Gabriel García Márquez
Ransom Center acquires archive :: page 8
Gabriel García Márquez has had as profound an impact on the novel in the latter half of the twentieth century as James Joyce had in the first half. He showed us a new way of conceiving our individual and collective stories, a new way of recounting the past, and he did so in a style immediately recognizable as his own. In 1982 the Nobel Prize committee honored García Márquez “for his novels and short stories, in which the fantastic and the realistic are combined in a richly composed world of imagination, reflecting a continent’s life and conflicts.” For many of us, reading One Hundred Years of Solitude for the first time was something like the discovery of a new world.

The acquisition of the Gabriel García Márquez archive aligns with the Ransom Center’s recently completed strategic plan, which singles out the growth of the Center’s rich collections as an area of continued excellence, and it contributes to vitally important university goals for teaching and research.

The acquisition extends the international reach of the Ransom Center’s collections, and, in the coming years, students and scholars will visit from around the globe to conduct research here that simply could not be undertaken anywhere else. Many will do so with fellowship support. The Ransom Center’s strategic plan offers a blueprint for the ways we will strengthen and extend this important work through the highest standards of collection care, important new access initiatives, investment in and support for the Center’s curatorial and professional staff, and expanded forms of outreach and community engagement.

All of us are, I trust, rightly proud of the extraordinary collections we are assembling here, but the future of the Ransom Center will rest on the many ways we give these collections new life in the years ahead.
Recent Acquisitions: Photography
Of Interest
News: John Lahr’s Tennessee Williams biography
News: Director draws upon Tennessee Williams collection to direct A Streetcar Named Desire
Current Exhibition: Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland
Upcoming Exhibition: Frank Reaugh: Landscapes of Texas and the American West
Feature: Undergraduate class explores archives
Research at the Ransom Center: Annotations in early editions of Canterbury Tales
Scholarly Publications
Philanthropy: Cataloging project creates greater access to J. Frank Dobie collection
Meet one of the Ransom Center’s most enthusiastic members

Feature: The “Wildly Strange” Photographs of Ralph Eugene Meatyard
Feature: Inside the Gabriel García Márquez archive
Before and After: Movie Jecktor from Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland


denotes a link to additional materials on the Ransom Center’s website
Recent Acquisitions

An Afghan soldier seen warming his henna-stained hands on the front lines in Zhari District, Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Since the Gernsheim collection was purchased in 1963 the Harry Ransom Center has continued to acquire photographs representing major artistic movements in the medium’s history. Recently, in an effort to collect significant photographs created in the 1960s and 1970s, the Ransom Center has acquired the important abstract work Motion-Sound #28 (ca. 1970), by Ralph Eugene Meatyard (American, 1925–1972), and Strip Tease #69 (1966), a vintage print made as part of Ray K. Metzker’s (American, 1931–2014) well-known Composites project. These photographs, as well as Chicago (1973), by Kenneth Josephson (American, b. 1932), and two photographs from the Cancellations series (1974) by Thomas F. Barrow (American, b. 1938), have been acquired to enhance the Ransom Center’s holdings of conceptual photography from the period.

The Ransom Center’s effort to represent historical movements extends to the acquisition of important contemporary photography, including a work from the series Heat/Gun (2000) by German artist Marco Breuer (b. 1966). Much like other recent acquisitions of photographs by Alison Rossiter (American, b. 1953) and Chris McCaw (American, b. 1971), Breuer’s work links the Ransom Center’s strong holdings of early photographic experiments with contemporary practice.

Twelve photographs from the Carpoolers series (2011–2012) by Alejandro Cartagena (Mexican, b. Dominican Republic, 1977) were acquired by the Ransom Center, as were eight photographs documenting the ongoing war in Afghanistan by Louie Palu (Canadian, b. 1968). In addition, the Ransom Center...
acquired 44 photographs made by Alec Soth (American, b. 1969) during a road trip around Texas with writer Brad Zellar in 2013. These photographs were featured in a one-night-only pop-up show, organized by Jessica S. McDonald, the Nancy Inman and Marlene Nathan Meyerson Curator of Photography, at the Ransom Center in December 2013.

Other recent acquisitions include:

:: The papers of Nobel Laureate Gabriel García Márquez

:: A limited edition of the Pennyroyal Caxton Bible, printed in Austin by Bradley Hutchinson in 1999 and illustrated by Barry Moser, a gift of Bruce and Suzie Kovner

:: The papers of Irish writer Aidan Higgins

:: An important collection of materials related to caricaturist David Levine

:: Materials related to the staging of the English premiere of Samuel Beckett’s Waiting for Godot

:: Significant additions to the archives of David Douglas Duncan, David Hare, Norman Mailer, Bernard Malamud, and the Woodward and Bernstein Watergate papers.

:: Denis Johnson’s novel The Laughing Monsters was published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in November 2014.

:: Tom Stoppard’s new play The Hard Thing premiered at London’s National Theatre in January.

:: The Roundabout Theater Company on Broadway produced two plays by Tom Stoppard this fall: The Real Thing and Indian Ink.

The archives of McEwan, Johnson, and Stoppard reside at the Ransom Center.
John Lahr mines “treasure trove of Williams material” for new biography

John Lahr’s new biography, Tennessee Williams: Mad Pilgrimage of the Flesh (Norton), draws upon his subject’s plays, letters, and even his own experience of meeting the writer to give readers greater insight into the complicated mind of one of America’s greatest playwrights. His research included visits to the Ransom Center, which houses an extensive collection of Williams’s papers, including original manuscripts. Lahr’s biography was shortlisted for the National Book Award this fall.

Lahr discusses how he stayed true to Williams by spending time with primary sources.

Was there a particular aspect of Williams’s life or work that you were particularly drawn to?

So much new primary source material—diaries, letters—had been published about Williams since the first biography was written, that I felt a new narrative was needed to tell the story with a deeper sense of event, and a surer knowledge of the internal issues with which Williams was struggling. Also, the plays needed to be interpreted not just recapitulated. Williams always said the plays were a map of his internal life at the time of the writing. My goal was to chart the trajectory of the mutation of Williams's consciousness, to show how the plays reflected the man and how the man re-presented his internal turmoil in his plays.

Was there a particular item that you found interesting?

The Ransom Center is a treasure trove of Williams material, so it’s really impossible to say which item was more revelatory. For me, I think the letter from his institutionalized sister Rose (“I’m trying hard not to die”) and the typing lessons which the blighted Rose, who never in the end held a job, were scorching. Miss Edwina, her mother, had her typing Puritan platitudes about the blessings of work and rigor and attainment—a regimen that finally helped to drive her crazy. And of Williams, there is a beautiful valedictory letter to his first real companion, Pancho Rodriguez, telling him in later life to walk tall in the world.

Director draws upon Tennessee Williams collection for UT production of A Streetcar Named Desire

For a recent campus production of Tennessee Williams’s iconic play A Streetcar Named Desire, director Jess Hutchinson delved into the Tennessee Williams collection at the Ransom Center to guide her work on the play. Set in New Orleans, Williams’s Pulitzer Prize-winning classic centers around fading Southern belle Blanche DuBois as she seeks refuge in her sister’s home, only to clash with her brother-in-law, Stanley Kowalski.

Hutchinson, a third-year MFA Directing candidate at The University of Texas at Austin, was especially interested in digging deeper into the ending of the play, and in the Williams collection, she found multiple drafts of endings that were quite different from the published version.

“Williams tried out different ways to end Blanche’s story and handle her departure,” said Hutchinson, noting one discarded draft included Blanche being forced into a straitjacket. “And he chose this very specific, relatively controlled exit. That tells me a lot about what that moment is for her, how to stage it, how to think about where she is mentally and emotionally at the end of the play.”

As Hutchinson sifted through various early drafts of the play in the Williams collection, she was struck by how “not good” many of them were and how it was a great reminder that the creative process includes false starts and dead ends even for the most talented writers and artists.

Juliet Robb as Blanche DuBois and Keith Machekanyanga as Stanley Kowalski. Photo by Lawrence Peart, courtesy of The University of Texas at Austin.

“Something about seeing documents in a famous, iconic writer’s handwriting revealed that this person who wrote this thing that I love was closer to me than I might have thought,” she said. “He was a human and an artist and was trying to make something that spoke to the core experience of what it is to be a person—what it means to interact with other people in the world and have your heart broken and have moments of incredible joy. Just the humanity that’s present in these archival materials and what we can see in these drafts and false starts and moments of inspired genius made it possible, at least for me, to be bolder in my own work in the rehearsal room.”

Read a longer version of this interview at www.hrc.utexas.edu/ransomedition.

Read a longer version of this story at www.hrc.utexas.edu/ransomedition.
The “Wildly Strange” Photographs of Ralph Eugene Meatyard

BY JESSICA S. MCDONALD

Studying the creative process of artists and writers, as well as tracing collaborations and intersections between them, is at the core of research at the Harry Ransom Center. In March 2015, the Ransom Center will highlight the intersection of photography and poetry in its collections, while celebrating creative collaboration across campus, in an exhibition organized with the Blanton Museum of Art. *Wildly Strange: The Photographs of Ralph Eugene Meatyard* will feature 40 photographs exclusively drawn from the Ransom Center’s photography collection and archives of writers in Meatyard’s intellectual network.

In the late 1950s, Meatyard (1925–1972) began staging elaborate visual dramas enacted by his wife, children, and close friends, and experimenting with multiple exposure, blur, and abstraction to imbue his images with an ambiguous, dreamlike quality. The abandoned farmhouses and densely wooded forests of rural Kentucky served as sets for Meatyard’s symbolic scenes, turning otherwise ordinary family snapshots into unsettling vignettes of life in a deteriorating South. Meatyard called these photographs “Romances,” adopting the definition American satirist Ambrose Bierce provided in his *Devil’s Dictionary*: “Fiction that owes no allegiance to the God of Things as They Are.”

Groundbreaking in their time and challenging even today, Meatyard’s photographic fictions were embraced by his circle of writers and artists in Lexington, Kentucky. Guy Davenport (1927–2005), a close friend and neighbor, was routinely one of the first to examine Meatyard’s new work and used one of his photographs on the cover of *Flowers and Leaves*, Davenport’s 1966 collection of poems. Just after Davenport viewed the last of Meatyard’s photographs in 1972, he wrote to literary scholar Hugh Kenner of the “wildly strange pictures” he had seen. The exhibition will present an intriguing selection of Meatyard’s “Romances” made between 1958 and 1970, including rare variants of published images.

While Meatyard’s “Romances” are familiar to those who study and appreciate photography, his evocative portraits of writers are less well known. Often incorporating the spectral blur and unconventional angles of his primary work, they served as unconventional authors’ portraits for book jackets and promotional materials. Prints were exchanged among Meatyard’s sitters, and many entered the Ransom Center’s collections with their archives. A group of these portraits will be assembled in *Wildly Strange: The Photographs of Ralph Eugene Meatyard* to highlight the relationships both between these creative figures in Lexington and across the collections at the Ransom Center.

As the Ransom Center continually seeks innovative ways to share its collections, this collaboration with the Blanton Museum of Art will introduce its photography holdings to a new audience and will demonstrate the collective strength of the cultural institutions across The University of Texas at Austin campus. *Wildly Strange: The Photographs of Ralph Eugene Meatyard* is organized by Jessica S. McDonald, the Nancy Inman and Marlene Nathan Meyerson Curator of Photography at the Harry Ransom Center, and will be on view at the Blanton Museum of Art from March 7 to June 21, 2015.
February 10–July 6, 2015

Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland

The Ransom Center celebrates 150 years of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland with an exhibition for the curious and curioser of all ages. Learn about Lewis Carroll and the real Alice who inspired his story. See one of the few surviving copies of the first edition of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. Discover the rich array of personal and literary references that Carroll incorporated throughout Alice. Explore the surprising transformations of Alice and her story as they have traveled through time and across continents. Follow the White Rabbit’s path through the exhibition, have a tea party, or watch a 1933 paper filmstrip that has been carefully treated by Ransom Center conservators. The Center’s vast collections offer a new look at a story that has delighted generations and inspired artists from Salvador Dalí to Walt Disney.

Mabel Lucie Attwell illustration from a 1910 edition of Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland.

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August 4–November 29, 2015

**Frank Reaugh: Landscapes of Texas and the American West**

Artist, educator, inventor, and naturalist, Charles Franklin Reaugh (1860–1945), pronounced “Ray,” is one of the Southwest’s earliest and most distinguished artists. Working in the vein of American Impressionism, Reaugh devoted his career to visually documenting the vast, unsettled regions of the Southwest before the turn of the twentieth century.

Drawing on more than 200 artworks in the Ransom Center’s Frank Reaugh collection, as well as other archives, museums, and private collections across the state, the exhibition examines Reaugh’s mastery of the pastel medium and his sophisticated yet direct approach to the challenges of landscape painting, particularly *en plein air* (painting outdoors). While Reaugh’s contributions have often been linked to the region, his work holds broad historical precedents.

Highlights include side-by-side comparisons of his small field sketches with larger studio works illustrating the same geographic location, and “Twenty-four Hours with the Herd,” Reaugh’s epic series of mural-size pastels that served as the centerpiece of his performance work of the same title.

The exhibition offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for visitors to experience a historical survey of the most significant works created by an artist often referred to as “the Dean of Texas Artists.”

A companion publication, *Windows on the West: The Art of Frank Reaugh*, edited by exhibition curator Peter Mears, will be published by the University of Texas Press.
Underneath the final brushstrokes of great paintings, below the surface, there are sometimes marks of doubt, hidden lines, and suppressed colors. These nearly invisible brushstrokes are called pentimenti—repentances, compunctions, remorses. I like the word pentimenti because it evokes a sense of drawn-out struggle and internal debate. Masterpieces don’t usually come to the world in one simple and spontaneous act of creation, fully formed and pristine. Artistic creation is usually messy. It might not be too much of a stretch to venture that, when dealing with a literary archive, the messier the better. My personal preference: the more pentimenti contained in an archive, the more I like it.

The Gabriel García Márquez archive, recently acquired by the Harry Ransom Center, contains numerous manuscripts with handwritten additions, crossed-out words and sentences, notes on the margins, excisions, discarded paragraphs, and other evidence of authorial repentances. A somewhat awkward combination of Italian and English would allow me to say that this is a very remorseful collection of papers.

Among the correspondence there is one letter where García Márquez reflects on his creative process after finishing The Autumn of the Patriarch. García Márquez notes that he should have written the novel in verse, except he couldn’t find the
courage to do so. Nevertheless, I think it reads like a long poem about power and decrepitude, a portrait of a Latin American despot who doesn’t seem to know that at some point everybody has to die. In this archive researchers will be able to study the very idiosyncratic prose of García Márquez as though he had spent his life crafting a lengthy, multi-volume poem with dozens of characters and plenty of melodramatic twists.

Remnants of the deliberative process of a writer are of immense value to scholars and amateurs because they provide a window into the artist’s workshop. I mention both the literary critic and the common reader because García Márquez is an author who obtained a most difficult and rare artistic achievement: nearly unanimous critical acclaim and a tremendously devoted and enormous readership worldwide. It is truly exceptional that so many readers around the world not only admired the writer but loved the person. I think this happened because readers could feel the arrival of a unique sensation, the *nouveau frisson*, the strange and palpable addition of a new imaginary world that suddenly becomes part of one’s own psyche.

García Márquez was a master of the novellas that read like Greek tragedies set in the Caribbean and a master of the sprawling, genealogic novel in which everything fits, including history and crime and love and miracles. Above all, he was an intoxicating stylist with the primal instincts of a storyteller. As the literary critic Christopher Domínguez Michael has put it, García Márquez’s imagination was so powerful and original that he will be remembered as a creator of myths, a Latin American Homer.

Within the holdings of the Ransom Center, the literary manuscripts of García Márquez become part of a constellation of innovators who influenced his own formation as a writer. William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Virginia Woolf, Jorge Luis Borges—these writers are both his direct lineage and his peers. More than 150 University of Texas at Austin faculty members engage with Latin America inside and outside the classroom, and numerous graduate and undergraduate students choose our university for its emphasis on Latin America. With outstanding patience and perseverance and care for almost 100 years, the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection has assembled one of the premier libraries devoted to the region. The Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies (LLILAS) integrates more than 30 academic departments across the university and ranks among the world’s leading centers of its kind. All this to say that, in its new home at The University of Texas at Austin, the Gabriel García Márquez archive is surrounded by a rich cultural milieu and finds itself in fertile ground for intellectual discussion. So much for remorse—let the celebration begin.

José Montelongo is the interim Latin American bibliographer at the university’s Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection. The García Márquez acquisition was supported by LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, a partnership between the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies and the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection. LLILAS is regarded as one of the strongest Latin American studies programs in the country, and the Benson Collection is recognized as one of the world’s premier libraries focusing on Latin American and U.S. Latina/o studies.
In the fall, I taught a class called “American Images: Photography, Literature, Archive” that made extensive use of the collections at the Ransom Center. Each week, the students and I explored the intersections between photography, literature, and archival theory using the Center’s primary materials as the foundation for our discussions. On Mondays and Wednesdays we met to discuss the week’s reading, closely reading passages or images and making connections to contemporary events. On Fridays the students had the opportunity to view rare manuscripts and photographs that illustrated, extended, and even challenged many of the concepts we discussed earlier in the week. Over the course of the semester, the students worked within a variety of written genres as they built toward a final project in which they conducted their own original research.

Centering this class around the Ransom Center’s dynamic collection of archival materials has, I believe, enhanced the experience for the students. It is a unique opportunity for these undergraduates to be able to apply their new knowledge each week as they directly engage with the primary sources. For example, as part of our unit on family photography the students grappled with questions about the gendered nature of the family snapshot and baby photographs. We considered the ways that family photographs are circulated as they are swapped between family members, on holiday cards, pasted into scrapbooks, or shared on social media sites. When they encountered several of the photographs pulled for the class, the students returned to some of their earlier questions and anchored those questions in their consideration of early post-mortem daguerreotypes, cartes-de-visite and Polaroids of Queen Alexandra, and studio portraiture taken of African American families in Galveston during the 1940s and 1950s. Providing students with access to the collections allows them to build their own interpretations about such rich cultural materials. They begin to form their own arguments about the collections in the Ransom Center as they prepare to enter into the scholarly debates that are already taking place around them.
The Ransom Center’s holdings also provide me with several opportunities to draw on the manuscript collections and enhance the writing workshop that forms a core component of this class. For example, for the class’s unit on war and the archive we read sections from Tim O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried*. As part of our exploration of the text, the students closely compared several of O’Brien’s manuscript drafts. This opportunity deepened their readings of the material as they ponder the weight of O’Brien’s word choices as they change across different drafts of the same passages. As they follow O’Brien through the revising and editing process, the students are able to gain a better understanding of the writing process both as it led to O’Brien’s published work and as they engage it for their own final projects.

Not only does the Ransom Center provide us with the chance to directly engage the primary materials we read about, but it also offers students the chance to consider the archive as an institution that shapes our understanding of the world. We spend time thinking, discussing, and writing about the Ransom Center and other archives on campus as physical spaces, historical buildings, and institutions with policies and people guiding the collection, conservation, circulation, and curatorial practices. At the Ransom Center the students consider everything from the installation provided for the First Photograph, to the use of the gallery space, to the evolution of the Magnum Photos collection, to the digital collections as they grapple with the ways in which our encounters with the archive shape our understandings of some of the world’s most spectacular cultural materials. These undergraduate students truly benefit from the many ways they engage with the Ransom Center’s collections. This class provided them with access to some of the Center’s astounding holdings and then afforded them the opportunity to make sense for themselves of the cultural significance of the materials they encounter.

Andrea Gustavson is a PhD candidate in American Studies at The University of Texas at Austin. She worked as a graduate intern in Public Services and as a Graduate Research Assistant at the Ransom Center in 2010–2014.
Geoffrey Chaucer’s early and enduring fascination among English readers has become a source of interest among modern critics. The Harry Ransom Center is home to one of the largest collections of early printed Chaucer editions in the world. While other major collections might have 8 or 12, the Ransom Center has 36 copies of these extremely rare books. A fellowship supported by the Carl H. Pforzheimer Endowment made it possible for me to study notes added to them by generations of readers since the time of their publication.

Chaucer (ca. 1340–1400) grew up in a well-to-do merchant family. The macabre silver lining for those who survived the Black Death, which killed more than 30 percent of England’s population between 1348 and 1350, was the inheritance of wealth from lost family members and increased opportunities for upward social mobility. Chaucer is an example of this: he became a retainer in the household of Elizabeth de Burgh, countess of Ulster, which led in turn to service as a royal administrator. He pursued his career as a writer at the same time, and he gently pokes fun at himself in the House of Fame for being the medieval equivalent of a geek. He describes how he would spend his days poring over records at the custom house, then, “Instead of reste and newe thynges thou goost hom to thy hous anoon, and also domb as any stoon, thou sittest at another book, til fully [dazed] is thy look.” His travels to Italy for the king benefitted his literary career as he became familiar with the works of Petrarch, Dante, and Boccaccio. One of his last works is the one modern readers know best, the Canterbury Tales. Chaucer’s literary achievements received acclaim during his lifetime and high praise from his literary successors. William Caxton made the Canterbury Tales one of the first books printed in English, ca. 1477. The first collected edition of Chaucer’s Works appeared in 1532, and it was so popular that it went through six editions by the start of the seventeenth century.

Knowing who owned editions of Chaucer can help researchers map the dispersal of copies from London. One of the Ransom Center Chaucers contains pages from another copy of Chaucer’s Works at Trinity College, Cambridge: both belonged to members of the extended Grenville family during the early nineteenth century, and it appears that an owner took pages from a rather raggedy Trinity College copy to replace pages missing from the book now at the Ransom Center, which is in better overall condition. Two other Ransom Center Chaucers accompanied their owners on travels abroad even before their eventual arrival in Texas. One belonged to a sixteenth-century naval explorer, Sir Robert Dudley (1574–1649), who left his wife and daughters to elope with a younger woman to Florence, Italy, where he lived the rest of his life. “J. Abdy,” an Englishman traveling the Continent in 1650, acquired Dudley’s 1602 Chaucer edition and brought it back to England. Another copy of the Canterbury Tales, from the 1687 edition of Chaucer’s Works, accompanied Charles Montagu Doughty (1843–1926), a nineteenth-century explorer, on a two-year trek through the Saharan Desert. Chaucer’s pilgrims travel from London to Canterbury, but all of the books in Texas have traveled much farther, and every book has a story about its journey from the Renaissance to the present day.

What can the surviving copies tell us about the reading habits of early owners? First, we have proof that Chaucer’s sixteenth-century audience included women as well as men based on the names of female readers inscribed in the books. DedICATIONs also provide glimpses of the personal lives of the readers, such as the romantic promise made by Peter Wood when he gave his book as
a gift. “Take in good worth from him that gives this present and his heart to you while he lives. Esteem not the gift after its value, but regard the goodwill of the giver, not as I now would but as I now may, to command him both night and day—Said Peter Woodde.” Expressions of affection accompany several of the books as they were passed along: “to my wellbeloved brothers,” and another “to my loving friend Carls.” There is even a polite thank you note in one of the Ransom Center Chaucers: “Master George Manning, I thank you for your book. Mary Buckmore.”

Annotations also provide insights into the reasons why readers enjoyed Chaucer’s writing. One early owner of a book at the Ransom Center notes with satisfaction how Criseyde is laid low and cursed by the gods in Robert Henryson’s Testament of Cresseid: “A just rewared for untrothe,” the comment observes. Another reader takes delight in Chaucer’s caustic depiction of corrupt religious officials, writing the following under the woodcut of the Pardoner: “Chaucer in this prologue (as in diverse other places) very excellently describes the great craft and abominable deceit of all the popish prelates, vanished over with a fair face and color of feigned religion and false pretended holiness.” In another book, the margins are so full of phrases copied by hand from the printed text that the effect is similar to the overzealous use of a highlighter in a modern textbook: the reader has copied so many phrases that none of them truly stand out.

“Father Chaucer” was seen as a source of wisdom for Renaissance book owners, and it comes as no surprise that readers would choose to add favorite sayings from other sources to their copies of Chaucer’s Works. One writes, “Give me that worthy whose true judgment can distinguish ‘twixt the ill and honest man, and not be swayed by others...” Another book declares (rather disingenuously) that the owner will not pass judgment on lazy individuals:

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<thead>
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<th>he that may thrive and will not</th>
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<td>and his master’s commandment fulfill not</td>
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<td>ffor to be his judge I will not</td>
<td>To be his judge I will not</td>
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<tr>
<td>and he never thrive that skill [has] naught</td>
<td>And he never thrive that skill [has] naught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be me katerynne leke</td>
<td>By me Katherynne Leke</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Hope Johnston is an assistant professor of medieval English literature at Baylor University. She received a fellowship from the Carl H. Pforzheimer Endowment to study “Owner Markings in Early Printed Chaucer Editions” at the Ransom Center.
Vincent Giroud

Nicolas Nabokov: A Life in Freedom and Music
Oxford University Press, forthcoming April 2015

Composer and cultural official Nicolas Nabokov (1903–1978) was admired by some of the most distinguished minds of his century for his range of interests and breadth of vision. Drawing on primary sources, this biography follows Nabokov’s life through his Russian childhood, exiles to Germany and France, his participation in the denazification of post-war Germany and in the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and his American academic career.

In preparing this book, Giroud consulted the Ransom Center’s collections of Nicolas Nabokov and Michael Josselson. His research was supported by a 2011–2012 Woodward and Bernstein Endowment fellowship from the Ransom Center.

Matt Cook

Queer Domesticities: Homosexuality and Home Life in Twentieth-Century London
Palgrave Macmillan, April 2014

Queer Domesticities explores the ways in which queer men have made, experienced, and described their homes in relation to stereotypes and to the contexts of the places they lived through choice or force of circumstance. Resting on oral histories and unpublished diaries of relatively unknown men and on reassessments of famous and infamous figures, this book shows how gay men orientated their sense of themselves behind closed doors and apart from the more public bars, courtrooms, and protest and pride marches that have more often drawn our attention.

In preparing this book, Cook consulted the diaries of George Cecil Ives. Cook’s research was supported by a 2004–2005 Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Research Fellowship from the Ransom Center.

Roberta Rubenstein

Literary Half-Lives: Doris Lessing, Clancy Sigal, and Roman à Cléf
Palgrave Macmillan, May 2014

While Doris Lessing was composing The Golden Notebook during the late 1950s, she was intimately involved with writer Clancy Sigal. Their relationship influenced The Golden Notebook as well as Lessing’s Play with a Tiger and Sigal’s Zone of the Interior, The Secret Defector, and a number of unpublished works. Focusing on multiple literary transformations of autobiographical materials, as reflected in the œuvres of these two writers, Rubenstein also offers compelling insights into the ethical implications of disguised autobiography and roman à cléf.

In preparing this book, Rubenstein consulted the Ransom Center’s collections of Clancy Sigal, Doris Lessing, and John and Joan Rodker. Rubenstein’s research was supported by a 2011–2012 Fleur Cowles Endowment fellowship from the Ransom Center.

Shaun Usher

Lists of Note
Canongate Unbound, October 2014

Humans have been making lists for even longer than they’ve been writing letters. They are the shorthand for what really matters to us, records of our memories, and reminders of the things we want to do before we die. Usher has trawled the world’s archives to produce a rich visual anthology that stretches from ancient times to present day, highlighting a to-do list of Leonardo da Vinci, Charles Darwin’s list on the pros and cons of marriage, and Julia Child’s list of possible titles for what would later become an American cooking bible.

In preparing this book, Usher consulted the Ransom Center’s collections of David Foster Wallace, David O. Selznick, and Alfred A. Knopf Inc.

Avid Moody

Ezra Pound: Poet, vol. II The Epic Years
Oxford University Press, September 2014

This second volume of Moody’s full-scale portrait covers Ezra Pound’s middle years and weaves together a narrative that illuminates the story of Pound’s life, his achievement as a poet and a composer, and his one-man crusade for economic justice. The book offers new insight into his complicated personal relationships and detailed accounts of the composition of his two operas and of his original contribution to the theory of harmony. A canto-by-canto elucidation of the form and meaning of the first 71 cantos of his epic poem reveals their hitherto unperceived musical structures and their overall design.

In preparing this book, Moody consulted the Ezra Pound collection at the Ransom Center.
Grant-funded cataloging project creates greater access to J. Frank Dobie collection

With the help of the TexTreasures Grant Program from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Ransom Center is creating an online finding aid to describe a substantial archive of manuscript writings, correspondence, and personal papers of renowned Texas folklorist, writer, and educator J. Frank Dobie (1888–1964). Dobie influenced other Texas writers such as Billy Lee Brammer, Fred Gipson, John Graves, and Bill Wittliff, and his championing of Texas literature and culture augured works such as James Michener’s *Texas*, Larry McMurtry’s *Lonesome Dove*, and Cormac McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian*.

Dobie, a University of Texas at Austin faculty member, focused his teaching and writing on exposing the richness of Texas and Southwest culture. In 1930, he pioneered his course “Life and Literature of the Southwest,” a course that is still taught 84 years later at the University.

Dobie’s papers were exhibited at the Center in 1961 soon after their acquisition. His art, books, manuscripts, and photographs have been used continuously in other exhibitions over the years, most recently in these Ransom Center exhibitions: *The World at War, 1914–1918* (2014), *Literature and Sport* (2013), *Contemporary Photographic Practice and the Archive* (2013), and *¡Viva! Mexico’s Independence* (2010).

The Dobie papers currently occupy 353 boxes that are stored on 145 linear feet of shelving. Approximately 75 percent of the papers were cataloged during the 1960s and 1970s in a card catalog. Users can access the cards only in the Reading and Viewing Room, and it can be time-consuming to read through the 17,000 cards that describe the collection.

To improve access, Senior Archivist Joan Sibley and Archives Assistant Daniela Lozano are converting information from the card catalog to create an online archival finding aid. During the one-year project, they will also arrange and describe 90 boxes of undescribed additions to the papers and add them to the finding aid. The completed finding aid will offer a complete description of the Dobie papers online, making the contents discoverable and searchable by the public. This improved and expanded access will reveal research opportunities in many different areas of studies relating to Texas art, culture, folklore, literature, and history.

The bulk of the papers consist of Dobie’s self-described “bales of correspondence,” with thousands of letters from family members, writers, artists, folklorists, publishers, book dealers, educators, students, and readers.

His papers richly illustrate Texas before cities and suburbs dominated the state and the social history of its people.

Sibley believes that the public will be very interested in this collection. “Expanding access to our collections to as many users as possible is a goal that Dobie would have supported, given his own ambitions to educate and broaden minds. That is why support from grants like this are so important to us,” she noted. Through online access, the Dobie papers will be a window to the past.

Materials from the J. Frank Dobie collection. Below: Clouds are reflected in this etching of Dobie on the Ransom Center’s exterior windows.
The conservation department of the Ransom Center is responsible for the care and preservation of the Center’s collections. This feature highlights repair and conservation work on collection items.

Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland Movie Jecktors

HEATHER HAMILTON, PAPER CONSERVATOR

The exhibition Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland features two 1933 toy paper film strips called Movie Jecktors. The film strips portray two of the most memorable parts of the Alice story: Down the Rabbit Hole and The Mad Hatter. Images and text are printed in three colors on 35” strips of translucent paper. The strips are rolled onto wooden dowels and stored in colorfully printed little boxes. The Movie Jecktors would have been used with a toy film projector to create a simple animation.

The Ransom Center’s Movie Jecktors required conservation before they could be safely displayed in the galleries. Both the wooden dowel and the storage box, which is made of wood pulp cardboard, had a high acid content. An acidic environment is harmful to paper. The Movie Jecktors had become brittle and discolored, and there were many tears and losses to the paper. The film strips had been repaired in the past with pressure-sensitive tapes (the common tape we all use to wrap gifts). These tapes are never appropriate for repairing paper that we hope to preserve because they deteriorate and often darken over time and are also difficult to remove once in place.

I removed the tapes using a heated tool and reduced the residual adhesive using a crepe eraser. I mended the tears and filled the losses using Japanese paper and wheat starch paste. For the fills, the Japanese paper was pre-toned with acrylic paint to allow these additions to blend with the original paper. Areas of ink loss were not recreated.

Visitors to the exhibition can see the areas of the filmstrips that were damaged, but those areas are now stabilized and less distracting. This kind of treatment reflects the practice of conservation to preserve, but not “restore,” the object’s original appearance. Libraries, archives, and museums today often choose the conservation approach because it allows researchers and other visitors a better understanding of the object’s history, including damages that occurred, which may speak to the materials used in the object’s creation.

Watch a recreated film and a video about the conservation process of these Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland Movie Jecktors at www.hrc.utexas.edu/ransomedition.
Parece que el demonio dirige las cosas de mi vida.

SIMON BOLÍVAR
(Carta a Santander, agosto 4 de 1823)

- Sh. Mb: Casa de la Adoración Vieja
- Conoci a través el 27 de enero de 1814
- Somos un pequeño grupo humano (I - 164, campesino)

Recibí sus frutas de Clerga a la hija de su hermano jamás licenciado (V) 1823 (julio 23) 63 años

Casa com should: julio 4

1824: formas parte de Nueva de la República (Venezuela)

16,000 de americanos

masur: 325 elefantes de fieri. notas: 525

352 petrarias Hoffman

Degalo la bumeran que estaba acostada 385
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: LYNDSEE NIELSON

Members provide vital support to the Harry Ransom Center. In this member spotlight, meet one of our most dedicated members. If you have a story you’d like to share, please contact us at membership@hrc.utexas.edu.

Lyndsee Nielson earned her bachelor’s degree at The University of Texas at Austin and works in the University’s Cockrell School of Engineering. She has lived in Austin for five years, where she continues to establish roots. Lyndsee has been a member and volunteer at the Harry Ransom Center since the fall of 2013.

What drew you to the Ransom Center?
After seeing original materials in the Reading Room as a freshman, I was hooked. I lived on campus and attended exhibitions for the rest of my college career, falling more in love with the Center each time. When I attended the Cabinet of Drawings exhibition, I was drawn to a small, peculiar sketch. After further research and a continued connection with the sketch, I got it as a tattoo. It is very meaningful to me.

Why did you become a member?
Because I absolutely love this place! Being a member extends access beyond the galleries—with gatherings, collection viewings, and member-only tours. It is a great way to delve into your favorite subjects and discover new ones. I also have the chance to meet others from the community who share my passion for the humanities and the Ransom Center.

What’s a favorite Ransom Center memory?
The day I took a tour of the Ransom Center spanning the basement to the upper levels of archives! It was a comprehensive view of the Ransom Center’s holdings. We saw collections of paintings, motorized shelves full of manuscripts, and stacks filled with rare books.

Read the full interview at www.hrc.utexas.edu/ransomedition.