



Treasures of the B&ECPL

A brief history of the Central Library and the
significance of its collection

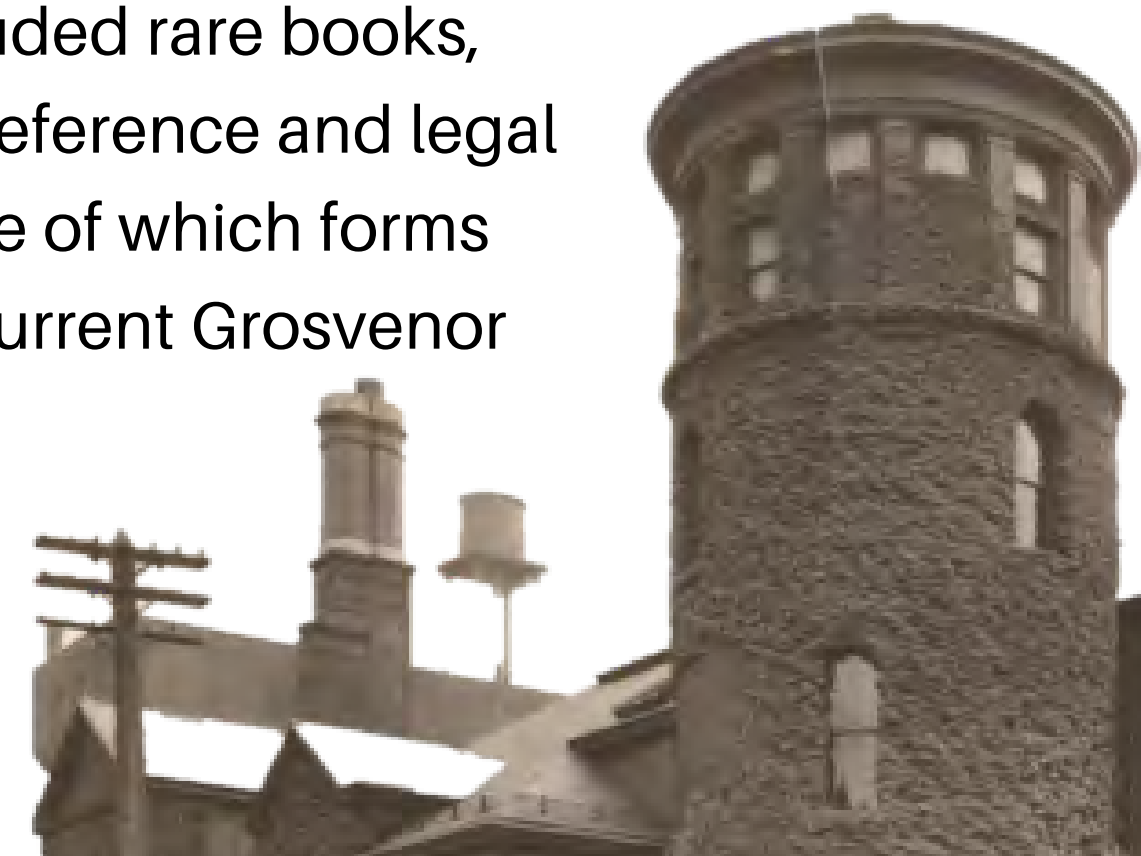
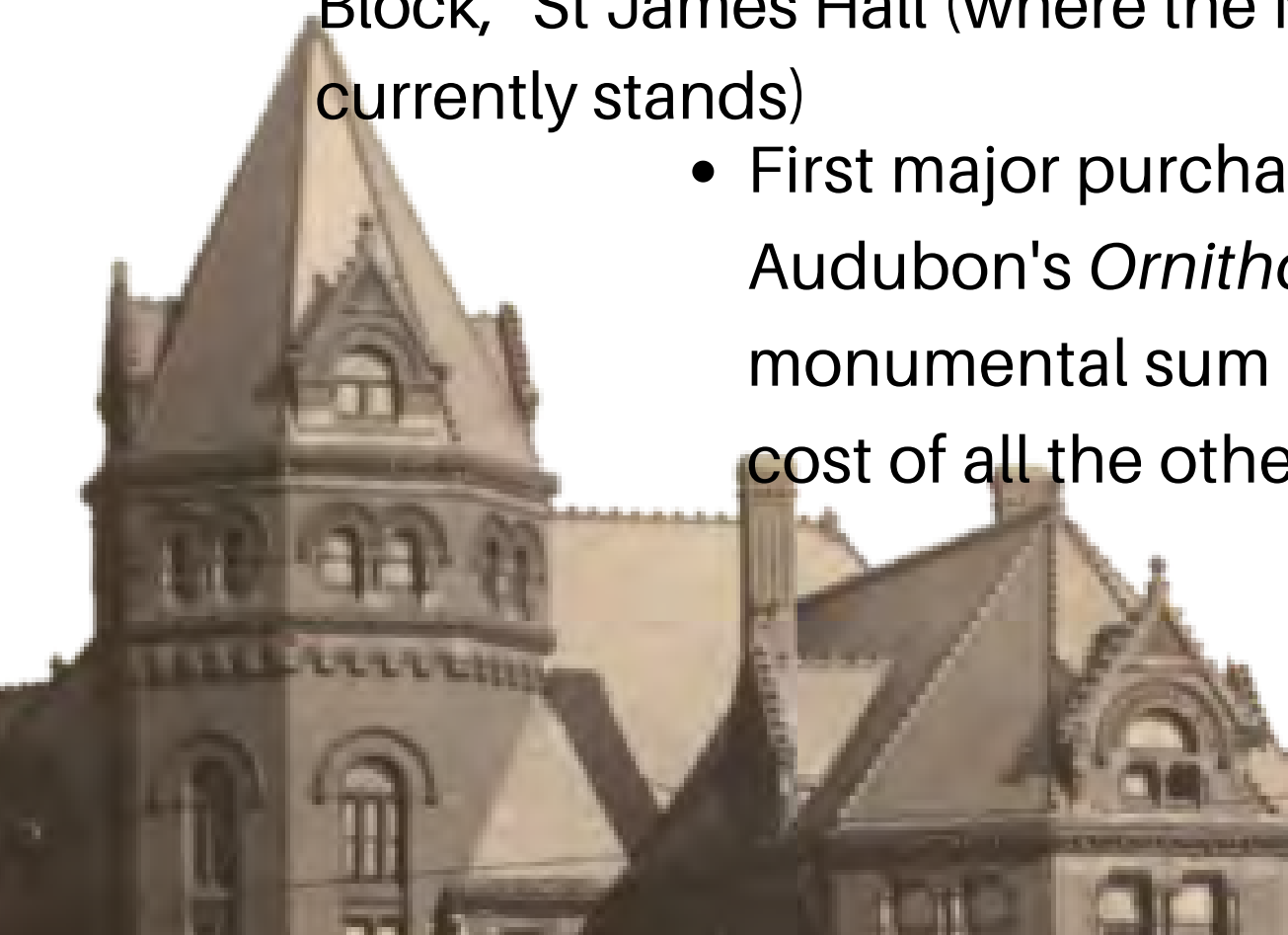
Early History: a Tale of Two Libraries

1836 - The Young Men's Association a subscription library for the "intellectual improvement of its members"

- \$2 per year for a subscription to the Buffalo Library's 2700 books (\$50 for a life subscription)
- Orig. locations - 3 rented floors in a building on Main St near what is now Seneca One Tower, later on South Division St, then the "American Block," St James Hall (where the M&T Tower currently stands)
 - First major purchase a 4 volume set of Audubon's *Ornithological Biography* for the monumental sum of \$800 -- more than the cost of all the other books in the collection

1871 - Grosvenor Library, a public reference library in Buffalo

- Built with funds bequeathed by prominent merchant Seth Grosvenor who left \$40,000 to the city of Buffalo to build a public, non-circulating library in 1857
- Moved to its own building on Edward & Franklin Streets in 1895
- Collections included rare books, music, medical reference and legal documents some of which forms the core of the current Grosvenor Room collection



From YMA to BPL



YMA served as an "incubator" to many local cultural orgs including AKG, Science Museum, and the Buffalo History Museum



First appearance on Lafayette Square in Cyrus Eidlitz designed building, 1887



Built on the site of the colonial court house



Buffalo Library had an appointed curator by 1885



Becomes The Buffalo Public Library in an agreement with the city of Buffalo in 1897



The Grosvenor's Rare Book Room established



1940 discovered that many books of a rare nature were stolen by a WPA worker, and only recovered by the efforts of the FBI & the NYPL



1942 Grosvenor Library expands, opening a reading room in the Cyclorama Building on Edward Street



Grosvenor Rare Book Collection dedicated in 1944. It was one of the first in a public library in the United States



Mid Century Merger



1953 three separate library institutions merged by New York State special legislation into The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System



New Central Library completed and dedicated in October of 1964 on the site of the previous building, which was razed (gargoyles & all)



A room dedicated to storing Rare Book materials was part of the building's orig. design



187 Years of Collecting

The Grosvenor Room benefits from the collecting of both of the City's Libraries

In the early years, members of the board, Librarians and Curators were often appointed from the community

Civic engagement and support of the library gave people a sense of pride in their local Institutions

Rare Book Display room, Apr. 1968, assistant deputy director Winnifred M. Wynne and clerk Marie Laurent



Poliphili

Hypnerotomachia

attributed to Francesco Colonna

Chapter initials acrostic: "FRATER

FRANCISVS COLVMNA POLIAM

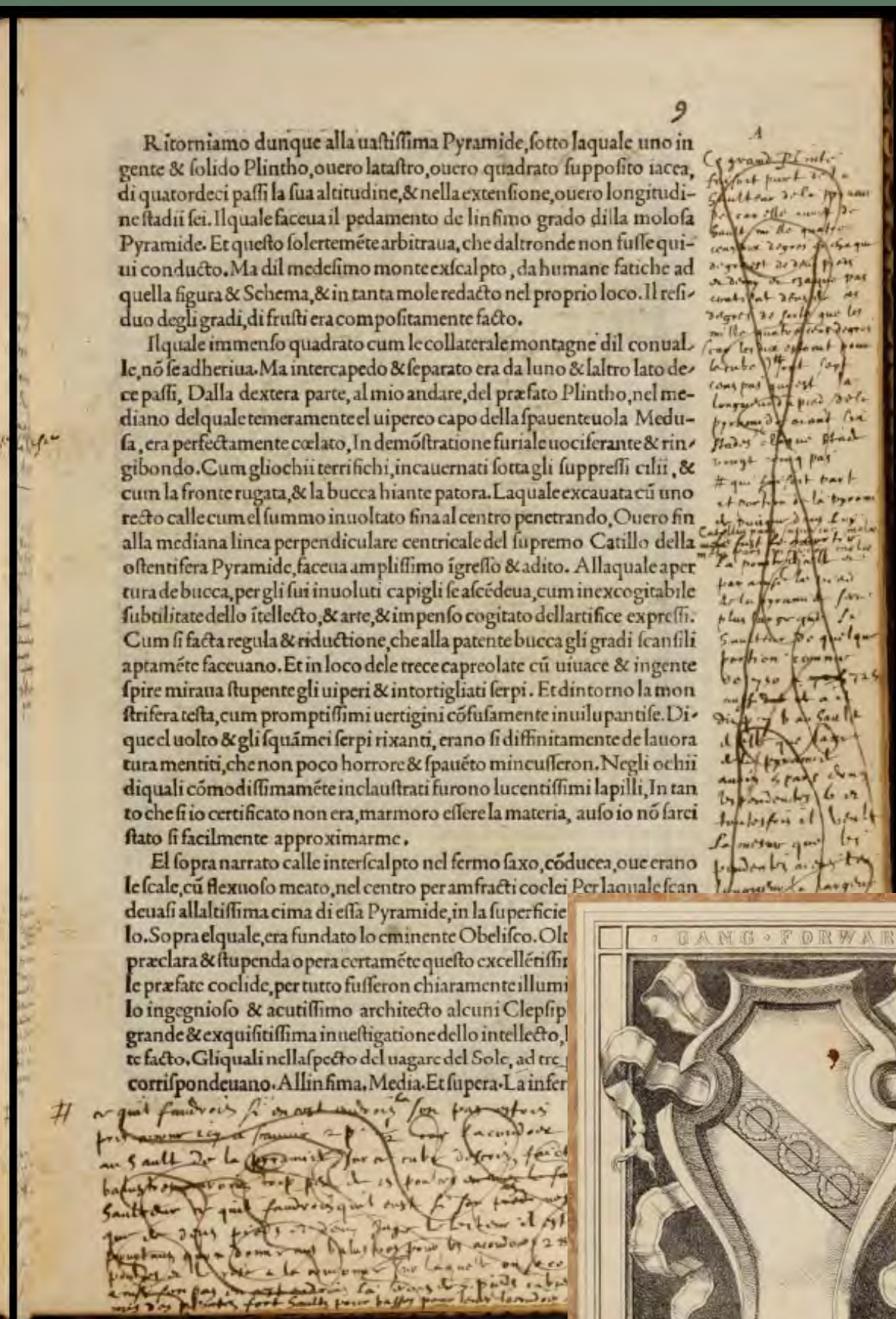
PERARMAVIT" (Father Francisco Colonna

greatly loved Polia.)

- Incunable, published in 1499

- Once owned by William Stirling, Scottish Baronet

- Marginalia written in several languages



Shakespeare's Folios

First Folio, 1623

- B&ECPL copy bound in full dark green morocco by Riviere & Son, a British (not French) binder (19th century)

Second Folio, 1632

- The Second Folio (1632) corrects many of the errors found in the First and adds some desirable new material including John Milton's first published work, a sonnet entitled On Shakespeare

Third Folio, 1664-5

- Third Folio (1663-1664) added several plays, including Pericles and 6 others now thought not to have been written by Shakespeare. Considered rare as most copies burned during the Great Fire of London in 1633

Fourth Folio, 1685

- Fourth Folio of 1685 was reprinted from the Third with obvious misprints corrected and spelling, punctuation and occasionally language "modernized"



Charles Clifton, Henry Folger and the "Gilburne copy"



- In 1919, NYC book dealer Gabriel Wells purchased a copy of the First Folio on behalf of Clifton. The copy was imperfect, but described in the seller's catalog as "probably" belonging to Samuel Gilburne, one of the actor's in Shakespeare's company.
- The original catalog price was \$3,000. Henry Clay Folger ordered the copy only to discover it had already been sold to Clifton. Folger offered to pay the buyer \$6,000.00 (double the catalog price). Clifton refused
- Folger and Clifton arranged a swap, whereby Folger got the purported Gilburne copy and Clifton received a perfect copy that Folger had purchased at auction for \$8,800.00
- The idea that Gilburne owned the disputed copy widely debunked! All four folios were donated to the Grosvenor Library in 1926

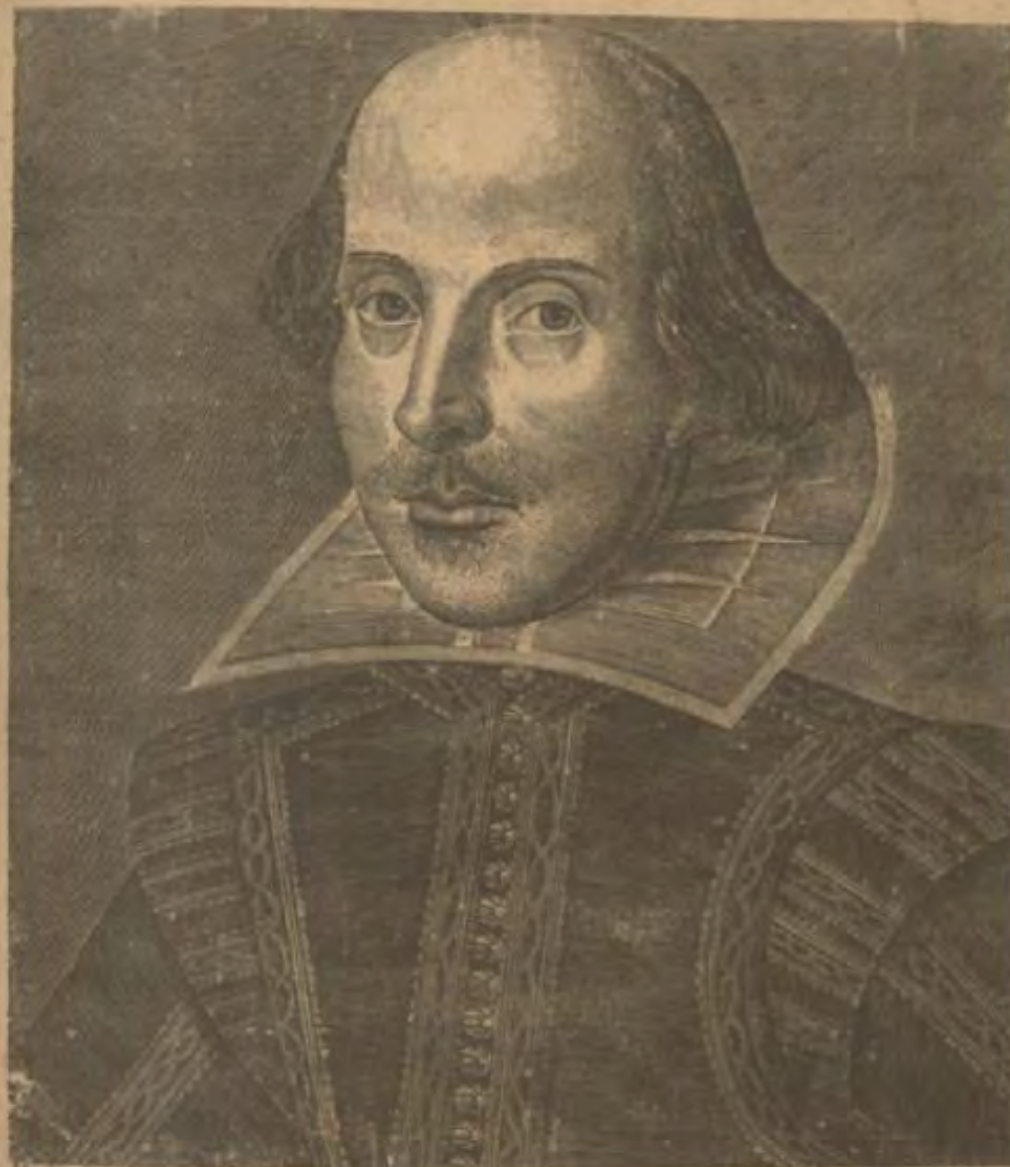
To the Reader.

This Figure, that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;
Wherein the Grauer had a strife
with Nature, to out-doo the life :
O, could he but haue drawne his vvrit
As well in brasse, as he hath hit
His face ; the Print vvould then surpassse
All, that vvas euer vvrit in brasse.
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
Not on his Picture, but his Booke.

B. I.

MR. WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARES
COMEDIES,
HISTORIES, &
TRAGEDIES.

Published according to the True Originall Copies.



LONDON
Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount. 1623.

400th Anniversary of Publication

View on our digital
collections:

<http://digital.buffalolib.org/document/2348#c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=7&z=-0.8047%2C-0.0504%2C3.649%2C1.6049>

The Federalist Papers, 1788

- A copy given to Thomas Jefferson by John Jay

- Marginalia on p. 151 attributed to Jefferson himself

32
To the Honble Mr. Jefferson
from his ob. Servant
John Jay. —

August Stewart.
a present from
Mr. Jefferson.

I was told by Mr. Jefferson
that the greater part of
the papers in this collecti-
on were written by Mr. Mad-
ison.

THE
FEDERALIST:
A COLLECTION
OF
ESSAYS,
WRITTEN IN FAVOUR OF THE
NEW CONSTITUTION,
AS AGREED UPON BY THE FEDERAL CONVENTION,
SEPTEMBER 17, 1787.
IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.
NEW-YORK:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY J. AND
No. 41, HANOVER-SQUARE
M, DCC, LXXXVIII.

authority of the legislature. New-York has no bill of her rights, and her constitution says not a word about the matter. No bills of rights appear annexed to the constitutions of the other states except the foregoing, and their constitutions are equally silent. I am told, however, that one or two states have bills of rights, which do not appear in this collection; but that those also recognize the right of the legislative authority in this respect. The 15th art. of the bill of rights of Virginia condemns standing armies in time of peace, without any reference to the consent of the legislature.

Audubon's Birds of America



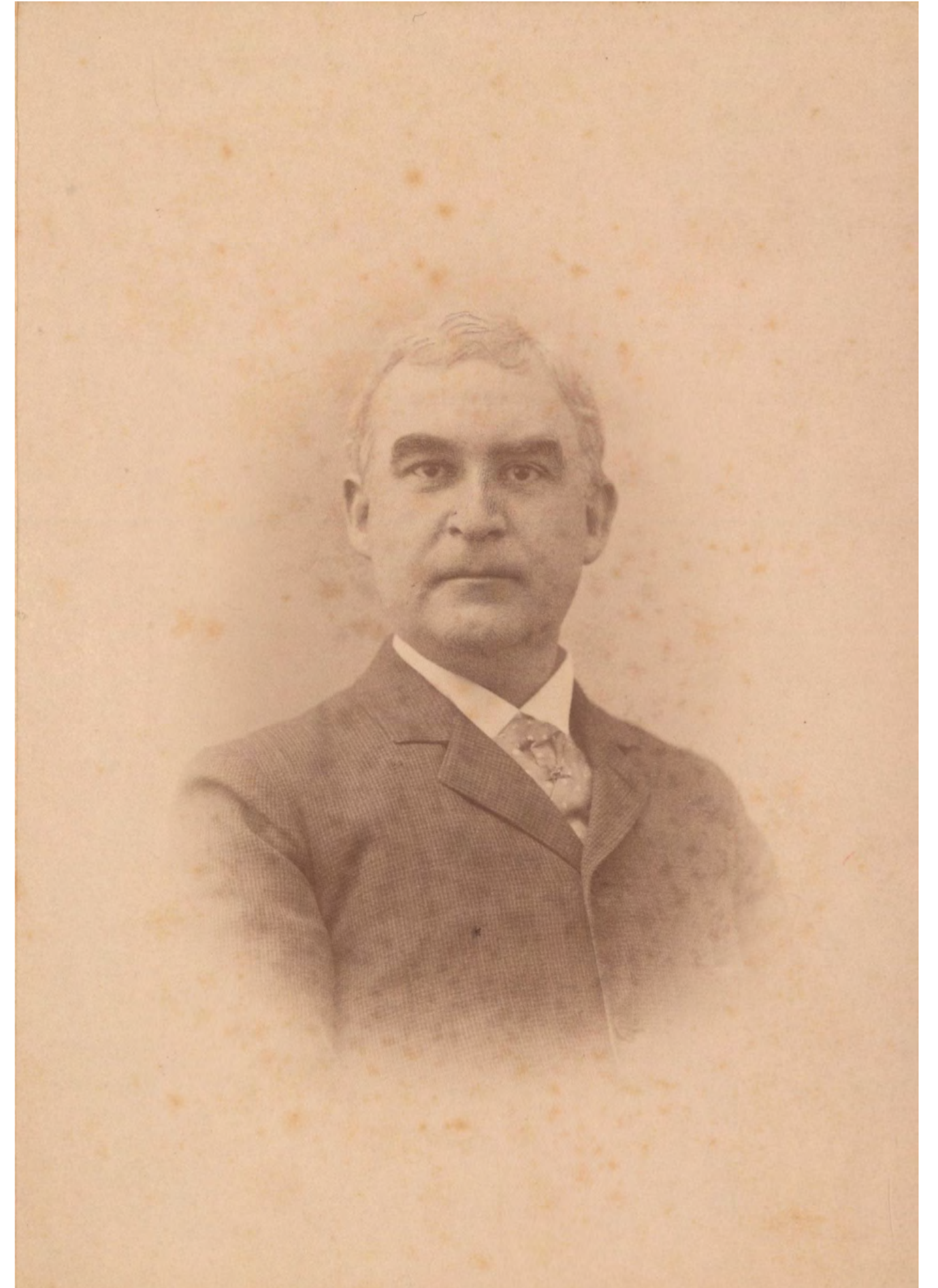
Audubon's Birds of America 1827-1838



- Issued in 87 parts. When completed in June 1838, it contained 435 hand colored engravings of 1,065 birds of 489 species
- The book was sold on a subscription basis with 5 plates delivered in each installment.
- The birds are drawn life size so even with a double elephant folio, some birds, like the pink flamingo, were difficult to fit on the page. Audubon has the flamingo bending down in order to accommodate its size on the page
- The Library's current copy of the Birds was purchased by Charles H. Williams in 1897. Williams had long standing order with NY ornithologists and bibliophiles for a perfect set of the work. In 1924, his daughter, Mrs. Frederick L. Pratt, donated the set to the Library

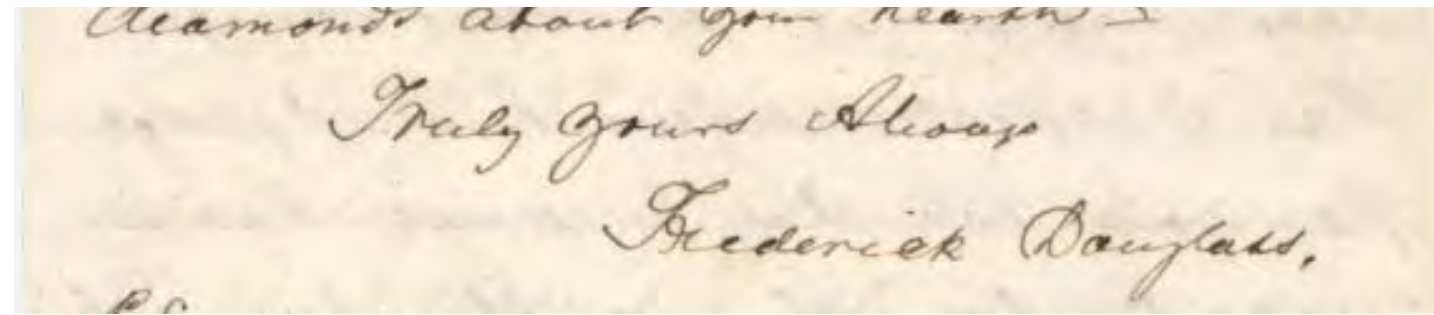
Gluck Collection

- A Cornell educated attorney born in Niagara Falls, practiced in Buffalo
- In 1885, Gluck was appointed curator of the Buffalo Public Library (BPL)
- Immediately began soliciting publishers and authors for manuscripts on behalf of the library. Would often secure items with his own funds
- Donated collection to the library corresponding with the opening of the Eidletz designed Buffalo Public Library in 1887. A second donation was made in 1897
- Died unexpectedly in NYC in 1897 just seven months after final donation



A treasure trove of over 500 manuscripts, letters and engraved portraits

- Letters from statesman including Jefferson, Washington, Burr, Lincoln, & Douglass



- Letters written by Byron, Bronte, the Brownings, Hawthorn, Johnson, and Tennyson
- Orig. manuscripts from Emerson (Representative Men), Alcott (Sophie's Secret), Dickens (The great international walking match of February 29th, 1868) and most famously ...

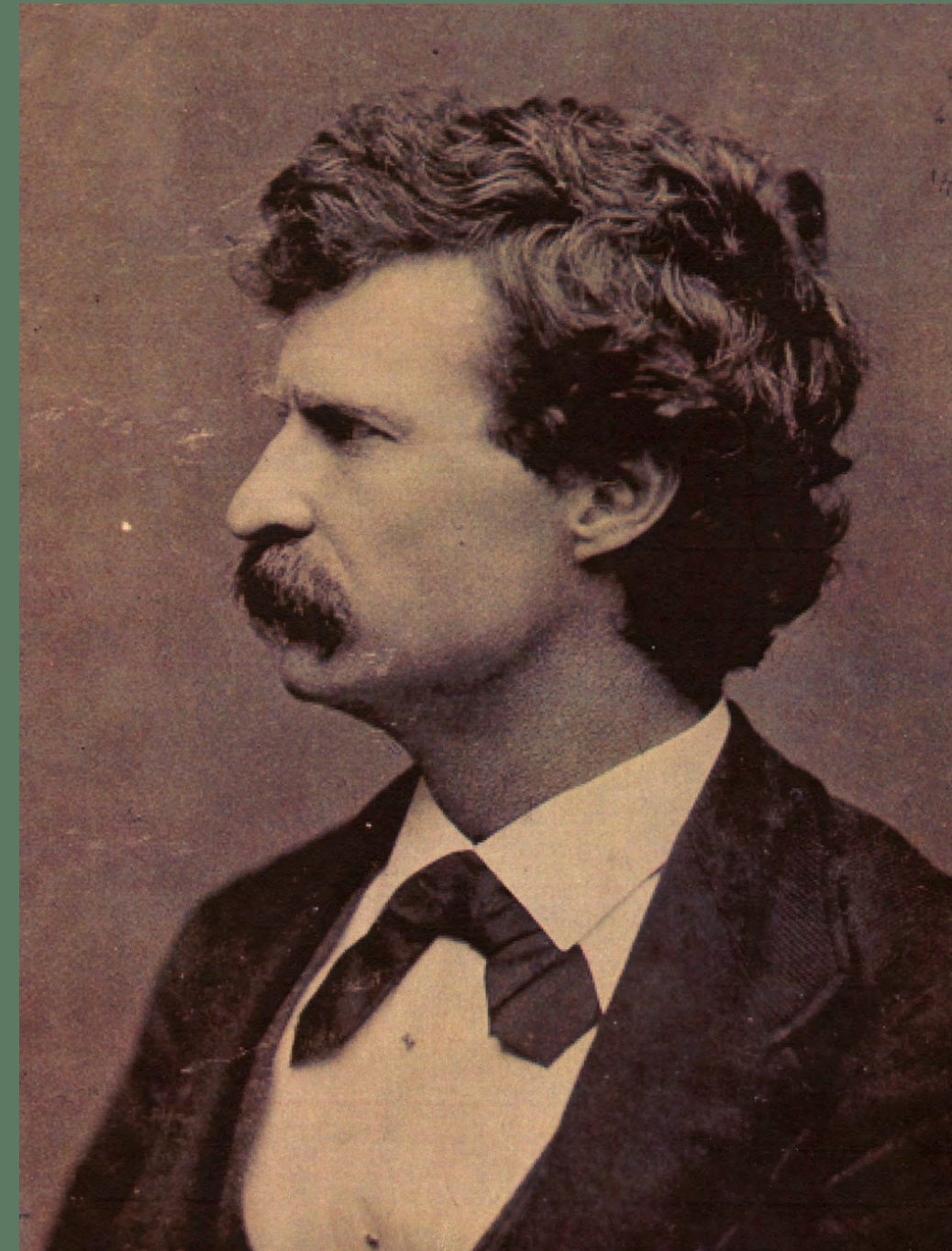
The Huckleberry Finn Manuscript

"Huckleberry Finn" - Autobiography.
Under preface ^{to} "Huck."
Jan of 20 of 0'

NOTICE.

Persons attempting to find a motive in this ~~book~~ ^{narrative} will be prosecuted; Persons attempting to find a Plot in ~~it~~ ^{it} will be shot.

By Order of the Author.
Per G. G. Chief of Ordnance.
(Artillery) 2



Hartford, Nov. 12/85.

James F. Gluck, Esq

Dear Sir:

I will comply, as far as I can, with the greatest pleasure — that is, to the extent of 50 percent of a MS. book ("The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.")

I have hunted the house over, & that is all I can find, except half of "Life on the Mississippi" — in mixed & shabby condition & not worth expressage.

Half of the Finn book is extant because that half was

Twain letter to Gluck offering half of the manuscript





Twain's home, 472 Delaware Ave, Buffalo

On display (in some form) since 1897..

Prized Documents Test Ingenuity of Library Staff

'Dual Tenancy' Temporarily Solves Problem of Valuable Collection



Old manuscripts and library director Joseph B. Rounds share quarters

... glass wall filled with literary treasures dominates.

By MARGARET FESS

WHEN OFFICIALS of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library moved into their new central offices yesterday in the Buffalo Public Library, a former "tenant" held priority rights.

The tenant in this instance is a collection of almost 1,000 manuscripts, the question of Cornell arose. Then the legal minds on the board of trustees went to work.

THE ANSWER—Dual tenancy. One of the last acts of the board of trustees of the Buffalo Public Library was to order a 750-pound fire-proof vault. In this and an-
retary, Mrs. Janet Severance; Mrs. Ann Adie of the personnel department and Mrs. Eleanor Putney of the payroll division.

A portion of the Gluck collection still dominates the scene. This is housed in a large, locked glass case just in front of the hallway leading to the new offices. It serves as a glass wall

Library, active in the formation of the Buffalo Public Library, a trustee of the Grosvenor Library and a trustee of Cornell University.

His collection of manuscripts and autographs contains such names as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Edgar Allen Poe, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Sir Francis Bacon, Benjamin

A library scandal of literary proportions!



Interior of the "Manuscript Room" of the Eidlitz Building c. 1887

POE'S WATCH GONE FROM LIBRARY

Old Gold Timepiece, Once Owned and Carried by the Poet, Is Stolen—Reposed in Autograph and Manuscript Department and Was One of the Treasures of Collection—Thief Also Robs Telephone Bank of Store of Nickels.

MAY HAVE ENTERED WITH DUPLICATE KEY

The police of the Pearl Street station are at work on a mysterious theft which was committed about five o'clock yesterday morning at the Buffalo Public Library. The thief, the police think, may have entered the Clinton Street basement by using a duplicate key. He went to the first floor and broke open a telephone bank taking from it all the nickels. Then he took from a case in the autograph and manuscript department an old gold watch.

The watch of itself is not very valuable as neither the gold in the case nor the works would bring much money in the present state of the pawnbrokers' market. The timepiece, however, has historical value because it once was owned and carried by Edgar Allen Poe, poet and Bohemian. The watch has been in the collection at the library for a long time.

MR. ELMENDORF RESERVED.

Inquiry concerning the robbery and the character and importance of the watch was made of H. L. Elmendorf, superintendent of the library, last evening. A woman who answered the telephone stated that Mr. Elmendorf was ill and could not talk with the reporter. Questions asked by the reporter were repeated by the lady to the superintendent. The replies, condensed, were that the superintendent did not wish the robbery to be reported by the newspapers until after a "meeting of the board" today; that the watch was "only a curio having no intrinsic value" and the matter was "not worth any attention." Further effort to ascertain whether or not the

Watch was an historical relic was shut off by the hanging up of the telephone receiver at the home of Mr. Elmendorf. A few minutes later Mr. Brown, who said he was "of the Public Library," called The Courier by telephone and stated that Mr. Elmendorf was ill and he would speak in his stead. Mr. Brown then gave the information that the watch formerly was Poe's and stated that the robbery was a mystery. He said that the thief may have entered the Library while the scrubwomen were getting to work at 5 o'clock. Mr. Brown also said that the watch was of no value excepting, as the reporter had contended, that it possessed historic value as connected with some important personage—which was all the reporter had attempted to ascertain from the superintendent of the Library, which is looked upon as an institution belonging to the people of this city.

COURIER 6-8-1906

Englische Werke Katholischer

MR. ELMENDORF RESERVED.

Inquiry concerning the robbery and the character and importance of the watch was made of H. L. Elmendorf, superintendent of the library, last evening. A woman who answered the telephone stated that Mr. Elmendorf was ill and could not talk with the reporter. Questions asked by the reporter were repeated by the lady to the superintendent. The replies, condensed, were that the superintendent did not wish the robbery to be reported by the newspapers until after a "meeting of the board" today; that the watch was "only a curio having no intrinsic value" and the matter was "not worth any attention." Further effort to ascertain whether or not the

manner; success of Roman
Manners.
Matilda of Canossa.
Jew of Verona.
Lorenzo; or the Conscript.
Ubaldo and Irene.

Article concerning the theft from the Courier-Express, June 8, 1906

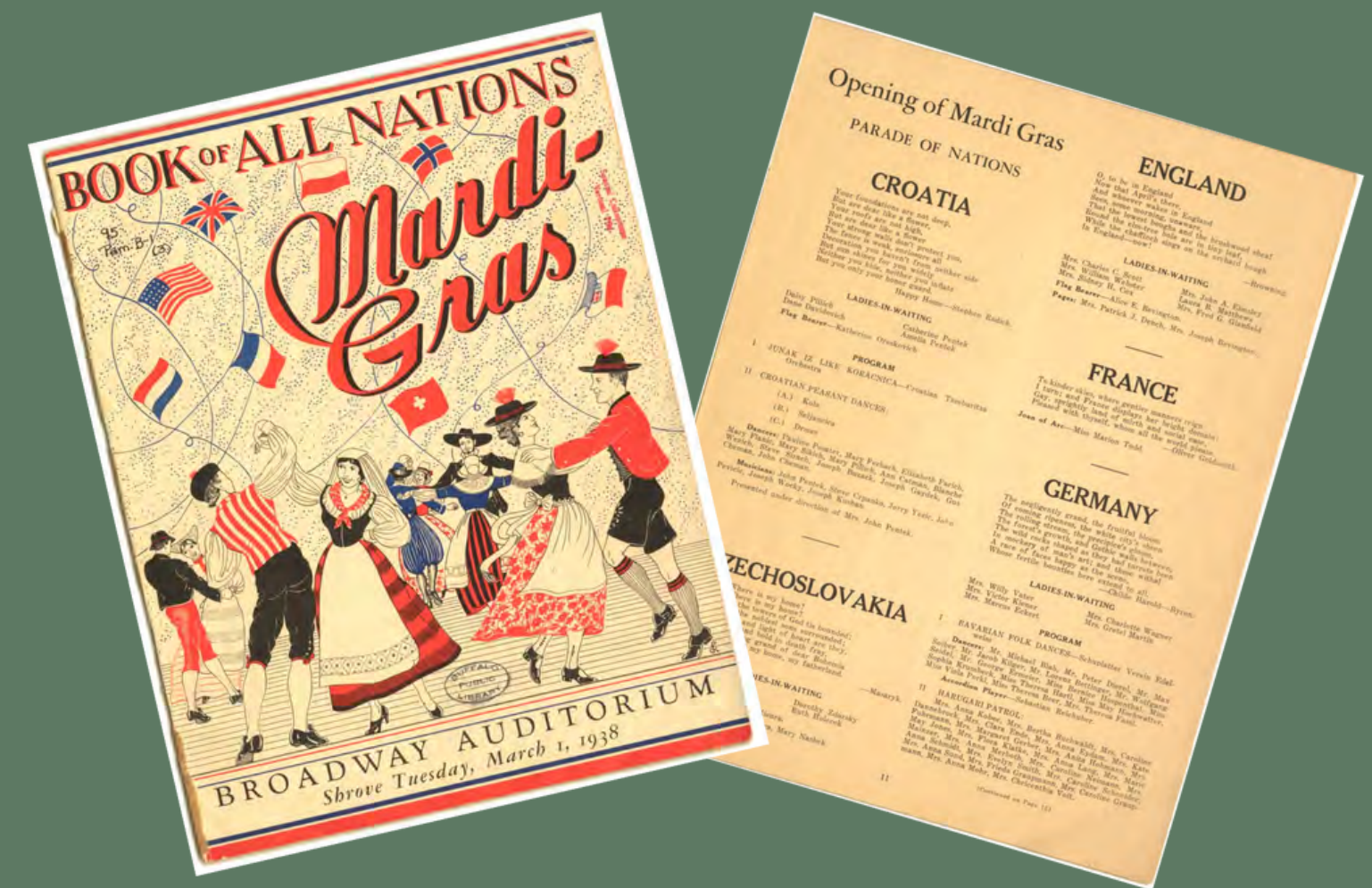
Milestones of Science Collection



- Collection assembled in 1938 at the Buffalo Museum of Science under the auspices of Chauncy Hamlin, the long-time Chairman of the Buffalo Museum of Science
- Inspired to purchase first editions by the world's greatest scientists after purchasing Copernicus' *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, printed in 1543. Purchased for a mere \$1800 during the Depression, Hamlin was inspired to collect first editions of books of Science that changed the world

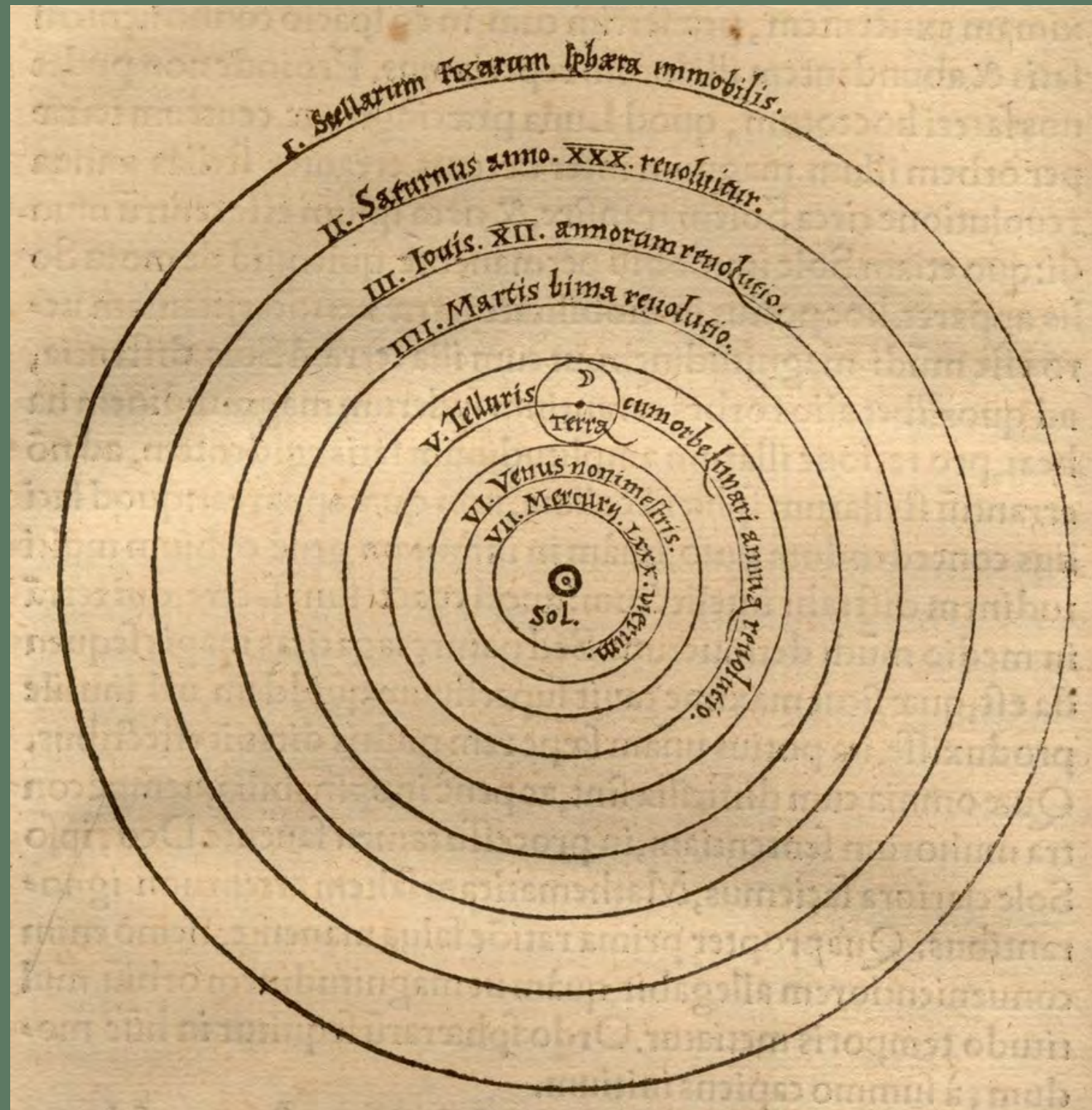
All Nation's Mardi Gras

To raise money to buy the books on the list, he employed a quite unique strategy: encourage the many strong ethnic organizations in Buffalo at that time to contribute to buy the books of their countrymen (i.e., Italians help buy DaVinci and Galileo, Germans help buy the Kepler and Bunsen, etc.) by participating in an "All Nations Mardi Gras," a pageant attended by over 6000 people to raise funds to develop the collection



Left to right, Mrs. Frederick C. Backus, Mrs. Robert Yates and Miss Joan Wendt, patronesses for the All Nations Mardi Gras on Tuesday night, March 1st, at the Broadway Auditorium, to benefit the library fund of the Buffalo Museum of Science, are pictured with the posters which they are helping to distribute throughout the city.

De Revolutionibus... and its provenance



censored, but almost all trace has been washed away together with possibly a few other notes. On T. 66, a finely-drawn copy of the diagram on f. 66v.

L258

Buffalo, New York.

Buffalo and Erie County Public Library.

1543
RL 16235.

Calf, with typical English fillets, red edges XVII(?). 263 x 185 mm. Old MS vellum guard strips from the original binding; trimmed in rebinding. Mild waterstaining at the top of the early part and at the bottom on ff. 146-47.

Errata (at the end.

Provenance:

1. (sp) *Johannes Londer* (not identified, but another Londer signature is found in a Kepler volume at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton).
2. Possibly in the library of the virtuoso Sir Thomas Browne (1605-82), physician and author of *Religio Medici*, or his son Edward (1644-1708), sometime president of the College of Physicians. Copernicus' *De revolutionibus* is conspicuously absent in the rich selection of astronomy books in their sale (ref. 1), but some of the library passed directly to family members and were not in the sale; also, they rarely inscribed their names in their books (ref. 2).
3. BP, Owen Brigstocke (1679-1746), grandson by marriage of Sir Thomas Browne, and a member of Parliament. From the Blaenpant Library, formed by Brigstocke and auctioned by order of A. Brigstocke at Sotheby's on 21 December 1921, lot 618, to "Weldon" for £26 [sic for John Weldon & Co. and William Wesley & Son, London ?]. The binding is described as "old sheepskin (damaged)."
4. Sold by J. S. Turner at Sotheby's on 11 December 1935, lot 577, to Scribner's for £230. Scribner's reproduced the title page in their *Catalogue III* [1937], and it was sold to the Buffalo Museum of Science for \$1800 (=£360). Funds for the purchase were raised from the Polish ethnic community in Buffalo.
5. After many years of not exhibiting the books, the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences decided to auction the collection; following a public outcry, the books were exchanged in 1996 to the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library for a duplicate copy of the John James Audubon's *Birds of America*, which was auctioned instead. (See ref. 3.)

Errata corrections made throughout (some on pasteover slips), plus a few underlinings. The title page and f. 9v are reproduced in ref. 4.

1. Jeremiah S. Finch, *A Catalogue of the Libraries of Sir Thomas Browne and Dr Edward Browne, His Son* (Leiden, 1986); the sale in London began 8 January 1711.
2. Geoffrey Keynes, *A Bibliography of Sir Thomas Browne* (Oxford, 1968).
3. Daniel L. Walters and Mary E. Petty, "The Milestones of Science' Collection: The Public Library and the Conservation of Buffalo's Cultural Heritage," *Libraries & Culture*, 34 (1989), 262-77.
4. Ruth A. Sparrow, compiler, *Milestones of Science*, Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences Collection Catalogue Number 1 (Buffalo, 1972).

L259

Ithaca 1, New York.

Cornell University.

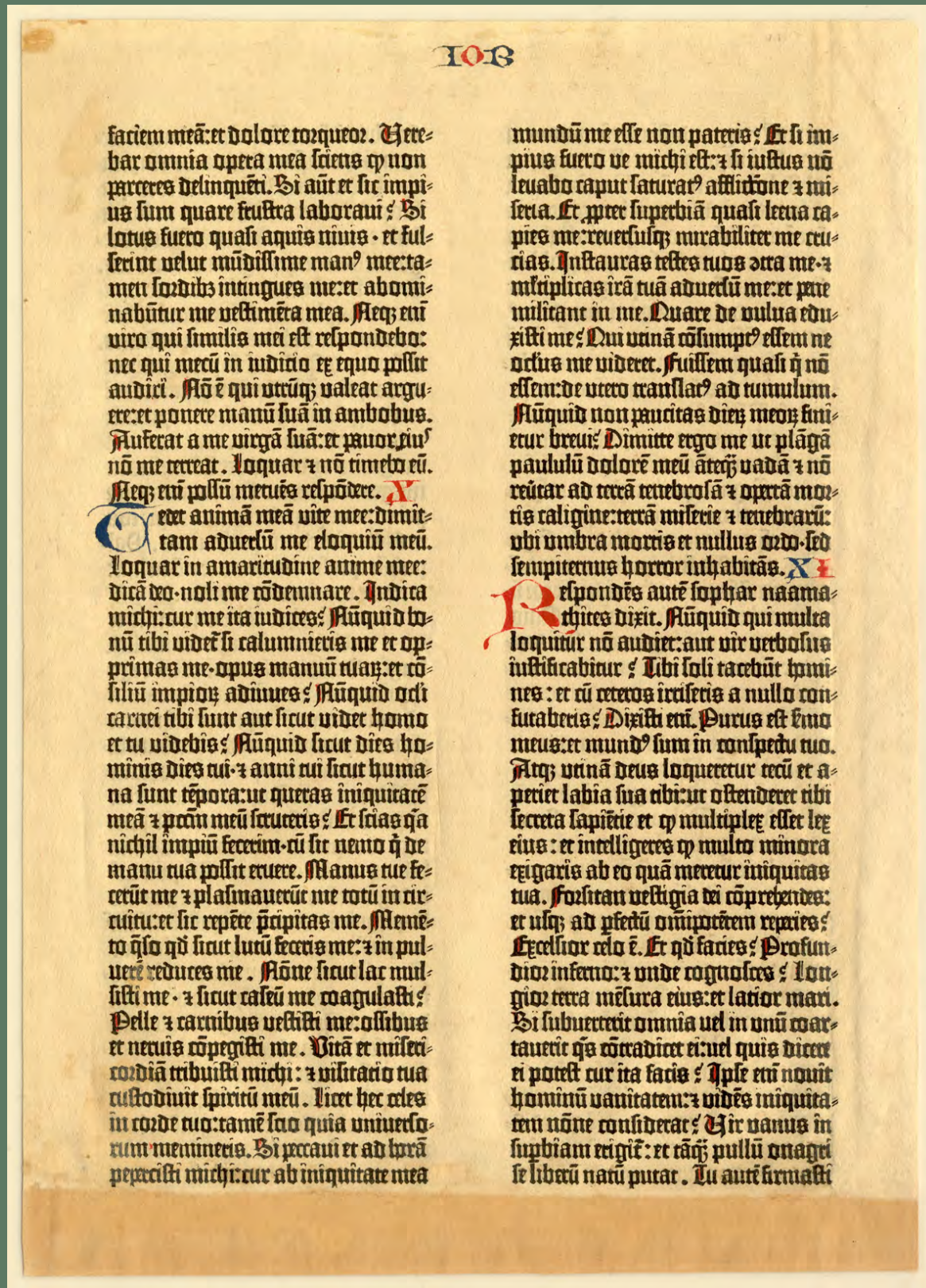
1543
Rare QB41 C78 D2+ 1543+

Blind-stamped calf over oak boards, clasps missing, XVI. 269 x 193 mm. Signature Y bound out of order.

Provenance:

1. Early annotator in or near Oxford.

The Milestones: from Aristotle to Marconi



197 epochal titles in the history of science as represented in the Buffalo Museum of Natural Sciences plus..

- A leaf from the Gutenberg Bible, printed in 1455



- Rudimentum Novitotiorum - one of the earliest examples of a printed woodcut map representing the world, printed in 1475

How the Milestones came to the B&ECPL



- Long after Hamlin's tenure at the Buffalo Museum of Science, the Museum fell on hard times. The Museum declared that the Milestones of Science "material [was] no longer appropriate to the purposes of" the Museum
- Science Museum's copy of BoA was sold in 1987, the Museum board justified this decision by the fact that another public institution—the public library—had a set of the Birds on display, so the public would not be deprived by its sale
- In 1994 Buffalo News reported that "The Milestones of Science" collection was headed for the auction block--the community objected strongly.
- Erie County government became involved and the sale was halted. One newspaper editorial reminded the citizens of Buffalo that "the [Milestones] collection is the property of the Buffalo area's people--a true community possession"

The work we do today

Collecting

- New acquisitions include the Jordan Collection, currently on exhibit both digitally and in person

Conservation

- Projects to repair and preserve books for future generations. Recent projects include stabilizing the Huckleberry Finn manuscript and Audubon's Quadrupeds of North America

Digitization

- The Library has invested in technology to digitize and exhibit many of its resources for view and study online.

The screenshot displays the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Digital Collections website. The header includes the library's logo and navigation links: Home, Browse Collections, B&ECPL on NY Heritage, Erie County Historic Newspapers, and About. A search bar is located in the top right corner. The main content area features a large image viewer for a document titled "NEW TOPOGRAPHICAL ATLAS OF ERIE CO., NEW YORK, FROM ACTUAL SURVEYS ESPECIALLY FOR THIS ATLAS". The viewer shows two pages: a blank page on the left and a title page on the right. The title page text reads: "NEW TOPOGRAPHICAL ATLAS OF ERIE CO., NEW YORK. FROM ACTUAL SURVEYS ESPECIALLY FOR THIS ATLAS. STONE & STEWART, PUBLISHERS. PHILADELPHIA. 1860." The viewer interface includes navigation controls like back, forward, and zoom. To the right of the viewer, there are metadata sections: "Collection" (Maps and Atlases), "Citation" (Stone & Stewart, publishers, "New Topographical Atlas of Erie Co., New York, from actual surveys especially for this atlas," B&ECPL Digital Collections, accessed September 12, 2023, https://digital.buffalolib.org/document/2156), and "Title" (New Topographical Atlas of Erie Co., New York, from actual surveys especially for this atlas).

Explore our Digital Collections page:
<https://www.buffalolib.org/research-resources/digital-collections>

Exhibits

- The Special Collection Department is dedicated to providing access to its collection to the public through various exhibits mounted in the library throughout the year. The Department also lends items to other institutions for view when conditions are met

Education

- Lectures, events and classes to educate the public, available online:

<https://grosvenorroom.wordpress.com/events/>

Research Services

- Obituary, city directory, and article lookups: <https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/research-services>
- Guides and publications to help familiarize you with our collections: <https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications>



Thank you for listening!

Questions? Comments?



Learn even more about the Library's history from this presentation from the Buffalo Imagine Series



Grosvenor Library, Cyclorama Annex