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NORUMBEGA NEWS

No. 17

NEWSLETTER OF THE OSHER MAP LIBRARY ASSOCIATES

Fall 2013

Letter from the President

As I write this update, the loan exhibition, *Torn in Two: 150th Anniversary of the Civil War*, is being taken down and crated for shipping. OML was the third and final venue for this popular traveling exhibition that originated at the Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library. This summer OML participated in the statewide *Maine Civil War Trail* whose publicity attracted a number of visitors previously unfamiliar with the map library.

On October 10-13, 2012, OML hosted the annual conference of the International Visual Literacy Association (IVLA). At first glance this group may appear to be an unusual guest, but OML approached it as an opportunity to introduce spatial literacy to members of an organization trained in decoding visual imagery. Since maps use a hybrid of text and imagery to represent spatial data, they require hybrid strategies for their interpretation.

The conference theme — *Mapping the Visual Beyond the Visible* — reflected the focus of both IVLA and OML as well as a new, university-wide program to incorporate visual literacy into the curriculum that began in Fall 2012. We owe a debt of gratitude to Jeff Beaudry, Associate Professor in USM's School of Education and Human Development, who co-chaired the local-host committee with OML's curator.

In conjunction with the IVLA conference, OML presented an exhibition depicting the widespread use of the outline map of the United States titled, *Iconic America: The United States Map as a National Symbol*. John Fondersmith guest curated the exhibition with materials loaned from his personal collection of cartographic ephemera to document how the outline map has pervaded our modern culture. He coined the word *UShopia* by combining *U.S.* and *shape* to

describe this motif of the outline map. It is his hope that the exhibition will spur further interest on the symbolic use of the US map as logo.

The keynote conference lecture was given by Ken Jennings, Jeopardy champion and best selling author of *Maphead: Charting the Wide, Weird, World of Geography Wonks*. To accommodate the sizable audience of local guests the lecture was held in USM's Hannaford Hall. In keeping with its international membership, the conference drew participants from Brazil, Cyprus, Dubai, Greece, Israel, and Italy in addition to members from Canada and the United States. So many foreign visitors have not been seen at OML since the international map history conference in 2003.

Staffing update:

Two of the three grant-funded positions from the previous year have been converted from "soft money" to full-time university staff positions. As a result, OML was able in July 2012 to hire Renee Keul as the new Outreach Coordinator. Thanks to her efforts, school group visits have doubled from 948 in 2011-12 to 2,038 in 2012-13.

In January 2013 Adinah Barnett became a permanent staff member in the Digital Imaging Center, operating the second camera station. This Technical Imaging position and an accompanying Metadata Cataloging position had been grant-funded by the Osher Foundation during the previous two years, to help process OML's backlog of map digitizing for the website.

Finally, I'm pleased to report that OML's new website was launched this past spring. OLA supported the upgrade with a grant to fund a computer technician; USM libraries provided much technical support as well and Prof. Matthew Edney volunteered his graphic design services. We invite you to view the elegant new design at www.oshermaps.org and to explore the expanded component for children and teachers. A new OLA members' section will help you keep up to date on special programs for OLA members.

The web upgrade is timely because we are about to begin planning for OML's twentieth anniversary, in October 2014. OML's anniversary year also coincides with Dr. Harold L. Osher's ninetieth birthday. Longtime supporters Bernard Osher and the Lunder Foundation just awarded the OLA a \$200,000 Challenge Grant to celebrate these two milestone events. To assist us with this effort we have enlisted L.W. Robbins Associates, a fundraising firm which specializes in non-profit organizations. We hope you will take a minute during this coming year to support OLA's appeals for the Challenge Grant in order to help OML retain its leadership position in educational outreach for decades to come.

— James A. Buchanan

To the Ends of the Earth ... and Back:

Selections from the Jay I. Kislak Polar Collection



Raymond Edward Priestly, drawing of the *Terra Nova* in ice pack, documenting Shackleton's 1910 Antarctic expedition

SEPTEMBER 24, 2013



FEBRUARY 27, 2014

Curated by Arthur Dunkelman,
Director and Curator of the
Jay I. Kislak Foundation

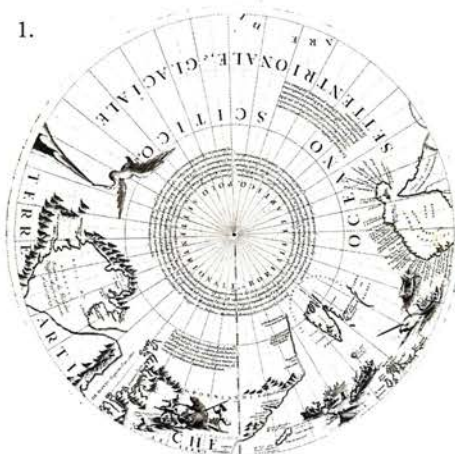
To the Ends of the Earth ... and Back: Selections from the Jay I. Kislak Polar Collection

Guest curated by Arthur Dunkelman, Director
and Curator of the Jay I. Kislak Foundation

I relish the opportunity to create a new exhibition. I see it as a test of knowledge, a challenge of interpretation, and an opportunity to build a collection. Mr. Kislak strives to acquire the significant, the unique, the definitive and, perhaps therefore, the unobtainable. His oft-repeated question when presented with an acquisition opportunity is to ask "why is this important?" Through this dialogue a collaboration of sensibilities emerges as the collection grows.

The process often leads to surprises and discoveries and, in this regard, the preparation for *To the Ends of the Earth* was exceptional. As curator I strive for completeness and connections by tying the subject to historical events of the larger world. However, this exhibition presented a particular challenge because *Terra Incognita*, as the Polar Regions were called, did not have much to offer early cartographers. For centuries maps of the extreme north and south were essentially featureless or filled with fanciful images of myths and monsters.

1.



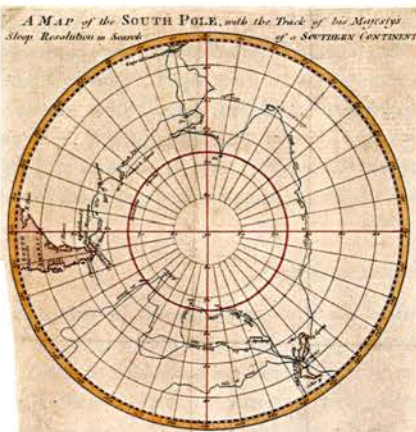
As the research progressed the theme of globalization emerged as the main subject of this exhibition, resulting in a 500 year journey represented by over 80 objects from the Polar Collection. The story begins – as always in western thought – with the Greeks. They knew very well that the world is round: it has a top and a bottom, regions suitable for life, regions not suitable, and *Terra Incognita* ... the unknown land.

2.



The exhibition includes examples of early maps of Ptolemy, Mercator, Ortelius, Fine and others who could not fill the void since little or no accurate information was known of the Arctic regions until the nineteenth century. Slowly, beginning with the English explorations for the Northwest and Northeast Passage to Asia in the seventeenth century, a picture of the great northern reaches began to emerge. Some 250 years later – after countless lost ships and lost lives – it became increasingly evident there might not be a passage.

3.



Initially the Antarctic held little fascination for European mariners. The great British navigator, James Cook, ventured into the frigid waters on two voyages in 1768 and 1772. Driven back by the walls of ice and inclement weather he never saw the mainland. He did, however, take pains to map his route accurately, which he then published in the account of his second voyage. It would take another 125 years before explorers actually set foot on Antarctica itself and another decade before Shackleton, Scott, and Amundsen endeavored to reach the South Pole at the beginning of the twentieth century. The exhibition displays several photograph albums and artifacts from two of these expeditions, including the man-haul harness worn by Shackleton to pull his sledge and a bone handled knife and fork from Scott's wardroom engraved, "Discovery 1901."

4.



5.



The journey ends with the establishment of a base in Antarctica by Admiral Bird, named Little America, and his successful flight and aerial observations over the South Pole in 1929. What was once seen as the great barrier to reaching the wealth of the Indies is now coveted for the valuable mineral resources beneath the ever-dwindling ice pack.

We invite you to share this journey online at www.oshermaps.org/exhibitions/to-the-ends-of-the-earth.



Arthur Dunkelman is the author of the Kislak Collection catalog. His major exhibitions include *Reefs, Wrecks and Rascals: The Pirate Legacy of the Spanish Maine*; *Myths and Dreams: Exploring the Cultural Legacies of Florida and the Caribbean*; and *From the New Golden Land and Enchantress: Emma, Lady Hamilton* that were presented at the Grolier Club in New York City.

1. Vincenzo Maria Coronelli
Calotte (cap) of the North Pole for a globe
From: *Libro dei globi* (Venice, 1697)
2. Aurelius Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius
Zonal map of the world from the "Commentary on the Dream of Scipio"
Lugano: Sebastianum Gryphium, 1583
3. Thomas Bowen
"A Map of the South Pole, with the track of his Majesty's Sloop Resolution in search of a Southern Continent"
From: *Gentlemen's Magazine* 46 (1776)
4. Rodgers EP
Knife and fork from the wardroom of the "Discovery"
Sheffield, 1901
5. John Player & Sons, 1915
Cigarette Card: "A Sledge Team"

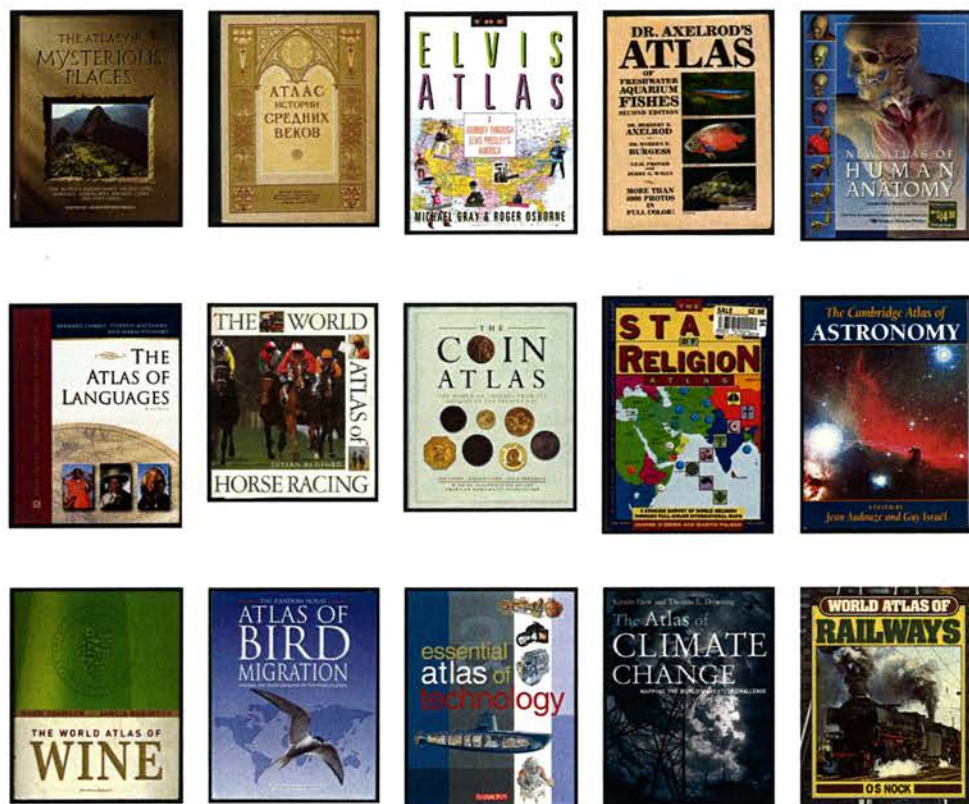
The Jay I. Kislak Foundation

The Jay I. Kislak Foundation in Miami Lakes, Florida, was established in 1984 with a mission to foster greater understanding of the cultures and history of the Americas. In 2004 Jay and Jean Kislak donated over 3,000 rare documents, maps, paintings, prints and artifacts related to early American history dating from 1492 to the 1820s to the Library of Congress. During the past decade the Kislaks' interest has focused on materials documenting the early history of navigation, exploration, and discovery of the Polar Regions. Selected highlights of this new collection are on display in this exhibition.

A New Atlas Collection

In May 2008 we received an interesting letter from a potential donor, describing his atlas collection. The collection was then boxed up and in storage, and he was hoping to find a university or library that would “care for, use and display these books and maintain them for the future.” His map collecting interest had begun at an early age, on a trip to Europe, and was later reinforced by his international travels for work. As he explained, he had set himself the task of collecting one atlas from each year of the twentieth century. Not that the “map bug” could permit him to stay so focused: in forty years he acquired over 700 atlases. To supplement the atlases, the donor also acquired some 150 related books, including travel and tour guides, and over 300 maps and charts. In total the collection contains about 1,500 items and includes 50 early works dating from between 1844 and 1900.

Having lived and worked in Europe for many years, the donor acknowledged that the collection could be considered somewhat “euro-centric,” given its emphasis on British and French publications. Even so, he actively worked to ensure that the atlases he collected represented a wide range of approaches, themes, and sizes, and audiences. As a result, the collection can be categorized in several ways. The donor himself distinguished between those which have or lack photographs and other images in addition to the maps themselves. Cartographically, we can distinguish between the standard geographic



A selection of fifteen illustrated book covers from the Atlas Collection depicting animal studies, climate change, technology, language, and culture. These books exemplify the broad range of subject matter compiled in the atlas format.

Upcoming Exhibition

CHARTING AN EMPIRE: ATLANTIC NEPTUNE

April 1, 2014 ♣ August 14, 2014

Curated by the Levanthal Map Center at Boston Public Library, *Charting an Empire* examines the decade following the French and Indian War (1754 - 1763), when Britain set out to accurately chart the coast and survey the inland areas of their new resource-rich empire in Atlantic Canada, as well as the eastern seaboard extending from New England to the West Indies. The resulting charts were published collectively by Joseph Frederick Waller Des Barres in the *Atlantic Neptune*, a maritime atlas which set the standard for nautical charting for nearly half a century.

atlases and specialized thematic atlases on a variety of subjects (archaeology, architecture, astronomy, commerce, culture, economics, education, environment, finance, history, language, literature, politics, military, religion, science, sport, technology, and transportation).

OML and its operations were closed for construction of the new addition during 2008, so we were unable to offer the donor a tour of the facility for a first hand look. However, we continued the discussion about his proposed gift by phone and mail and reviewed the inventory list he provided. A comparison of this list against the university library's URSUS catalog revealed that less than 5% of his collection duplicated atlases already housed in OML. While duplicates are not necessarily bad — as OML's Faculty Scholar notes, duplicate items permit smaller groups of students to examine the same works simultaneously during in-class map analyses — such a low rate of duplication made the collection especially interesting to OML. At the same time, the non-duplicate items are themselves significant works. Future generations will likely view the twentieth century as the “golden age” of atlases but, with the routine discarding of “out-of-date” works and the shift since 1980 towards online atlases, few such works will survive. The donor was thus prescient both in assembling his collection and in desiring its preservation as an important record of a soon-to-be-bygone era.

Based on these findings, OML's Accessions Committee agreed that the atlas collection would make a significant contribution to the holdings and scholarly activities of the University, so that OML would be pleased to accept the donor's generous offer. In 2011, a crew from Earle W. Noyes & Sons transported a truckload of boxes from his home to Portland. It then took several months for OML staff to process and catalog the collection.

In 2012, the donor increased the historic component of the collection by donating five early atlases dating from 1666 to 1878 together with some two dozen sheet-maps dating from 1859 to 1881 that represent countries and places from his extensive world travels. He has recently shifted his focus to documenting environmental features such as oceans, lakes, rivers and coral reefs, that are under threat from climate change. This interest is reflected in a further gift of 200 materials he donated this Fall that, once processed, will form an important resource for USM students interested in environmental studies generally and in environmental tourism in particular.

These gifts exemplify the interdisciplinary scope of cartography and will support a number of programs in the University curriculum. We are all indebted to the donor for sharing his collection with us.

Map Collectors Worldwide Honor Dr. Harold L. Osher

In June 2012, Dr. Harold Osher received the IMCoS Helen Wallis Award from the International Map Collectors' Society. The award, named for the prominent map historian and longtime superintendent of the British Library's Map Room, is presented each year to "an individual who . . . has been responsible for cartographic contributions of great merit and wide interest to map collectors worldwide."

Tony Campbell, chairman of the award committee and Helen Wallis' successor as head of the Map Room, presented the silver salver and certificate to Cal and Carol Welch of Scotia, New York, on behalf of Dr. Osher, who could not attend the annual IMCoS dinner in London. Later that summer, a small group gathered at the Osher Map Library to present the plate. Dr. Osher was delighted with the award and greatly enjoyed reading the names engraved on the salver of eminent map historians and collectors who had previously received the award.

Dr. Osher also reminisced about purchasing his first map, with his wife Peggy, in 1975. An impression of the Colton map of Maine is still in his possession. Coincidentally, it was Mr. Campbell who sold them this map! Dr. and Mrs. Osher had just visited an exhibition commemorating the American War of Independence at the British Museum and were entranced by the maps they saw. On leaving, they immediately stopped at a map shop beside the museum, Weinreb and Douwma, where they enquired of Mr. Campbell, then a young shop assistant, whether he had any maps of Maine. This innocent purchase launched the beginning of a lifelong passion that would culminate some twenty years later in the creation of the Osher Map Library to house the collection.



Dr. and Mrs. Osher accept the Helen Wallis Award from the International Map Collector's Society.

The following are excerpts from Tony Campbell's remarks at the award ceremony, recalling that first purchase by the Oshers.

...they returned the next day and bought further maps, this time of New England and North America. Already, on day two, the decision to move out from his home state of Maine to a national level was a harbinger of a collecting policy that would later extend back to the beginning of map printing and out to all parts of the world. Harold is a meticulous record-keeper and diligent researcher, and often knows more about the map than the dealer who is selling it.

Harold would be the first to acknowledge the important contribution of his wife's artistic experience to the process of broadening the collection's cartographic scope.

While I am naturally proud of my own miniscule (and inadvertent) part in the genesis of that project, in truth it may have been preordained. As a child, Harold was fascinated with both maps and medicine, so it was fitting that in later life he would spend three days a week at the Map Library and the rest at the Maine Medical Center. He has been affiliated with that since 1953, and was instrumental in building it up as a world-class cardiology center.

The association between medicine and the history of cartography is a long one and (as Harold pointed

out) the subjects are "both graphically oriented combinations of art and science, and both involve teaching."

Philanthropy was part of Harold's earliest upbringing. His parents believed that if you had a good education and worked hard, you could be successful; and, if that happened, you should give something back.

As Harold himself elegantly expressed it: "We came to regard ourselves as the privileged temporary custodians of objects that had a higher destiny . . . It is a source of great satisfaction to us that the collection that we treasured so much will be preserved and will enrich the lives of generations of children and adults."

Other parts of his remarks are available online (<http://www.imcos.org/organisation/helen-wallis-award>) and the full text is available in the *IMCoS Journal*, no. 130 (Autumn 2012): 49–51).

www.oshermaps.org

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NEWSLETTER NO. 17

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