt to ensure that there is always a staff member in the reading room to oversee events. We limit what researchers can bring into the reading room, and sometimes we limit the number of items a person can use at a single time. We always request that researchers use pencils, and we keep a generous supply of those somewhat antique writing implements on hand.

In our daily work with people who use the Library, we do our best to be helpful. Unfortunately we must also be watchful. I am always sorry when our rules offend a patron. I try to explain to them the reasons behind our policies. Among our most important responsibilities is to guarantee that when one researcher finishes his or her research, the collection, whole and unaltered, will be available for the next user. President Ronald Reagan once answered a question regarding the good faith of the Soviet Union with the phrase, "trust, but verify." Special-collection libraries, including the Clarke, must adopt that same approach.

Do we trust you? Yes, but we must also verify. I hope the many people who visit our reading room will understand our viewpoint.

Frank Boles
The CMU Friends of the Libraries is a membership organization that supports, through financial and other gifts, the programs of the Charles V. Park Library, home to the University Library, the Clarke Historical Library, and Off-Campus Library Services.

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