

Treasures of the SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

*Join us in creating
an exciting new
public service
media project.*

PENNSTATE



**PUBLIC
BROADCASTING**

SYNOPSIS

What's so special about special collections?

The past protected. Knowledge guarded and shared.
Creativity inspired.

Treasures of the Special Collections – a new public television and web series from Penn State Public Broadcasting will investigate the marvels and mysteries of the unique and irreplaceable materials held in special collections and research libraries.

Stories will originate from primary source materials—our collective heritage—but can take us anywhere in the world or deep into the past—brought to life through documentary filmmaking, minimalist reenactments, theatrical interpretations, and graphics/animation techniques.

And while the term “special collections” conjures images of dusty stacks held under lock and key, viewers will see curators and archivists bringing materials right into their living rooms. Our passionate, inquisitive host and field reporters will be our vicarious eyes and ears as they dive into the stacks and reveal rich cultural repositories to a national audience.

Viewers will experience scenes and excerpts from undiscovered plays, music and literary works for the first time.

Experts will authenticate rare artifacts, identify people in early photographs/motion pictures or reveal evidence about famous historical figures in worlds ranging from popular culture to science to religion and politics.



Archivists will tell preservation stories of precious works barely saved from ruin.

And artists, filmmakers, technicians and writers will reveal hidden gems of scholarship that inspire new and important creative works.

The series will relate the recorded human experience from ancient papyrus to the most recent born digital media and will increase awareness and appreciation for the vital work of special collections and research libraries, supporting their missions to preserve and protect primary sources and to make them accessible – fostering the notion that it is the *use* of special collections that makes them special.

Treasures of the Special Collections will inspire young viewers eager to find and tell their own stories, presenting research libraries as a treasure trove waiting for new journeys of discovery.



[*Treasures*]
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TRAILER

What is this series' potential? Taking two research libraries as a case study—our special collections library at Penn State and the University of Illinois—we shot test footage of these four examples to assemble a sample video trailer.

THE MYSTERY OF THE DESERTER'S ROSTER

While searching basement archives in the *Centre County Historical Museum* in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, a professor finds a deteriorating 1866 roster of Civil War soldiers deserters that raises puzzling questions.

Why would someone produce a list to track deserters after the war?

Focusing research on one Pennsylvania Regiment, the answer slowly came to light – the roster was part of a state “voter identification” law that effectively denied men of one political party the right to vote. And it was completely unconstitutional.



“The Descriptive list of deserters from Pennsylvania military units during the Civil War” • <http://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/digital/deserters.html>

TINTYPES

Many special collections workers display hidden talents. Here we examine 19th-century “tintype” photographs and the anachronistic process that produced them.

Cody Goddard, an undergraduate co-curator of the 2009 “Reinventing Photography” exhibit drawn from the *Heinz K. and Bridget A. Henisch Collection of the History of Photography* at Penn State, not only knows the subject matter but has mastered the craft – as he demonstrates the science and art of wet plate collodian process photography.

Goddard's work • <http://www.codexphoto.com/?p=1462#more-1462>



JUDY CHICAGO

The iconic and controversial feminist artist secures her legacy by donating archives representing 40 years of teaching, activism and art to Penn State's *Special Collections Library*. Includes footage of monumental new performance art works (in dry ice, road flares and fireworks) that recently opened the *Pacific Standard Time Arts Extravaganza* in Los Angeles. The university is planning campus-wide events for spring of 2014 in time for Judy's 75th birthday and the 35th anniversary of "The Dinner Party."



Judy Chicago 2012 Pacific Standard Time performances • http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGfmk2z-N_A

The Dinner Party K-12 curriculum • <http://judychicago.arted.psu.edu/dpcp/>

The Judy Chicago Art Education Collection • <http://judychicago.arted.psu.edu/>

"SUMMER'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT"

In which scholars and actors take a rare and precious 16th century manuscript from the University of Illinois *Rare Books & Manuscripts Library* of a never before produced play by Shakespeare contemporary and notorious bad boy pamphleteer Thomas Nashe – research the material, prepare a script and perform a scene not witnessed in over 400 years.

University of Illinois Rare Books & Manuscripts Library • <http://www.library.illinois.edu/rbx/RareBooks.htm>



STORY SOURCES & ANGLES

Where will we find our stories? It seems obvious when one glances at *Celebrating Research* and the crown jewel collections of A.R.L. member libraries. Our dog-eared copy will attest to myriad story topics.

But how will the series invite viewers into a story?

Is the *Edgar Rice Burroughs Memorial collection* at the University of Louisville merely an excuse to produce a biography on the creator of Tarzan and “the Grandfather of American Science Fiction” in documentary style? Possibly.

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But we can take a more personal approach – *follow a researcher or writer* as she uncovers revelatory passages or notes hidden in the margins of collection papers— showing us how an examination of the manuscript is like reading an author’s DNA.

Simply put, we engage an audience by following an articulate collection user who shares with us the thrill of meaningful discovery.

There are many angles.

Stories could be researcher driven. Perhaps we investigate a mysterious artifact’s purpose; or an author uncovers a piece of information that sheds new light on a famous discovery; or a totally new line of discovery is initiated due to previously unused sources.

A story could be curator driven—showing off myriad wonders in a single collection—with artifacts as old as medieval manuscripts or as contemporary and spontaneous as the Arab Spring explosion of Twitter messages and social media.

There could be a story about how a collection came into being—perhaps a profile of someone even now in the process of donating his or her life’s work or personal collection to a library.



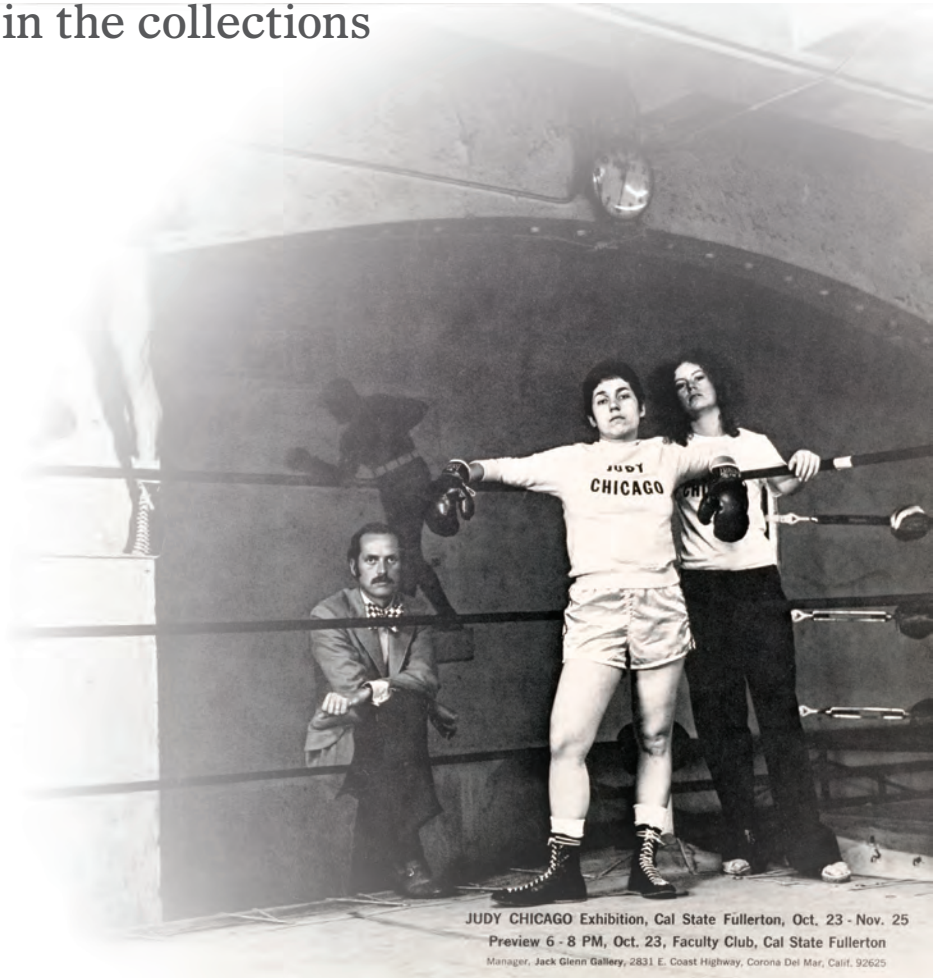
STORYTELLING STYLE

At first we saw this series as a cross between *Antiques Roadshow* and *History Detectives* – showing off fascinating artifacts and hunting down mysteries. But that comparison now seems narrow given all that is available in the collections of research libraries.

Some stories may benefit from the energy and focus that a host or field reporter brings to the table. We plan to conduct a talent search for individuals who can take the audience into their confidence and act as vicarious eyes and ears, engaging with curators and the material.

In other cases a cinéma vérité or traditional narrated documentary approach will better serve the material.

Stories emerging from collections of graphic materials like maps, artwork, posters or cartoons will benefit from incorporating animation and digital graphic techniques.

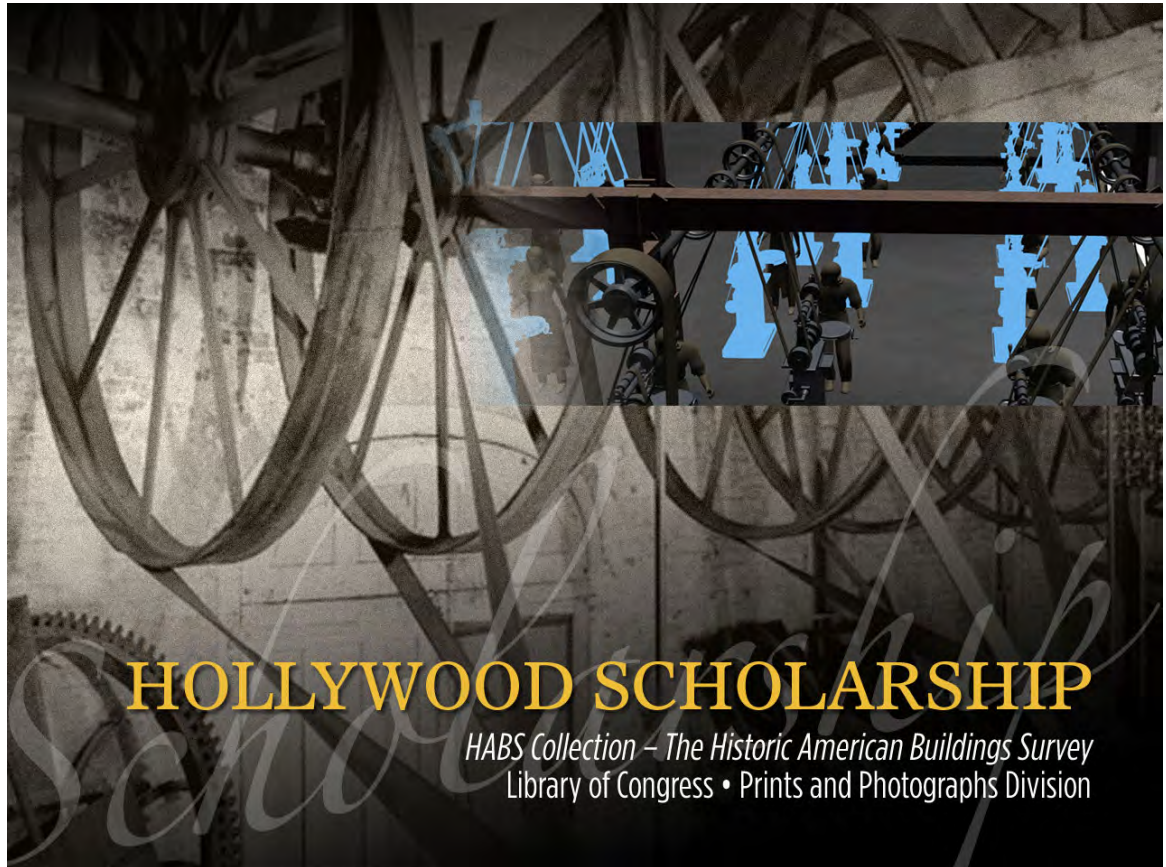


Historical mysteries may require minimalist reenactments by living historians or professional actors.

Much will be worked out during the pilot program phase but we see the series as a delightful mélange of styles and voices.



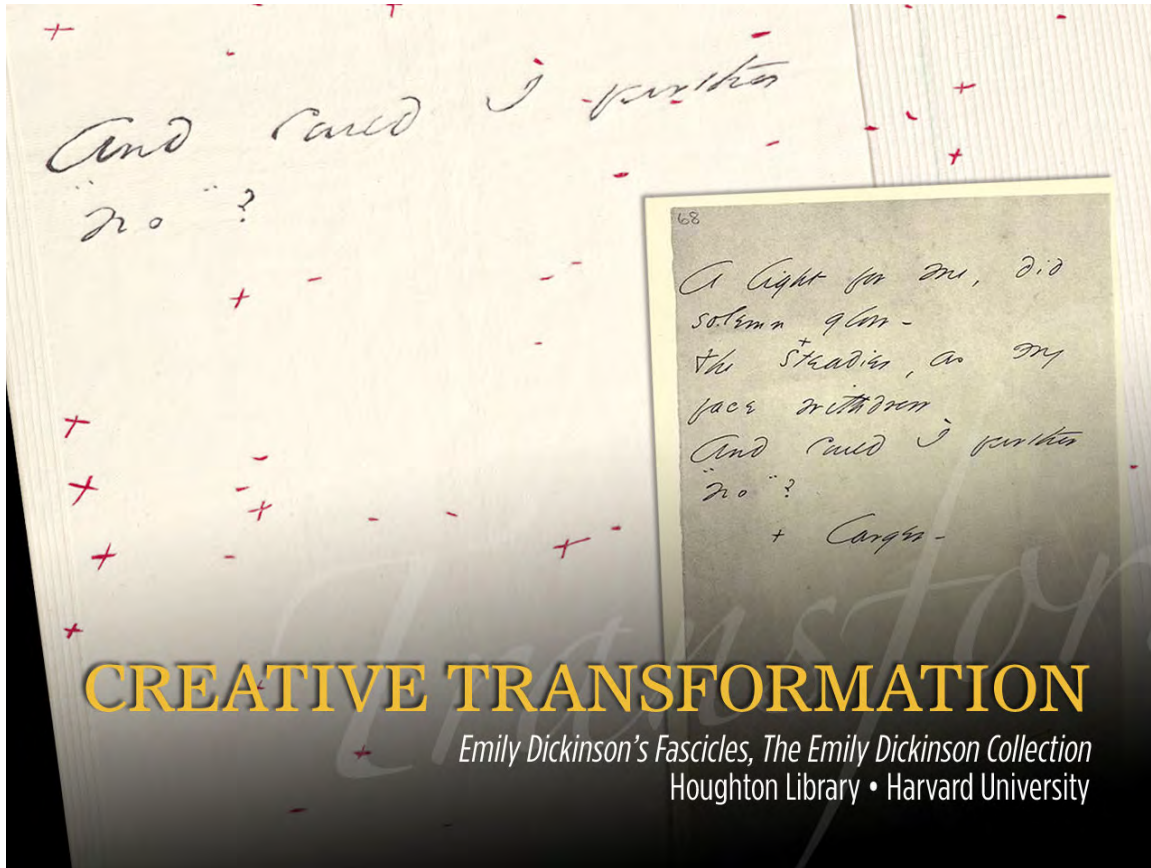
POTENTIAL STORY EXAMPLES



HOLLYWOOD SCHOLARSHIP — In the midst of the Great Depression, the National Park Service hired one thousand out of work architects and draftsmen to systematically document “America’s antique buildings.” They drafted and photographed architectural details of America’s built environment — from well-known buildings like Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello to simple barns, churches, jails and gas stations. Since many buildings have since been torn down, much of what they recorded is the only remaining trace.

The Historic American Buildings Survey collection now resides in the *Prints and Photographs Division* of the Library of Congress. Here historians, teachers, architects, homeowners and set designers come daily for information and inspiration.

We follow the HABS staff as they document a new building and add to this historic collection. We reveal novel uses of the collection including Hollywood set designers as they research photograph and drawings that influence and inspire an Oscar™-winning set design.



CREATIVE TRANSFORMATION During her life Emily Dickinson published only ten poems – all anonymously. When she died in 1886, her sister Lavinia made one of the most famous discoveries in American literature: a small box containing over 900 of Emily's poems assembled into 40 handmade booklets. These are the famous *Dickinson Fascicles* – and at Harvard University's Houghton Library they are the heart of the largest Emily Dickinson collection in the world – a collection that cultivates a hotbed of scholarly and artistic activity – including the surprising embroidered interpretations created by scholar and visual artist Jen Bervin.

In "The Dickinson Fascicles," Bervin explores and illustrates Dickinson's groundbreaking techniques based on composites of the punctuation and variant markings in her manuscripts – asking viewers to regard Dickinson's writing in visual rather than grammatical terms. "I wanted to see what patterns formed when all of the marks in a single fascicle remained in position, isolated from the text, and were layered in one composite field of marks." She writes that she tried to make something as forceful, abstract, and generously beautiful as Dickinson's work is to her.



UNCOVERING THE TRUTH — The untold story of an elite platoon's murderous seven-month rampage in the central highlands of South Vietnam and how it came to light more than 30 years later.

From May to November 1967, soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division's "Tiger Force" turned their rifles on hundreds of unarmed men, women, and children in what became the longest-known string of war crimes by a battle unit in Vietnam.

Col. Henry Tufts, the army's chief criminal investigator, secretly hoarded and, through a neighbor, posthumously donated archives of classified case documents to the University of Michigan's *Labadie Collection* decades after the army buried the case and forced him to resign.

Writer Michael Sallah gives a firsthand account of finding the records that set off a full-scale journalistic investigation that led to the 2003 series "Buried Secrets, Brutal Truths." The series won a Pulitzer Prize and prompted the Army to open a review of the case. Sallah has agreed to work with our team on this story, calling the Henry Tufts Archives "a rare gem" in the *Treasures of the Special Collections*.



A COLLECTOR'S LIFE — When Charles Blockson was in the fourth grade his teacher told him that African Americans had not made any historical contributions. Blockson took that remark as a challenge and made the preservation of black history his lifelong work.

He began to collect books and artifacts and over a 40 year period built one of the world's largest private collections of the African American history and traditions. The collection spans nearly four centuries from Leo Africanus to Langston Hughes and spans geographically from Africa through Europe and the Caribbean to the United States. Now 78, Blockson has established two special collections at Temple and Penn State Universities that are important cornerstones and testaments to his work. In 2010 Blockson inherited and donated a collection of Harriet Tubman artifacts to the new Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture that document the life and work of the famed abolitionist, Underground Railroad operator, Civil War spy and suffragist.

Penn State Public Broadcasting has already initiated projects on Charles Blockson and his collections. Story possibilities branching off this collection are myriad – Paul Robeson and Harriet Tubman come immediately to mind. But Charles Blockson's own story and example is an inspiration – a person who took action to claim his own history and culture.



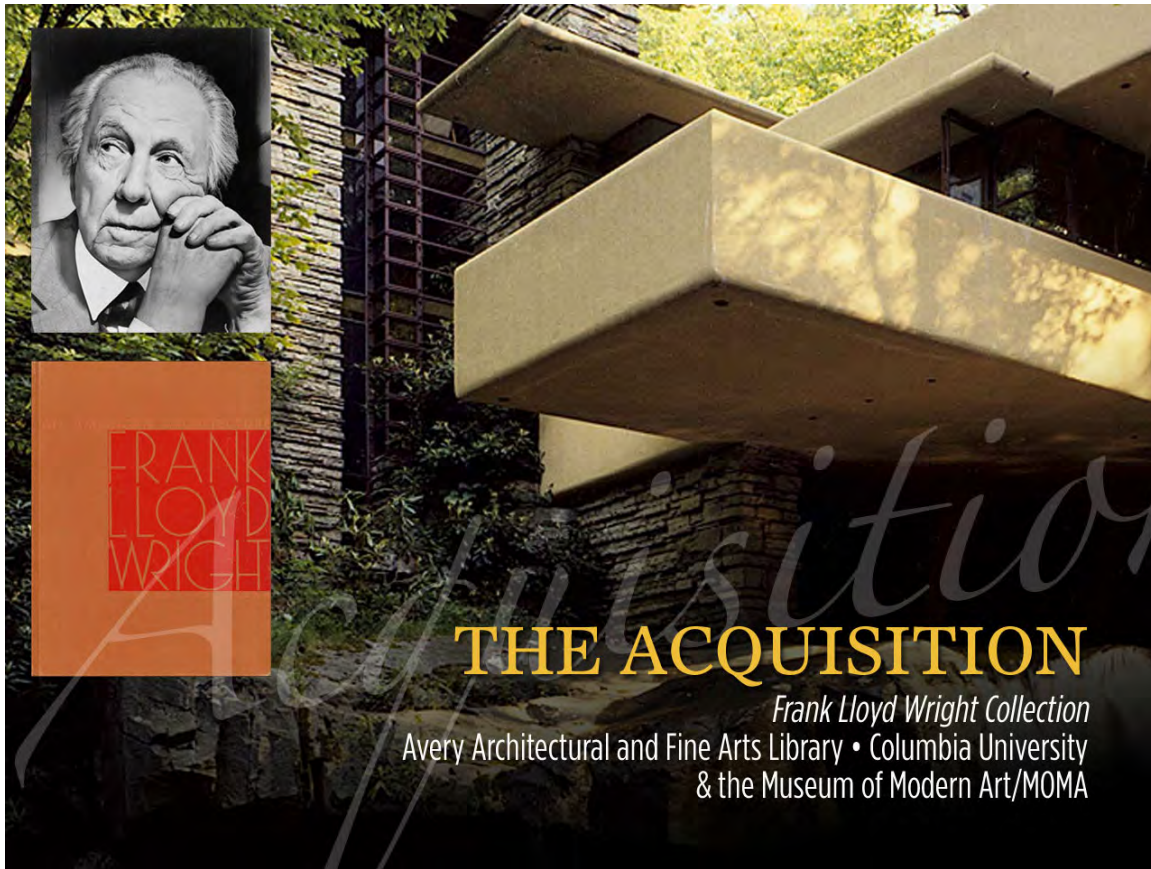
CONCEPTION FROM INCEPTION ~ A special collections library supports a collection's creation from its conception. Educator and photographer Vincent Cianni is interviewing and photographing gay and lesbian service members and veterans to record their stories as an oral and visual history.

Because of their sexual orientation service members were penalized and denied benefits due them for their service – oftentimes while serving in combat zones. Harassment and discrimination resulted in lost careers and personal lives.

In many cases, these men and women—highly skilled, well educated, patriotic, courageous and productive—attained high rank, received numerous medals and held top-level jobs that were essential to the military. They had no recourse; their devotion to country went unnoticed and jobs were lost due to unjust policies.

Hundreds of stories exist. Thousands have gone untold. Cianni's efforts will expose this hidden chapter in American civil rights history. Interviews and photographs will be archived at the Rare Book, Manuscript and Special Collections Library at Duke University and will be exhibited as a multi-media exhibition in 2012.

<http://vincentcianni.com/>

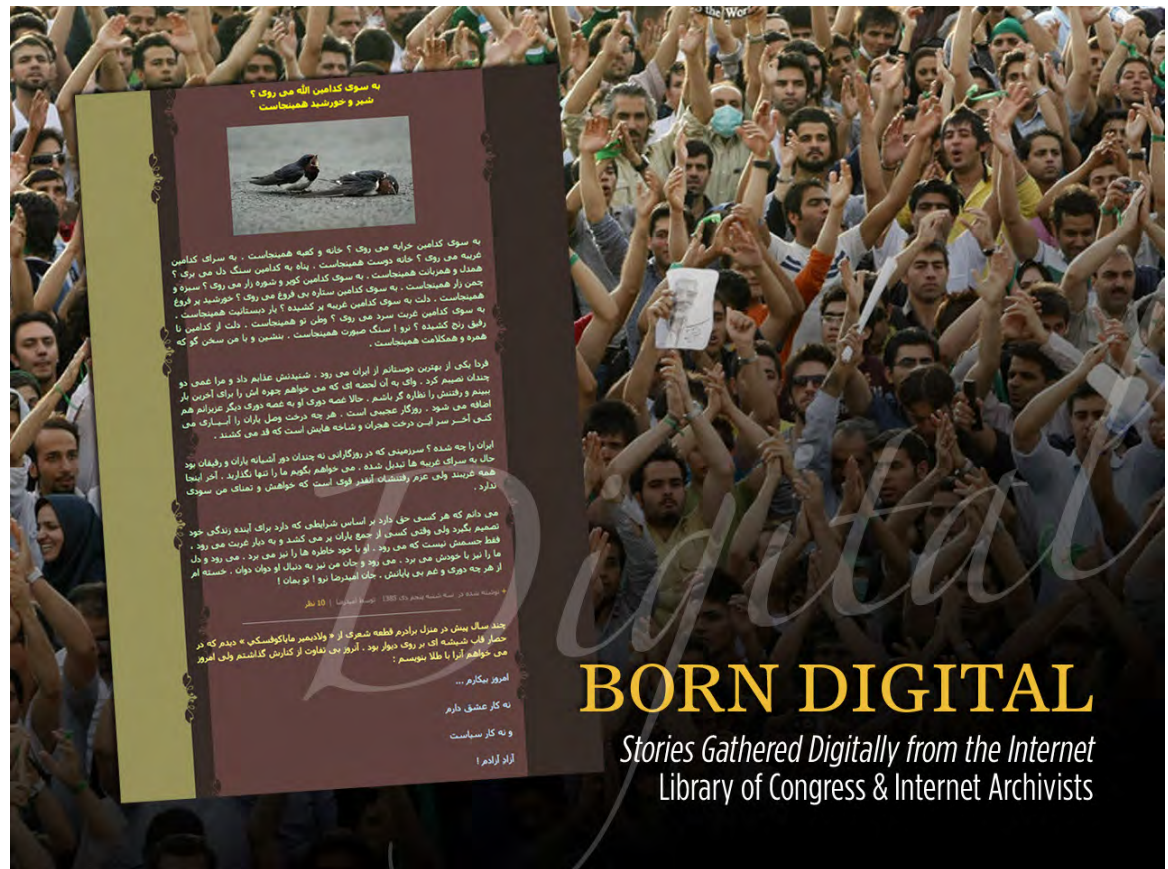


THE ACQUISITION — Every so often, a special collections story leaps out of the headlines. That is certainly the case with the news that the *Frank Lloyd Wright collection* is coming to New York City.

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation has entered into a partnership to move the visionary architect's vast archives into the permanent collections of MOMA and Columbia University's Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library – which houses one of the most comprehensive collections relating to architecture and the fine arts in the world. This presents the opportunity to gather a behind-the-scenes look at the workings of a research library and how they handle such a huge undertaking as they receive, process, make accessible and exhibit the works of an American master.

Video story on the acquisition •

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnSOENFuP6M>



BORN DIGITAL Primary sources are the “rough draft of history”—original accounts traditionally preserved as tangible artifacts—scrolls, letters, manuscripts, celluloid, and vinyl recordings.

... digital technology
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Now digital technology has exploded the size and scope of recorded human interaction and forced archivists into vast, uncharted territory on an ever-changing sea of information.

As spontaneous events like natural disasters and revolutions flare up the internet springs to life with user-driven communications that motivate action and reaction. Suddenly text messaging, social media, YouTube and Twitter ignite protests that topple governments and dictators.



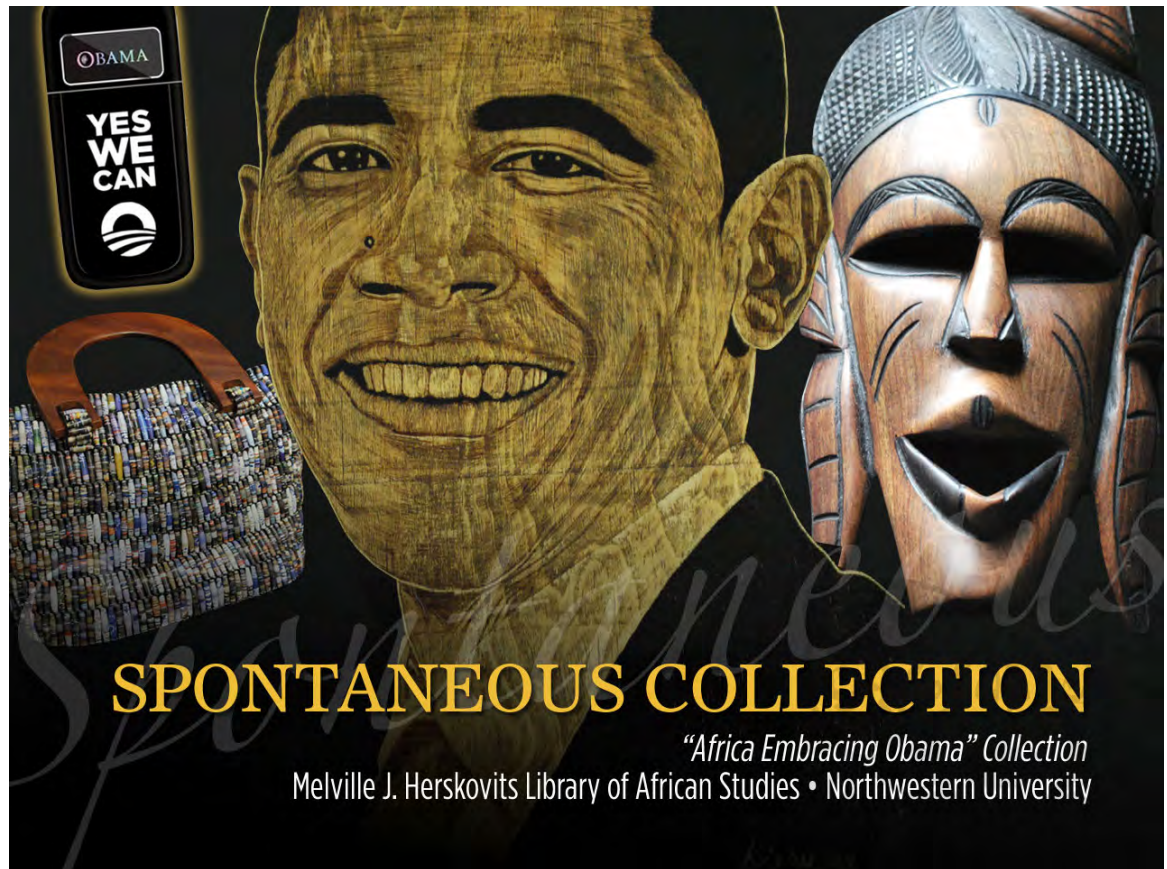
In Iran authorities strike down digital dissent as soon as it appears. Iranian bloggers plea for human rights even as FATA– the Iranian cyber crimes police– removes their blogs and hunts them down.

But archivists harvest digitally-born voices before they are silenced. Programmable “web crawlers” at the Library of Congress and other internet archives gather terabytes of raw data documenting unfolding events and worldwide struggles for freedom.

“I learned that the salvation is not achieved by wandering through the primrose path of sticking to the dogmas and the preordained codes. But it is in having faith in the dignity, nobility and liberty of the human beings.”

–archived web diary of blogger Omidreza Mirayafi, who was charged with “posting seditious materials and insulting the Supreme Leader Khamenei” and died in Tehran’s Evin Prison on April 15, 2009.





SPONTANEOUS COLLECTION — When curator David Easterbrook was traveling in Africa in 2007, virtually everyone he met was talking about Barack Obama's newly launched presidential bid. Since Easterbrook represents the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies—the largest library of Africana in the world—he saw the perfect opportunity to document an historic event from Africa's point of view. So Easterbrook put out the word and artifacts poured in!

Publications, beadwork, jewelry, textiles, lapel pins, key rings, fans, greeting cards, hats, T-shirts, posters, and even a brand of beer (first named "Senator" then, after the election, "President"). Almost overnight, the *Africa Embracing Obama* collection was born. What comes across clearly in these objects is the exuberance and exhilaration with which African nations have embraced Obama's election.

Voice of America video on collection •
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rt5ibU4eXeU>



BIRTH OF SOUL FOOD — Soul food, a cuisine with roots in Native American foods and the African slave trade, is a way of exploring a large cultural inheritance, one that has profoundly influenced American life. We envision a chef traveling to the W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library at the University of Alabama to research a menu from the *David Walker Lupton African American Cookbook Collection*. Among the 450 volumes he finds materials dating from 1827 (the first publishing of a recipe book by an African American) to the present day – a treasure trove documenting the soul food movement. We intercut between research and the process of cooking (and eating) each newly discovered delicacy. Leafing through cookbooks that are largely community-based fundraisers (churches, women's groups and sororities) we find that food is linked with music, humor, social satire, cultural and religious celebrations, and other aspects of African-American life. These culinary texts say much about ethnic identity, family and community life, social history, the roles of women and men, economics, religion and values. We are intrigued by the cross-promotional possibilities of recruiting Food Network host “Chef Jeff” Henderson (author of *America I Am: Pass It Down Cookbook*—which discusses African American culinary influences), to travel to Atlanta for a research session in the stacks and in the kitchen.

NPR story on Chef Jeff • <http://www.npr.org/2011/02/04/133430214/chef-jeff-collects-soul-food-through-the-generations>

PENN STATE PUBLIC BROADCASTING TEAM



KRISTIAN BERG

Series Producer

Kristian Berg is an award-winning producer, writer and director of non-fiction television and new media. His documentaries include *The Dakota Conflict* (PBS), *Dakota Exile* (PBS), *Greatest Trials: The Scottsboro Boys* and *The Capture and Trial of Adolf Eichmann* (Court TV).

Berg also wrote and produced stories for the 2004 and 2005 seasons of Oregon Public Broadcasting's hit prime time PBS series *History Detectives*. For nine seasons he wrote, produced and directed stories and specials for the Twin Cities Public Television's Emmy award-winning PBS science series *Newton's Apple*.

Berg has also produced for WGBH-TV's prime time PBS science series *NOVA scienceNOW*; the PBS children's series *ZOOM!* and the PBS children's science series *DragonflyTV*. He has also developed and produced educational programming and materials with the National Science Foundation and Annenberg Media.

Berg's awards include a National Daytime Emmy Award nomination; a Gold Plaque from the Chicago Film Festival; three regional Emmy Awards; a Science Journalism Award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS); a Western Heritage Award for Outstanding Documentary; a CINE Golden Eagle; and an Ohio State Award.

MELANIE K. DOEBLER, D.ED.

Director, Project Development & Public Service Media

Melanie Doeblér has over 25 years experience working in educational program planning, development and evaluation in a variety of academic and field settings. She joined Penn State Public Broadcasting in 2004 to lead their *Engaging Faculty* initiative and has led the development of a Public Service Media Initiative that brings together robust academic research with the power of public media to impact public audiences. She has served as the Project Director for *Liquid Assets: The Story of America's Water Infrastructure*, *Telling Amy's Story: Raising Awareness of Domestic Violence*, and *The Geospatial Revolution*.

Doebler holds a B.A. in English from Bucknell University, a master's degree in Extension Education from Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, and a doctorate in Counselor Education from Penn State University.



ELAINE J. BRZYCKI, M.ED.

Manager, Project Development

With over 25 years of experience, Elaine Brzycki provides strategic direction to the development of large-scale public media projects that serve communities at the local, national and international levels through public television documentaries, interactive media, and collaborative outreach partnerships. In addition, she oversees project management for a diverse portfolio of public engagement and education initiatives, and manages foundation and corporate relations for Penn State Public Broadcasting.

Previously a development director at Tufts University, Elaine contributed to advancement efforts for the schools of medicine and liberal arts, and led a patrons of the arts program which secured funding for the University's first purpose-built music and performance building.

She holds a B.A. in 19th-Century European cultural studies from Wellesley College, and a master's in education from Harvard University.



JOE MYERS

Creative Director

Joe Myers is creative director at Penn State Public Broadcasting and has produced and directed such PBS documentaries as *Telling Amy's Story* (2011), *A Road to Independence* (2005), and *The Grange Fair: An American Tradition* (2003). Recounting a domestic violence homicide, *Telling Amy's Story* screened as an official selection of the Input 2011 Public Media Conference in South Korea.

Myers is currently developing the international human rights issues series *World on Trial* and the race relations series *You Can't Say That*.

His works have been honored with Mid-Atlantic Chapter National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS) Emmy awards, the Silver Screen Award from the U.S. International Film and Video Festival, a CINE Golden Eagle, Telly Awards and Pennsylvania Association of Broadcasters awards for his short-form and commercial work.



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