

COE BIBLIOPHILE

Fall 2007

A newsletter for members of the Coe College Library Association

Out of the darkness: Making the Henry College Archives a resource for scholars on and off campus

Even with a growing interest in Coe's collection of materials related to journalist and author William L. Shirer '25, the George T. Henry College Archives on the library's lower level can be a rather lonely place to work, admits new Archives Assistant Sara Pitcher. "Almost nobody comes here unless they mistake it for the Audiovisual Department," which is located next door.

But Pitcher's hiring is part of an effort to make the archives a livelier — and more useful — place for the college community and others in search of historical documents and photographs. Her two-year position was funded by gift money to further the processing of the Shirer collection, which comprises more than 150 linear feet of material, and provide a resource person for researchers using the archives.

A 2007 Coe graduate who worked at the library for four years while a student, Pitcher now staffs the archives during regular hours — from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 3:30 p.m. — every weekday. After getting a taste of archival preservation work while assisting with the Shirer archives project as a student, she is learning the trade "one step at a time" from Coe's new Head of Reference Jill Jack, an experienced archivist.

In addition to managing the Shirer archives, Pitcher attends to other materials that arrive on an almost daily basis. "My main job is processing them, getting them in the correct acid-free folders and putting them in the proper place in the vault. I'm also here to help people find a photo

or other materials, and we want to make the archives a place that is easy for classes to use."

The archives' largest and most used resource is its 60-year collection of images by college photographer George Henry '49, Pitcher says. Coe also has a significant collection of archival materials relating to poet Paul Engle '31.

"We have a lot of materials on World War II that have not been processed, posters from past Olympics, and letters from the 18th century," Pitcher adds. "We are finding new collections all the time that we didn't know were there, and we're trying to get them catalogued so we can tell the faculty what we have."

Pitcher says she recently discovered a signed photograph of Herbert Hoover and a photo of the library being built in 1928. "It's fun to come across photos or documents while I'm working," she says. "It's like finding jewels. It's interesting to stop and look — and then file things in a way that someone else can find them."

That's an important objective, she emphasizes. "We have the documents and collections. Instead of having them buried



Sara Pitcher '07, the new archives assistant in Coe's George T. Henry College Archives, is eager to help library users discover the archives' vast resources.

in a corner where no one can see them, we want people to be able to look at and use this great resource on campus."

Recent physical changes to the archives are also aimed at making the facility more user-friendly, she notes. A system of drop-down lights that limited where furniture could be placed has been replaced with more flexible lighting, and a new bookcase in the archives main room contains part of the archives collection of every known book published by Coe faculty and staff members and alumni, as well as rare books.

"Anyone can come in and look at these," she says — hoping that the next time you pass through the library, you'll do just that.



From the library to the big wide world...

A few of the library's more than two-dozen graduating student workers gathered on the library steps before they said farewell to Coe this past summer. Many of them had worked for four years in one of the library's six departments, learning from and developing close friendships with library staff members and work-study colleagues.

Where are they now? Here's what we know, clockwise from top left:

Dan Mayo is working at TestAmerica, an environmental testing lab in Greensburg, Pa.;

Chris Adair is working at Banker's Life Insurance in Cedar Rapids;

Sarah Dolan is teaching Kindergarten at Walker Elementary School in Troy Mills, Ia.;

Cassidy Brandt is attending graduate school in physical therapy at the University of Iowa;

Kelly Argo is working in a library in Oklahoma City, Okla.;

Ashish Rajbhandari is a graduate student in economics at the University of California-Irvine;

Gavin Wright is working at West Music in Iowa City;

Gen Oroszvary is working in the hospitality industry in Pa.;

Vanessa Dimmer is finishing her final course work at Coe this semester;

Sara Pitcher is the new archives assistant at Stewart Memorial Library (see page 1); and

Michael Hale (seated at center) is an applications architect at ShopKo Corporation in Green Bay, Wis.

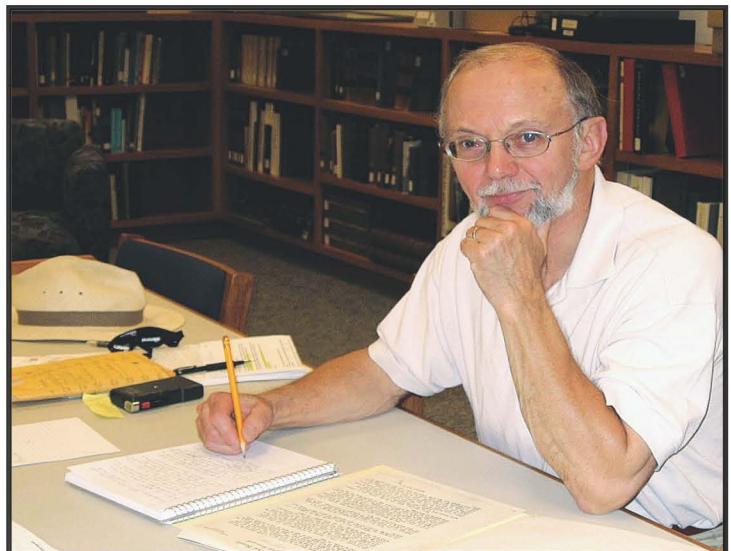
Scholarship begets friendship

Among those who made their way to Coe's campus to use the George T. Henry College Archives this past summer was Ken Cuthbertson, editor of the quarterly *Queens Alumni Review* at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. The author of two published biographies, Cuthbertson was conducting research for his upcoming biography of William Shirer, tentatively titled *A Complex Fate: William L. Shirer and the American Century*, to be published by the University of Missouri Press. Cuthbertson says his book — the first biography of Shirer — "is 'unauthorized,' but is being written with the full cooperation and encouragement of Shirer's family."

He writes of his experience at Coe, "The week I spent at Coe delving into the Shirer papers yielded a wealth of information, and the staff at the Stewart Library...were wonderfully supportive and helpful. So were the other folks on campus with whom I was in contact. I came away from Coe with only positive memories and now sing the praises of the college to anyone who asks or will listen."

Other researchers who used the archives recently include historian Kenneth C. Barnes from the University of Central Arkansas, who is writing a book about four of the last western journalists in Germany after World War II; Paul C. Juhl, who is writing a book about Grant Wood; and Charles J. Shields, who used the Paul Engle collection in relation to a book he is writing on Kurt Vonnegut, an Engle correspondent.

Shirer biographer Ken Cuthbertson did vital research at the Henry College Archives — and enjoyed meeting the Coe community — this past summer.



Library's new reference chief brings dual interests and experience to Coe post

For Stewart Memorial Library's new Head of Reference Jill Jack, the position provides an opportunity to pursue two of her passions — reference work and archival research.

"I love being a reference librarian — trying to find answers and being able to teach people to find information," she says. "Libraries can be a scary place, particularly now with all the technology. I want learning to be fun, and for students, the most important thing could be knowing that someone is here to help them when they're stuck."

With equal enthusiasm, Jack is overseeing Coe's George T. Henry College Archives, including the work she began in fall 2006 as a part-time archivist consultant processing Coe's William L. Shirer collection.

"I love history and the research aspect of it," she emphasizes. "I really think archives are one of the most important aspects of our history and I want people to be able to find what they need. Without it we won't know anything about ourselves, and it's fascinating."

Jack has honed both areas of expertise during a two-pronged career that has included tours of duty with several area academic and historical institutions. A Chicago native, she came to the University of Iowa to earn her bachelor's degree in history and political science, followed by a master's in history with an emphasis in African-American and women's studies.

After managing the textbook section of the UI Bookstore for several years, Jack earned her Master of Library Science degree at the University of Indiana in 1995, with a focus on "special collections" — archives, rare books and government documents. Returning to Iowa, she spent five years as a reference librarian at Cornell College. On the side, she developed an archive consulting business called Paper Trails that led to assignments with the State Historical Society of Iowa and the Linn County History Center.

Most recently, Jack worked as a part-time reference librarian at Kirkwood Community College while exploring and organizing the Shirer archives at Coe. The Coe reference position vacated by retiring Head of Reference Betty Rogers offered a chance to deepen her relationship with an institution she has grown to appreciate during her archives work.

"I like the small college community and I like the people," she says. "I'm excited to meet the faculty as they come in and to get to know the students."

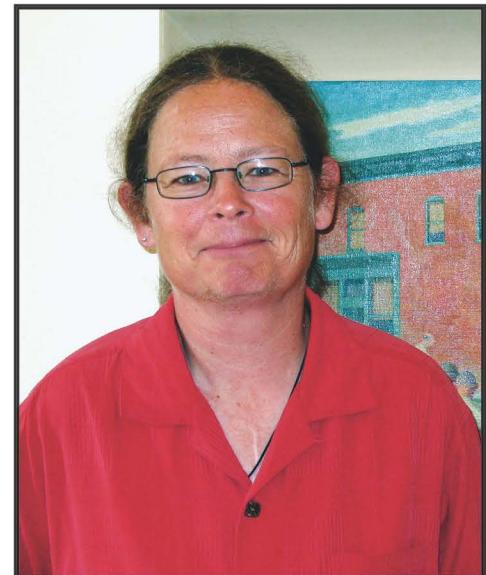
Jack's first priority has been teaching Coe's First-Year Seminar

students and other classes about the library's databases and how to use them to do research. "Next is making sure we have the materials here that faculty and students need to do their research and going the extra mile to make sure they're really accomplishing their objectives."

When not working with students and faculty or acquiring resources for the library, Jack will continue her archival work on Coe's massive collection of William Shirer notes, manuscripts and documents, which came to the college in two large portions before and after his death.

"It has all been processed," she says. "Now I'm directing [new Archives Assistant] Sara on merging the two parts into one coherent collection. We would like to get to a point in the near future where faculty can use it in their classes. I'm really excited about getting the archives into shape so that it's a functional tool. To be able to use the materials in the archives will really enhance the learning experience."

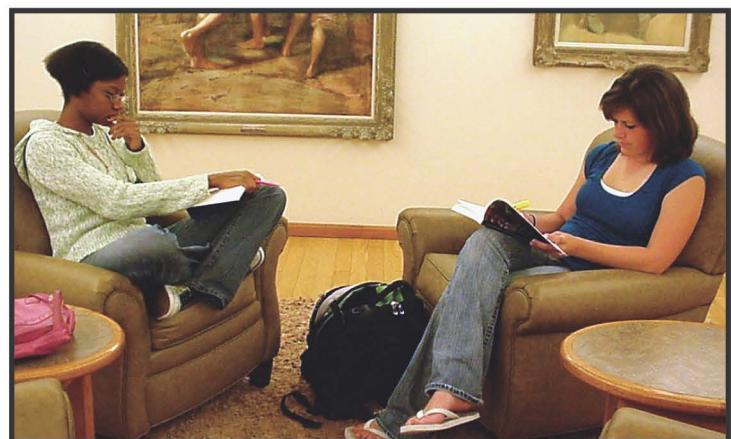
Jack, whose family includes partner, Diane, a 20-year-old daughter, Jennifer, and two dogs, has hobbies as diverse as her research interests. "I play softball, I like movies, I'm a big Cubs fan, I'm a Marx Brothers fan, I like to garden and I love to cook." As if that's not enough to fill her time, she says she's also looking forward to attending many Coe events.



Stewart Memorial Library Head of Reference Jill Jack, who joined the staff in July, loves working with students and digging into the college archives to unearth interesting information.

Conger-style comfort

Alexis Johnson '09 (left) and Meredith Toay '11 study in the ample leather chairs recently donated to Coe for placement in the library's Metcalf Gallery by Marguerite Gurekian, a dear friend of Boston artist and 1936 Coe graduate Conger Metcalf. Gurekian, who has remained in close touch with Coe since Metcalf's death in 1998, says the chairs are ones that he would have liked. In 2001 she donated four similar chairs, now located in the Pashgian Gallery, which also houses works by Metcalf. The comfy chairs are very popular with students, reports Library Director Rich Doyle.

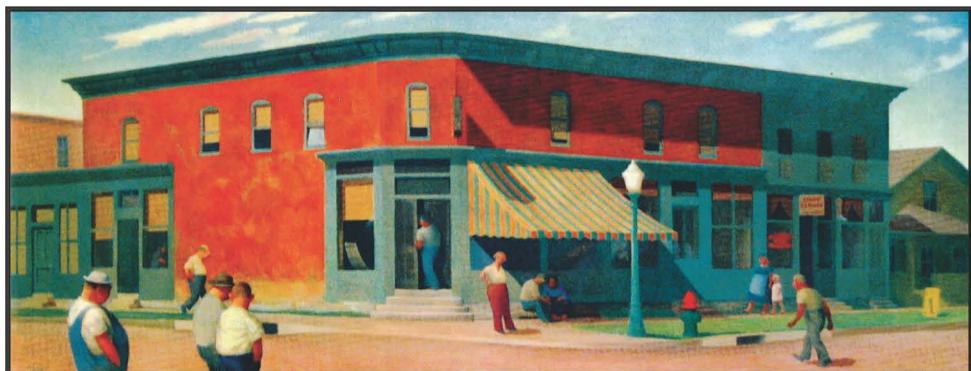


Research reveals story of real “Little Bohemia” lithograph

The spring 2007 issue of the Bibliophile featured a photo of what was believed to be a lithograph, recently donated to the library, of Marvin Cone’s painting “Little Bohemia Tavern.” At the time, the library staff was trying to determine when the lithographs were produced. Because the print was identified as a “Lithography by Wagners Printers,” Reference Assistant Harlene Hansen went to the Internet to locate contact information for the longtime Davenport, Iowa-based printer. Although the company has been purchased by another firm, officials there directed Hansen to Arnold Randone, a retired Wagners executive.

Randone, as it turns out, is the grandfather of former Coe student Andrew Randone. He was able to determine that what had been donated to Coe was actually a smaller print (14-1/2 by 5-1/2 inches) of the lithograph (20-5/8 by 8 inches), and he subsequently sent one of the now rare lithographs, with back plates that describe the printing company, the artist and the significance of Little Bohemia Tavern, erected at Third Street and 16th Avenue in Cedar Rapids in 1883.

Randone explained that the “Little Bohemia” lithograph was No. 3 in a series of approximately 40 lithographs created as part of Wagners’ Midwestern Landmarks promotional series to highlight the company’s high-quality printing capabilities. The description of the lithograph notes that, “Wagners’ full color reproductions of paintings and photographs almost always are printed in four colors. Little Bohemia is an exception in that greater fidelity to the original subject has been



Wagners Printers of Davenport, Iowa, eliminated the black printing plate to create a lithograph called “Little Bohemia” that is true to the colors of Marvin Cone’s 1941 oil painting of “Little Bohemia Tavern,” a Cedar Rapids landmark.

obtained by eliminating the black ink printing plate.”

The company, which opened an office in Cedar Rapids in the early 1960s, printed about 250 lithographic copies of each subject to send to customers around the Midwest. Other featured landmarks — all painted by established artists — included Snake Alley in Burlington (by Harold W. Pond), Wolfe Bridge spanning the Spoon River southeast of Galesburg (by Paul Norton), Chicago Warehouses (by Atsushi Kikuchi) and Fort Mackinac (by Roy A. Brostrom).

It should be noted that the original “Little Bohemia Tavern” oil painting (39-1/2 by 15-1/2 inches) was created by Marvin Cone in 1941 and purchased for Coe in 1964 by the Fisher-Pilcher Fund. It is on display in the library’s first floor Cone Gallery. Coe’s collection now includes the original, the Midwest Landmark series lithograph, and what Hansen describes as “a very good copy of the lithograph.”



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