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Osher Library Associates

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NORUMBEGA NEWS

No. 13

NEWSLETTER OF THE OSHER LIBRARY ASSOCIATES

Fall 2009

A Letter from the President

Nineteen years ago, in October 1990, a group of individuals came together to incorporate the Associates of the Osher Map Library as a formal nonprofit corporation. The mission of the Associates was simple: to support and promote the Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education, a unique treasure in northern New England.

Over the years, the Associates have worked hard to achieve that mission, assisting the library in numerous ways with publications, conferences, exhibitions, special events of all kinds, and of course, financial support.

The past year in particular has been one of exciting change. The library has been closed during construction, but

the anticipation is mounting as we get closer and closer to the public ribbon cutting on October 18. Yet despite the closure, the Associates have been working hard to make the opening a reality. Many board members have been working with USM to plan and execute a series of memorable opening events and celebrations.

Equally important has been the Associates' financial contribution to the new map library. Given the current fiscal situation, the officers and directors have recognized fully that we must partner with the University of Southern Maine to make the new library a reality. As a result, the Associates have contributed well over \$200,000 in grants and loans

over the past year to help fund the purchase of critical digital imaging and audio visual equipment, finance a new Web site to make available in digital form the incredible wealth of maps housed by the library, provide grants to support a graduate assistant and an opening conference in October—the list goes on and on.

The Board would never have made these financial contributions were it not convinced that the Osher Map Library is a world-class institution, we could not have made those contributions without the assistance of our members. For that, I thank each and every one of you. And for those of you who are not now members, please join us—we are embarking on a wonderful journey, and we would love to have you come along!

—Harry R. Pringle



The facade of the top two floors of the map library is clad with aluminum panels. Of these panels, 104 have been etched with a projection of the world known as the Dymaxion Map. It was created in 1946 by the noted futurist and inventor Buckminster Fuller to represent the entire globe with minimal distortions. It may well be the largest such exterior map in the world.

Save these Dates

October 16–18, 2009

Friday, October 16, 7 p.m.
***Thoreau, His Maps, and
His Image of Nature***
Hannaford Lecture Hall

Saturday, October 17,
8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
***New Directions in the Study of
Early American Cartographies***
Osher Map Library

Sunday, October 18, 3–5 p.m.
Open House
Grand opening with ribbon cutting
and tours of the new facility



American Treasures

The Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education has, since its inception in 1994, established a tradition of mounting special exhibitions every five years to highlight the many "treasures" in its collections. The fourth such exhibition will be part of the celebrations in observance of the 15th anniversary of the library and the grand opening of its newly expanded facilities. Titled "American Treasures," the exhibition will display important maps of the Americas, with a particular emphasis on depictions of North America, the United States, New England, and Maine that illustrate our educational mission.

Door Prize Announcement

A framed facsimile copy of the De Wit map measuring 23" x 29," about one quarter size of the actual wall map, will be offered as a door prize at the Grand Reopening celebrations. The winner of this gift will be announced at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 18, 2009 in the Osher Map Library.

Winners need to be present at the drawing to receive the gift.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is a large, rare, and beautiful wall map of the Americas from the "Golden Age" of Dutch cartography. Such maps were commonly hung like tapestries in the mansions and offices of Dutch merchants and public officials, as seen in Jan Vermeer paintings, and often served as prestigious gifts to foreign leaders, nobility, and merchants. Unfortunately, their unprotected display exposed these maps to many hazards, including light, smoke, water, and human and animal contact. Very few have, as a result, survived without significant damage. Our map, made by the eminent Amsterdam cartographer Frederick de Wit and dated 1672, is one of seven known surviving examples, and is one of only two in the United States.

Titled *Nova Totius Americae Tabula* ("New Map of all America"), the map is a truly glorious work. It measures no less than 60 inches high by 77 inches wide. An ornate title banner decorated with garlands runs along the top. Explanatory text panels in Dutch, Latin, French, and English are positioned on either side and below the map. Each lateral border contains 10 attractive miniature plans or views of American cities, such

as the important Dutch colony of New Amsterdam and many of the Spanish and Portuguese settlements in Central and South America. The oceans are embellished with sea battles and numerous ships. Other ornamental engravings depict allegorical figures, New World animals, and Dutch merchants engaged in serious negotiation with Native Americans. The depiction of South and Central America is quite accurate, and an inset of the North Polar regions shows the results of recent forays into the Arctic Oceans. By contrast, North America displays geographical ignorance with a huge blank area in the northwest, and misconception, with California depicted as a large island.

This elegant and well-ornamented snapshot of the status of Europe's various imperial interests in the Americas, skillfully engraved and tastefully hand colored, is indeed a cartographic treasure.

OSHER LIBRARY ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER NO. 13

Published by the Associates of the Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education at the University of Southern Maine.

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Contributions are invited and welcomed. Please submit in double-spaced, typed format or on computer disk. Subscriptions to the newsletter are included with OLA membership. For access inquiries contact the OML at (207) 780-4850 or oml@usm.maine.edu.

www.usm.maine.edu/maps

Osher Map Library History and Timeline

Although now 15 years old, OML is still a young collection in comparison to other rare map libraries in the United States, some of which commemorate their anniversaries in centuries.

Yet during its short life, OML's staff has made several significant achievements. OML is recognized by the cartographic community for its innovative approach to integrating the collections into the University's curriculum. OML's Faculty Scholar has taught over 80 guest classes to students in several departments—notably history, geography-anthropology, English, art, and foreign languages and literatures—as well as his own courses for geography-anthropology (undergraduate) and American and New England studies (graduate).

The library's outreach programs, in particular those developed for the K-12 community, are cited as models for other rare map collections. Since 1994, over

200 schools have participated in OML's K-12 programs and OML's staff members have presented numerous workshops at regional educational conferences. The online lesson plans posted on OML's Web site routinely receive commendations from educational organizations.

OML's exhibitions and their accompanying printed publications have generated positive reviews in academic journals. Of the 22 exhibitions created to date, 12 are posted on the Web site. In addition, six facsimile exhibitions have traveled to cultural organizations throughout Maine (Dyer York Library, Saco; Hudson Museum and Page Farm & Home Museum, Orono; Owls Head Transportation Museum, Rockland; Penobscot Marine Museum; Ross Museum, New Brunswick, Canada). OML's public lecture series has included over 40 guest speakers drawn from the U.S. and Europe. Over the years OML has filled hundreds of reproduction requests for journals,

books, and Web sites and has loaned original materials for display at historical societies, museums, and libraries. To broaden its reach nationally, OML has also hosted half a dozen conferences and annual meetings for other map organizations.

The collections were founded by two major gifts, the first in 1987 from the late Lawrence M. C. And Eleanor Houston Smith, the second from Dr. Harold L. and Mrs. Peggy L. Osher in 1989.

With the opening of its facilities in 1994, OML was able to receive further gifts of maps. Since then, several donations have substantially increased the size and scope of the collections, notably from Tony Naden, Prof. Peter H. Enggass, Douglas Yorke, the family of Henry Stuart Michie, Edna and Lawrence Story, Gerard Morin, Charles and Dalinda Carpenter, and Norman H. Morse.

See a timeline highlighting some of the critical events in OML's existence to date below.

A Timeline of the Osher Map Library's History

Phase One, 1986-1993

- 1986 The Smith Collection of maps, atlases, and globes was donated to the University of Southern Maine by Eleanor Houston Smith (1910-1987), a longtime summer resident of Freeport, Maine, in memory of her husband L.M.C. Smith (1902-1975).
- 1988 The Smiths' children published a memorial catalog of the collection: *Maps, Globes, Atlases and Geographies through the Year 1800*, compiled by James E. Mooney.
- 1988 The Smiths' cartographic collection was shipped to USM from their home in Germantown, Penn. The collection was housed temporarily in Gorham Campus Library while plans were prepared to construct an addition to the library in Bailey Hall.
- 1988 The popular map exhibition, *The Land of Norumbega: Maine in the Age of Exploration and Settlement*, was displayed at the Portland Museum of Art and the Hudson Museum, Orono. Funded by the Maine Humanities Council and guest curated by Susan Danforth, it was the first display of the Smith and Osher Collections together with other private and public Maine collections.
- 1989 USM appointed Yolanda Theunissen to a newly created library position to manage the Smith Collection.
- 1989 The Osher Collection was donated by Harold and Peggy Osher, long-time Portland residents. Like the Smith Collection, the Osher Collection reflects a 25-year joint venture with each partner contributing to its growth and development. The two gifts constituted the founding collections, complimenting each other with surprisingly little overlap.
- 1990 A Faculty Advisory Committee was formed to review ways the map collections could be incorporated into USM's curriculum.
- 1990 The Osher Library Associates was incorporated to support and promote the interests and continuity of the map library. Predating the map library's opening by four years, this non-profit friends group was instrumental in raising funds for its construction.

- 1990 USM acquired the former Nabisco Bakery at the edge of the Portland campus to be the new campus library, named the Glickman Family Library in 1997. New floor plans were prepared to house the map collections on the first floor of the new library. USM began a three-year capital campaign to raise \$1.5 million for the map library's construction.
- 1992 Building on the success of *The Land of Norumbega*, the map library collaborates with the Portland Museum of Art on two other exhibitions featuring maps from the Smith and Osher Collections: *The Art of Discovery* (Fall 1992); and *Maps, Myths and Monsters: Images and History on Early Maps* (Spring 1994).

Phase Two, 1994-2008

- 1994 On October 16, OML opened its doors on the first floor of the Portland campus library. The inaugural exhibition, *Treasures of the Collection*, showcased maps, atlases, globes, and scientific instruments. An accompanying conference, *Reading the World: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Maps*, was held at the Holiday Inn by the Bay.
- 1994 Endowed Lecture series begins: David Woodward presents the first Ball Lecture, founded by Barbara M. Goodbody in honor of her aunt and uncle, Edmund F. And Virginia B. Ball. John Noble Wilford presents the first Mattson-New York Times Lecture established by the New York Times Foundation to honor their retired president, Walter E. Mattson, a graduate of Portland Junior College, which is a predecessor to USM.
- 1994 OML issued its first catalog, *Maine 175: A Celebration of 175 Years of Maine Statehood*, for its exhibition of the same name.
- 1995 USM appointed Matthew Edney, an assistant professor of geography at SUNY Binghamton, to its newly created Faculty Scholar position.
- 1996 OML issued its second exhibition catalog, *Jerusalem 3000: Three Millennia of History*.
- 1996 OML hosted the three-day annual meeting for the Society for the History of Discoveries at the Holiday Inn by the Bay.

Osher Library Associates

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Timeline continued

- 2000 *Reading the World*, the first in the series of Occasional Publications of the Osher Library Associates was published, with the essays presented at the 1994 conference of the same name. It was quickly followed by the second occasional publication, Don Johnson's book, *Charting Neptune's Realm: From Classical Mythology to Satellite Imagery*.
- 2000 OML participated in Opsail 2000, the Tall Ship Regatta with a facsimile traveling exhibition loaned to half a dozen cultural organizations throughout Maine. OML also hosted a two-day annual meeting for the North East Map Organization (NEMO).
- 2001 OML organized a day-long conference and half-hour TV program, *Road Maps: The American Way*, in conjunction with the popular exhibition of the same name guest curated by Prof. Robert French.
- 2003 OML co-hosted a week-long conference with the Harvard Map Collection: *The 20th International Conference on the History of Cartography*. Among several exhibitions created for the conference at several Portland museums, OML installed a permanent facsimile display, *Heavens on Earth*, in the lobby of USM's Southworth Planetarium.
- 2004 OML celebrated its 10th anniversary with a year-long program of guest lectures keyed to the themes of the exhibition, *Worldly Treasures*, and with the publication of the third Occasional Publication of the Osher Library Association, Walter MacDougall's, *Settling the Maine Wilderness: Moses Greenleaf, His Maps and His House-hold of Faith, 1777-1834*.
- 2004 Prof. Matthew Edney began a three-year leave of absence with a teaching fellowship at the University of Michigan. He later became director of the History of Cartography Project at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. During his absence, Prof. Harry Steward served as OML's interim Faculty Scholar.
- 2006 Third Endowed Lecture series inaugurated by Dr. Mary Pedley of the William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, who presents the first David Woodward Memorial Lecture.
- 2007 OML closed for reconstruction in December; all collections, equipment, and furnishings were moved to offsite storage for the duration.
- 2008 OML received a \$466,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to purchase custom-designed compact storage systems for the new addition.
- 2009 Portland Museum of Art displayed OML's exhibition, *The Coldest Crucible: Arctic Exploration in American Culture*, guest curated by Prof. Michael Robinson. During the summer, OML staff undertook a reverse inventory as stored materials, equipment, and furnishings were returned to the new library.

Phase III Begins with the grand reopening of the newly expanded OML on October 16-18.



Map Prize

A hand-colored map of the Gulf of Mexico, (shown above) by the Italian cartographer Giovanni Antonio Rizzi Zannoni will be awarded to a new or renewing member of the Osher Library Associates. This engraved map, *Carte Geo-Hydrographique du Golffe du Mexique et de ses Isle*, measuring 11.5" x 18," is from the French edition of Rizzi Zannoni's *Atlas Moderne*, published in Bordeaux in 1762 by Jean Lattre.

The framed map was donated by Charles Carpenter, owner of Historic Map Works in Westbrook, Maine. HMW provides genealogists, local historians, and map aficionados with digital images of land ownership maps and gazetteers from the nineteenth and twentieth century. HMW is working with OML to digitize OML's rare map collections. See www.historicmapworks.com.

Membership forms will be available at registration tables staffed by the Osher Library Associates at each of the public events on October 16-18. The winning ticket will be drawn at 5 p.m. on Sunday, October 18, in the Osher Map Library. The winner does *not* need to be present at the drawing.