PECULATION ABOUT THE VIRTUAL LIBRARY has appeared prominently in the media in recent months. The goal of a truly virtual library where the researcher can immediately access any bit of information, be it text, picture, or sound, is still a few years in the future. The Libraries is keeping pace with technological advances, moving towards the goal of making an increasing array of information resources available in an electronically networked environment at the Smithsonian Institution.

Project Access is the Libraries' program established to enable the Institution's research and user community to access information which is now available from a multitude of sources in a variety of formats. The cornerstone of Project Access is SIRIS (Smithsonian Institution Research Information System) which provides access to the Libraries' 1.2 million volumes through SIL's online catalog. The Database Searching Center, accessible electronically from all eighteen branch libraries through direct connections and from some office personal computers (pc's), provides a wide variety of indexes and abstracts in CD-ROM format.

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**Publications**

**Electronic Publication**

The disc contains more than 443,000 records of SIL collections, and the records of the National Museum of American Art/National Portrait Gallery Library (a separate entity). G. K. Hall, an imprint of Macmillan, Inc., will publish an annual update.

**Paper Publication**

**Staff Publications**


**LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR**

**Preservation Concerns**

Mrs. Karklins’s piece in this issue about our trade catalog collection (see Trade Literature, pp. 3-4) points to a problem we share with the nation’s libraries, preservation. It is a particularly acute problem for items like the trade catalogs, items that never were intended to last and therefore were published on poor quality paper that is rapidly deteriorating. Like so many other matters that appear to be simple, preservation is a deceptively complicated problem for libraries. The mere act of choosing what to preserve and what to let turn to dust is controversial and is exacerbated by the great expense involved. Recent estimates indicate that it costs $90.00 per volume to microfilm a book. And authorities in the field, when pressed, will admit that microfilming is currently the only preservation tool that is proven, standardized, and promises a long shelf life. Yet, even if sufficient funding were available and the trade catalog collection was microfilmed, much of the value of its marvelous array of illustrations would be lost. The color and fine detail in many of the catalogs would not survive transfer from paper to microfilm.

The Commission on Preservation and Access, a private, nonprofit organization acting on behalf of libraries, archives and universities, defines its mission as developing and encouraging collaborative strategies for preserving and providing access to the accumulated human record. In March the Commission announced the establishment of The Digital Preservation Consortium which will examine a myriad of issues from insuring the longevity of digitized images to defining production quality standards. Digitizing appears to be an application that is ideal for many of the estimated 300,000 trade catalogs in the SIL collection. While the Libraries has not yet ventured into these more technologically advanced means of preserving materials, our Preservation Services Department routinely employs microfilming in its preservation program for the general collections, augmenting the program as required by preservation photocopy, an even more expensive tool than microfilming. The work of the Commission’s new Consortium will be watched carefully by our Preservation Services staff so that when funds are available appropriate choices can be made to ensure that those library users who will need to consult the materials under our care will be able to do so for some time to come. As Mrs. Karklins indicates, we must first bring order to the catalog collection and acquire funding to do so before major preservation initiatives can begin. Only when both cataloging and preservation have been completed can we assure long term access to this notable collection of information about manufacturing, business, and marketing in the United States.

Barbara J. Smith

**Development Watch**

The Libraries was awarded three grants by the Smithsonian Women’s Committee: $3,783 to cover the cost of adjustable support stands for the exhibition of rare books. These efficient and economical stands are reusable, and will replace the costly custom-made stands previously made for each exhibition. 2) $6,000 to fund two educational brochures for the forthcoming exhibition on “Balloons: The First Decade of Flight, 1783-1793,” scheduled to open in September 1994. And 3) $4,000 to conserve one of the finest illustrated travel guides of the seventeenth-century, Martin Zeiller’s Topographic Gael (1655-71), with 331 hand-colored engravings, many by Casper Merian. This scarce work is in the collections of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum Branch Library.
Trade Literature

Outside Funding Begins To Bring Light to Hidden Treasure

Contributions from the Atherton Seidell Endowment Fund and the Jaques Admiralty Law Firm have recently made it possible to continue organizing and indexing the Libraries' distinctive collection of trade literature. The collection of over 300,000 items of trade catalog literature is acknowledged as a national treasure. Acquired over the years through gift and purchase and representing an estimated 35,000 companies, most items date from around 1875 to the mid-twentieth century, with an estimated 45% printed between 1900 and 1930.

The name 'trade catalogs' is derived from the expression 'to the trade,' and the materials were initially produced for wholesalers, retailers, and salesmen. By the late nineteenth century illustrated catalogs became an accepted way of publicizing consumer and industrial products, from plumbing fixtures for the 'modern bath' to agricultural machinery and fences for the farmer and sophisticated precision machine tools used in the growing industrial centers. The collection consists of product catalogs, technical manuals, advertising brochures, price lists, and company histories which describe and publicize the products of American business, industry, agriculture, and the decorative arts. Most of the trade literature is located in the Branch Library of the National Museum of American History, and the Burpee and McFarland collections of seed catalogs are housed in the Horticulture Branch Library, with a number of design-related catalogs for products from tableware and wallcoverings to ornamental garden furniture in the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum Branch Library.

Researchers rely on illustrations in old trade catalogs as an important source of information on specific products in their studies of technological development, using them to identify artifacts and trace histories of products. Economic and business history is well-served by these surviving pieces which trace the growth of a company and development of its products. Social and cultural historians, patent searchers, remodelers of old houses and designers of period gardens, and lawyers and journalists all find a treasure trove of information in this genre of printed literature.

Because this sizeable collection has not yet been fully organized, these valuable materials are a hidden treasure. Most of the collection is not indexed, and researchers and librarians must spend extra time locating the specific information they seek. It is not for lack of interest or attention that the collection remains largely unorganized. Memory, as well as documents in the Libraries' files dating back to the 1960s, point to planning and fundraising efforts. Over the last thirty years, the Libraries has hired consultants, surveyed other libraries that hold trade literature collections, and sent out funding proposals. The first tangible progress was made as a result of procedures developed by the Working Group on Trade Catalogs, 1980-1983. Some 45,000 individual items were cataloged following procedures developed by that group. The work, done mostly with volunteer help, progressed slowly at a "stop and go" pace. When it became clear that indexing each item would take an inordinate amount of time, the Libraries wisely chose to pursue another approach, and create a record for each company, with the promise of gaining bibliographic control of the collection at least ten times sooner.

The Atherton Seidell Committee awarded a small grant to index the Mel Heinz collection of 60,000 mid-twentieth-century trade catalogs on machine-tools and metal-working. The

Continued on page 4)
Professional Appointments

Thomas Bickley was appointed Librarian of the Anacostia Museum Branch. He earned his M.S.L.S. from The Catholic University of America and his B.A. from the University of Houston. He holds a M.A. in Music from The American University and a Master of Divinity from the Wesley Theological Seminary.

Claire Dekle joined the Preservation Services Department, Book Conservation Laboratory, as a book conservator in November. She earned her B.A. from Agnes Scott College, and her M.L.S. from Columbia University. She recently completed an internship with the Royal Academy of Arts in London, England.

Margaret Dittemore has been named Librarian of the Anthropology Branch. Dr. Dittemore was awarded a B.A. and a M.L.S. at University of California/Berkeley, and she earned her Ph.D from the University of Chicago. She previously worked at the Van Pelt Library of the University of Pennsylvania.

Gwendolen R. Leighty joins SIL as Development Officer. She previously worked at the Institution’s Office of Development, and she earned her B.A. from Dartmouth College, and M.A. in Public Administration at George Washington University.

Valerie Wheat is the Librarian of the Museum Reference Center. She was awarded her B.A. from Fisk University, an M.A. in Spanish at Howard University, and her M.L.S. from University of Missouri - Columbia.

Trade Literature

collection is a gift of Mrs. Maxine Heinz, the widow of Mr. Heinz. In 1993 the funds were used to contract out the cataloging, and two librarians are now devoting a portion of their time to the project: Jim Roan, librarian in the National Museum of American History Branch, arranging the collection by company, and cataloger Carolyn Hamilton of Original Cataloging and Indexing providing quality control for the contractor’s work. An important part of the project is to stabilize and protect the paper catalogs by placing them in acid free envelopes and boxes. Recent support received from the Jaques Admiralty Law Firm permits this work to continue.

The Libraries is appreciative of the support received from the Atherton Seidell Endowment Fund and from the Jaques Admiralty Law Firm. With this start in organizing and cataloging the trade literature, researchers are beginning to see good online records of this amazingly diverse collection. The need for substantial funding to complete the project is now ever more evident. When the company-level indexing is completed, it will be possible to group subject areas and create a series of specialized data bases to serve particular research interests. The materials could then be put on microfilm or optical disk, thus assuring long-term preservation of the contents, and making the visual images available to researchers.

Gwendolen R. Leighty
Deputy Director
Project Access (Continued from page 1)

SILIBS-L is a listserv that provides electronic news and information via electronic mail and is designed to keep the Institution’s research community in touch with new services of the Libraries. A recently introduced innovation is the ability to request materials through interlibrary loan using electronic mail. The ultimate objective of Project Access is to bring library services, collections, and information directly to each user’s desk through his or her personal computer.

The Internet is a primary means for delivering many of these new resources. Project Access is now tapping the Internet as a means of bringing today’s information services to the Smithsonian community of library users. Other on-going features of Project Access are maintaining subscriptions to online databases, and membership in or association with national and international networks. The Libraries’ Systems Office provides much of the equipment and network connectivity; and branch libraries’ staff assists users with research help in each of the eighteen branch locations.

To increase the Smithsonian community’s ability to carry on its work effectively, the Libraries must be able to supply a wide range of information quickly. Online databases and other electronic resources are a means of meeting the goal of providing accurate and complete information on demand. The Libraries previews and tests appropriate new information technologies for its users under the direction of the Information Access Coordinator.

Currently the Libraries is experimenting with FirstSearch, a collection of over forty end-user bibliographic databases covering a wide range of disciplines produced by the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) and available over the Internet. By Fall the Libraries will conduct a trial of another collection of end-user databases, CitaDel, maintained by the Research Libraries Group.

As Project Access continues to develop, SIL encourages a dialogue between the Libraries staff and its community of users. The Libraries’ Information Access Coordinator is ready to assist users in choosing from and accessing the increasing number of electronic resources we are putting at their disposal. Contact the coordinator at email: LIBEM071, or call 202-357-2139.

Martin R. Kalfatovic
Information Access Coordinator

PROJECT ACCESS: Electronic Information Resources Available from Smithsonian Institution Libraries

- SIRIS (Smithsonian Institution Research Information System): Includes the Libraries’ online catalog of over 1.2 million volumes covering all areas of the Institution’s areas of research interest. SIRIS also includes access to the catalogs of nine Smithsonian office and bureau collections.

- Database Searching Center (DBSC): Smithsonian Institution Libraries offers access to many CD-ROM databases (including BIOSIS, America: History and Life, Art Index, Dissertation Abstracts, Humanities Index, Wildlife Review and Fisheries Review, AGRICOLA, and others). Please see a branch librarian for details.

- SILIBS-L: An electronic news and information service (Continued on page 6)

Paul Evan Peters spoke on “The National Information Infrastructure, the Internet, and the Future for Research and Education: What Networking Means to You” on December 3, 1993. Peters is Director of the Coalition of Networked Information, a joint project of the Association of Research Libraries, EDUCOM, and CAUSE. The Libraries and the SIRIS Management Committee co-sponsored the lecture which was open to staff throughout the Institution.

(Laurie Minor-Penland)
available via electronic mail to keep the SI research community in touch with new Libraries' services. Please call Martin Kalfatovic at 202-357-2139 for information on how to sign up.

- CD-ROM Databases: SIL branches have a variety of CD-ROMS (data oriented compact disks) available for use. For example, U.S. History on CD-ROM in the National Museum of American History Branch; UNESCO Bibliography of Museology in the Museum Reference Center; Jane’s All the World’s Aircraft in the National Air and Space Museum Branch; and Multimedia Birds of America in the National Museum of Natural History Branch. See a branch librarian for additional titles.

- Inter-library loan (ILL) and document supply through electronic mail. Staff may now order ILL items and documents using electronic mail accounts.

- FirstSearch: This service provides access to over 15 million items on WorldCat, the OCLC database of bibliographic information. The over forty databases on FirstSearch include: ArticleFirst; Arts and Humanities Search; Biography Index; ContentsFirst; Disclosure Corporate Snapshots; GPO Monthly Catalog; MEDLINE; MLA Bibliography; Readers’ Guide to Periodical Literature; Social Sciences Index; and others.

- Online Database Searching: Branch librarians are able to offer online database resources such as DIALOG, EPIC, RLIN, and selected others to Smithsonian Institution research staff. Please contact a branch librarian for more information about available databases.

Contact a branch librarian for details on all services listed above or call Central Reference and Loan Services at 202-357-2139.

“Race to the Telephone”

W. Bernard Carlson delivered the 1994 Dibner Library lecture before an appreciative crowd of some sixty members of the public and Smithsonian staff. His slide illustrated talk on “Making Connections: Alexander Graham Bell, Elisha Gray, and Thomas A. Edison and the Race to the Telephone” was a dramatic account about how the three inventors all worked towards the same invention in the 1870s. Carlson projected images of drawings of the first experimental prototypes developed by the three inventors, and photographs of the men, their families and business partners, and of the earliest telephones, some of which are currently on display in the exhibition “The Information Age” in the National Museum of American History. An Associate Professor of Technology, Culture, and Communication in the School of Engineering and Applied Science, University of Virginia, Carlson was a 1993 SIL/Dibner Library Resident Scholar. He is currently at work on a book with his colleague Michael Gorman on invention as a cognitive process. In 1991 he published Innovation as a Social Process: Elihu Thomson and the Rise of General Electric, 1970-1900 (Cambridge University Press).

Post-Graduate Resident Completes Practicum

Sally Siew-Siew Chua, a native of Penang, Malaysia, who was selected after a nationwide recruitment as the Libraries’ first Post-Graduate Resident in Library and Information Science, has completed a successful year of training. This practicum, designed to train beginning professionals for a career in a research library, was funded by the James Smithson Society. The Libraries is seeking funds to support the continuation of the program. Ms. Chua gave an informal talk to Libraries staff about her impressions from her varied experiences at “Lunch with Sally,” part of the Brown Bag Lunch Series sponsored by the Libraries Staff Development Committee.

Oceans and Robots: SIL/Dibner Library Resident Scholars Named

The 1994 SIL/Dibner Library Resident Scholars are Helen M. Rozwadowski and Steven A. Walton. Ms. Rozwadowski, whose research will concentrate on “Fruits of the Sea: The Literary Products of Nineteenth-Century Ocean Travel,” is a Ph.D. candidate in the History and Sociology of Science at the University of Pennsylvania. She earned her B.A. in Biology and English at Williams College, and an M.A. in her current field of study from the University of Pennsylvania. Walton is in a pre-doctoral program at the Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology, University of Toronto, working on “Engineering the Body: Examples of Mechanical Beings, 1500-1800,” a study of early robotics. He earned a B.S. from Cornell University and an M.S. from the California Institute of Technology, both in the field of Mechanical Engineering.
SIL NEWS DIGEST

GARBER DONATION

The Libraries has recently acquired a fine collection of books left by Paul Edward Garber, Historian Emeritus and Ramsey Fellow of the National Air and Space Museum, who died in September 1993 at the age of 93. Three notable items received from Garber’s personal library are General Billy Mitchell’s Winged Defense (1925), inscribed by the author, a book which brought the need for the use of aircraft in the nation’s defense strategy to the attention of politicians and the public; an autographed copy of the famed World War II general ‘Hap’ Arnold’s Global Mission (1949), with his personal account of the development of American air power and air operations during the war; and Francesco Zambeccari’s Descrizione della maccina aerostatica del cittadino Bologna (1803), a very early book on Italian aeronautics. Nearly 200 of Garber’s books will be added to the collections of two Branch Libraries, the National Air and Space Museum Branch and the National Museum of American History Branch. Among Garber’s many accomplishments in his seventy-two year association with the Institution was his assistance in cofounding The Ramsey Room which houses the rare book collections of the National Air and Space Museum Branch. The rare-book facility was established with funds provided by Juanita Ramsey, the widow of Admiral DeWitt Clinton Ramsey, a naval aviator and Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, and a friend of Garber’s.

Author Fiske Hanley presented a copy of his History of the 504th Bomb Group in World War II (1993) to National Air and Space Museum Branch Librarian Dave Spencer. Other members on the 504th Bomb Group Veterans Association were on hand for the presentation. The photograph was taken at the P-47 display on the first floor of the museum.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION LIBRARIES MISSION STATEMENT

The Smithsonian Institution Libraries supports the mission of the Smithsonian Institution “for the increase and diffusion of knowledge” by providing access to information in all forms to Smithsonian scientists, scholars, curators, and staff, as well as others with research needs. The Libraries accomplishes this by building, organizing, managing, housing, and preserving collections; by providing reference services and consultation; by employing all appropriate technologies for finding and disseminating information; and by contributing to and drawing from remote databases. The Libraries offers educational opportunities which include exhibitions, internships, publications, lectures, and user instruction. The Libraries participates in local, national, and international networks and cooperative activities which promote the sharing of information, access to recorded knowledge, and the support and advancement of scholarly communication.

February, 1994

IN BRIEF

The Libraries on-line public catalog is up and running on SIRIS, the Smithsonian Institution Research Information System. Library users can access the catalog in all of the eighteen branch libraries, and soon will be able to get into the catalog from office computers (pcs). SIRIS also carries databases from several archives, bureaux and other offices within the Smithsonian Institution. The Libraries expects that SIRIS with the Libraries online catalog will be available on the Internet in the fall of 1994.
Calendar of Exhibitions

SIL EXHIBITION GALLERY
National Museum of American History, first floor, west wing
10:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. daily

Opening Fall 1994
Balloons: The First Decade of Flight, 1783-1793
Thomas Crouch and Alex Spencer, National Air and Space Museum, Curators

Opening Spring 1995
The Art of Discovery: Scientists' Books/Artists' Books
co-sponsored with Washington Project for the Arts
Carol Barton, Robin Moore, and Ellen Wells, Curators