

A Picture is Worth... Part 2

By Miranda Howard Haddock

What do original programs from the 1936 Berlin Olympics; pictures of Quonset huts; booklets of Roman letter styles; book illustrations by N.C. Wyeth; photographs of Uppsala Cathedral, Sweden; and details of Hans Holbein's artistic treatment of the human hand have in common? In this instance, the common factor is location. All of these items and many more can be found in the Visual Resources Library in Sangren Hall. Readers of the first part of "A Picture is Worth—a Thousand Uses" (*Gatherings*, Winter, 1998, pp. 1,6) will recall that the focus was the University Libraries' slide collection. However, visual resources libraries are not just for slides!

Surely, everyone has noticed how much more visually acute everyone is in this day and age. The omnipresence of motion picture films, videos, television, the World Wide Web, and other graphic representations dominate society as we know it. Moreover, the technical quality of these media are uniquely more sophisticated. Compare, for example, the visual stimulation in an older TV series such as *I Love Lucy* to a recent episode of *The Nanny*, or the special effects in *A Night to Remember* to *Titanic*. Even the sets of TV's game and talk shows attempt to dazzle the visual senses. Think back to the simplistic sets of *What's My Line* or Jack Paar's late evening talk show, and note the assault on the ocular senses found in *Wheel of Fortune* and *The Jerry Springer Show*. Advertising signs on businesses and roadsides are far more elaborate and eye-catching than just a few

years ago. Corporations depend on striking logos to give singular recognition to their products. Even letterheads are designed to attract the eye and gain attention. Everyone is seeing more; almost everything is visually accessible.

This contemporary emphasis on the graphic and visual has had a major influence on educational institutions. Although no classroom instructor has to upstage Oprah or a major disaster, students demand more than a lecture and blackboard scrawls. A key mission of the Visual Resources Library is to assist members of the University community, faculty, staff, and students, in their presentations. Building on its extensive foundation of slides, the VRL offers other services ranging from low to high on the technological/graphical spectrum. Specifically, services include a vast picture depository and special help in locating images useful for Web sites, videos, presentation software such as Power Point, and even the ever-useful transparency of olden days. Before much longer, electronic art collections will also be available via the Visual Resources Library.

The low-tech end of the spectrum is the picture collection. In January, 1998, the VRL acquired the Picture Collection from the Kalamazoo Public Library. This collection contains thousands of images from magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, and original photographs. First started in the late 1940s, it now contains a half-century record of popular illustrations, and, in fact, has even earlier material since the late 1940s date only notes the point that the staff began formal collection and arranging of the materials. One of the key

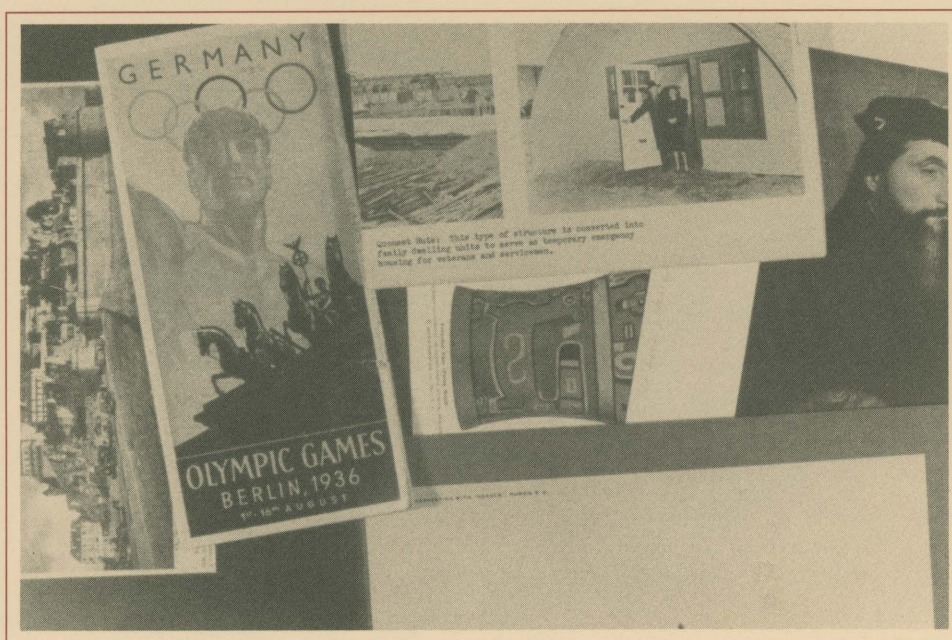
sources are the women's magazines dating back to pre-World War I. Another is the superb documentary photography and text of the 1940s and 1950s clipped from *Life* magazine. Sections of long out-of-print books were also added to the files. In short, visual American culture for eight decades of this century are represented in the Picture Collection.

Valuable sections of the collection include pictures of book illustrations, portraits of famous people, and myriad aspects of U.S. and world history. Art, literature, and education studies would be enhanced by examples of pictorial interpretations of Alexandre Dumas' *Three Musketeers*. Students aspiring to be children's book illustrators would find inspiration from Jessie Willcox Smith's work. Portraits range from Mahatma Gandhi to Antoni Dvořák to James Fenimore Cooper to Jules Jean Lecomte-du-Nouy's vision of Demosthenes.

The Picture Collection is available to students, faculty, and staff. Access is made available by a subject index to specific subjects, people, or events. A user can check out the pictures, or the Visual Resources Library staff will make slides for classroom use. Copyright can be a problem, but the staff will also assist in determining if rights to use the image on the Web or in some other form of mass distribution can be secured.

Moving into the realm of middle to high technology is the VRL's use of the World Wide Web. As academic Web sites become more and more popular for course review and distance learning, questions about using images on the Web are common. Patrons looking for an image to illustrate a Web site need to know that publishing on the WWW is like any other kind of publishing, i.e., rights must be obtained in order for the author to use the "borrowed" image. Visual Resources Library slides cannot be used on individual Web sites, but the staff can assist in locating the source of an image for patrons. One role of the VR Library is to create, maintain, and catalog images for patron use.

Electronic images are especially key to the development of image libraries whose purpose is to bring digital images into the library as well as catalog them. The Visual Resources Library is very much a part of this trend to acquire "virtual" art collections. One of the newest products is the AMICO Library that has just been made available at WMU. AMICO stands for Art Museum Image Consortium, and is comprised of 23 well-known, North American



A Picture Collection Collage

Continued on page 4

Of Libraries and Books

Continued from page 3

public libraries included more than a decade in Portage as well as earlier work in Ohio has reminded Diether of how important trained staff are to the use of libraries. He believes her—as his record shows. He also is very proud of the Carol Ann Haenicke Collection of American Women's Poetry that he established in the Special Collections Department of the University Libraries. The Haenicke Collection is, indeed, a rare collection for any campus. That collection of American women poets, covering 200 years of writing, honors his wife, one of her scholarly interests, and offers valuable research opportunities in an area in which the University now offers a doctoral degree.

When commenting on the need for more professionals for the University Libraries, Dr. Haenicke made special note of the Libraries' programs of information literacy and increased attention to library instruction. He is hopeful that both areas will continue to grow. He remarked upon the somewhat ironic fact that despite a heavily automated library environment, ever more dominated by electronic databases that presumably make information more accessible, we need more librarians with specialized expertise to locate and interpret library resources for users.

Books and libraries have always been, needless to say, an important part of Diether Haenicke's life. Some of his most fond memories are of his mother and father reading books aloud to the children in the evening after dinner. Even today, his leisure time is devoted to only two choices: reading and classical music. Dr. Haenicke still keeps in touch with a now quite elderly high school teacher who helped to inspire his love of literature as a young man. But, this strong advocate of books does have painful memories that center around the book burnings he was forced to watch when he was a young boy during the Third Reich. The "suspect" authors whose works were burned by the Nazis are, he reflects, among the most accomplished of authors—Jewish and non-Jewish.

Dr. Haenicke's discussion of books and libraries concluded with a personal reminiscence on the central importance of the influence that teachers have on students. When Diether Haenicke decided to work on his doctorate in German literature, he was especially honored to be asked to work on a dissertation in history by the scholar Franz Schnabel. This scholar and

teacher profoundly influenced the young Haenicke because Schnabel had not only survived the Nazis, but had become so much more prolific and dedicated after the war ended. An academic library can be gifted with a rich stock of books, but students need the inspiration of professors such as Schnabel who encourage them to study, think, and learn. Diether Haenicke says that one of the most common things he hears, from both graduating students as well as alumni, is how much of a difference particular professors have made in their lives. He adds that he then tells those graduates and alums that their thanks should be given directly to the professors—not to him alone.

And so, Diether Haenicke, we who serve the University Libraries and/or are part of the Friends of the University Libraries will take this opportunity to thank a man who made a difference in our lives and in the life of the University Libraries at Western Michigan University. You have given generous personal and intellectual as well as financial support to the Libraries. Welcome to your office on the third floor of Waldo Library.

Diether H. Haenicke's commitment to libraries and Western Michigan University has been definitively accentuated by his establishment, on July 27, 1998, of a \$1.5 million endowment to be "used at the discretion of the Dean of Libraries...to fund University library acquisitions." The guidelines further specify that the endowment is "intended to augment, rather than replace or reduce existing general fund support...."



No. 19, Fall 1998

Gatherings is published triannually by the Friends of the University Libraries, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, 49008-5080. Contributors to this issue include: Tom Amos, Rare Book and Special Collections Librarian; Miranda Had-dock, Visual Resources Librarian; David Isaacson, Humanities Librarian, Central Reference; and Lance Query, Dean, University Libraries.

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A Picture is Worth...

Continued from page 2

art museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the J. Paul Getty Museum. These museums are providing high resolution images and descriptive information of selected works from their collections that are then delivered electronically to subscribing libraries.

Of course, seeing a virtual object d'art is not the same as viewing the real thing, but resources found in collections such as the Art Museum Image Consortium expose patrons to works of art that they might ordinarily be unable to see without visiting museum collections. Since AMICO includes museum cataloging records along with the image of the art work, those who access AMICO are able to get more information about a work of art than those who actually visit the museum and "see" the real work of art.

Western Michigan University is fortunate to have been chosen as one of the 20 AMICO Library University Testbed Sites for the 1998-1999 academic year. As a testbed library, patrons and staff have the advantage of trying out and experimenting with the imagebase, and, in turn, providing the project developers with feedback as to ease of use and accuracy of the system. This information will then be used by the project investigators to make necessary modifications, and, ultimately, to make available the best possible imagebase.

The University Libraries is also engaged in its own digital image collection. Images from the slide collection will be available to patrons using our WestCat system. Since the collection has been growing by thousands of images every few months, the ability to locate exact images through the OPAC will be of great benefit to users. A recent addition, during the winter semester, 1998, brought over 1400 slides of medieval manuscripts from the Pierpont Morgan and Bodleian libraries to the Visual Resources Library.

Remember, when needing inspiration for a paper on interior design, an image for a lecture on World War II's Pacific Theater, a picture of mid-twentieth century cotton processing equipment, proof that paper dresses really did exist in the 60s, or just a reminder of the innocence of Charles Kingsley's *Water Babies*, there is a source at Western Michigan University. See you—and the picture—at the Visual Resources Library, 2213 Sangren Hall.