



**Finding Common Ground: CLIR
Postdoctoral Fellows on Scholarly
Engagement with Hidden Special
Collections and Archives**

Kelly Miller
University of Virginia

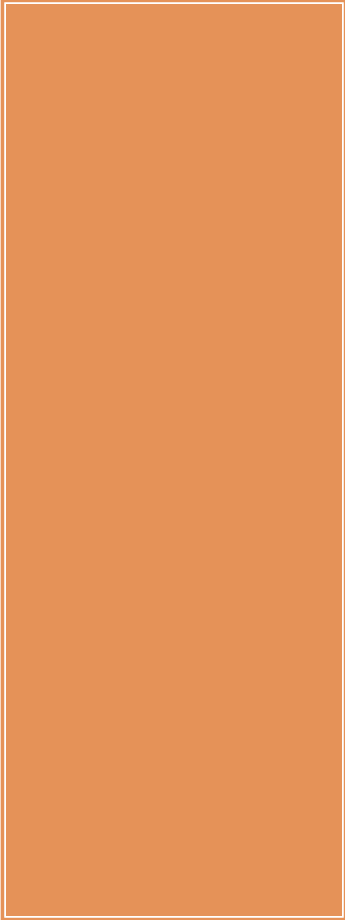
Gabrielle Dean
The Johns Hopkins University

Patricia Hswe
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Christa Williford
Council on Library and Information Resources

PRESENTERS

Opening Exercise

- 
- Please describe one example of a meaningful interaction you've had with a scholar in your library or archive.
 - What made the interaction meaningful for you?

The Scholar in the Library & Archive

What is the role of the scholar in the 21st-century library and archival environment?

How do today's librarians, archivists, and scholars interact with one another to realize their own professional goals?

How do our professional goals overlap and complement one another?

How can we use our complementary skills to solve shared problems?

Observations on Scholarly Engagement with Hidden Special Collections and Archives

Study Goals:

- ❑ To track successful aspects of user outreach – specifically with scholars, and
- ❑ To describe current practice regarding scholarly engagement with hidden special collections and archives that may be useful to others.

The Study: Some Preliminary Findings



1. Scholars are the primary users of special collections libraries/archives.
2. Scholarly use of special collections is part of the essential mission of special collections libraries/archives.
3. New or increased scholarly use of hidden collections is one of the success factors identified by nearly all of the HC projects.
4. The 2008 HC projects employ various approaches to the involvement of scholars in the cataloging and processing of collections.
5. Means of documenting scholarly use of collections is not yet standardized or ubiquitous.

Case Studies

Meaningful Interactions

Kelly on her experience as a doctoral student conducting research in Russia's St. Petersburg State Theater Library.



Elements of Engagement



- Shared interest / mutual curiosity
- Space/context for sustained conversation
- Access to primary resources
- Exchange of information that facilitates discovery and outcomes
- Describing discovery and outcomes

Christa on her experience as a postdoctoral fellow, working with special collections at Bryn Mawr College.

(Glenn Anders and Claudette Colbert in Eugene O'Neill's *Dynamo*, 1929. By Vandamm Studio, copyright Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Used with permission.)





Theresa Helburn Theatre Photography Collection. Select photos by Vandamm Studio, copyright Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Patricia on her experience
as a practicum student in her
final semester of library
school at UIUC.



User Contributions in Special Collections

“The experienced librarian or archivist knows that by presenting a collection to users, it may be possible to learn from the users just how much further description of that material might be desirable. Faculty and graduate students quarrying neglected collections for new sources may be called into service to describe those collections with a modicum of training and professional guidance.”

“Special Collections in ARL Libraries: A Discussion Report from the ARL Working Group on Special Collections,” March 2009

www.arl.org/bm~doc/scwg-report.pdf

Gabrielle on creating a workshop to imagine the future of the George Peabody Library at Johns Hopkins University.



4

ENGAGING SCHOLARS TO CRAFT A SHARED VISION OF THE FUTURE

A Scholar's Proposal

“... it's time to bring librarians and scholars, planners and users together.... Only by doing this can we hope to fashion what we now need: ... libraries that can regain their place as craft ateliers of scholarship...”

Anthony Grafton, “Apocalypse in the stacks? The research library in the age of Google,”
Daedalus Winter 2009.



Your examples of meaningful
interactions with scholars?

Common Ground

The space the CULTURAL
ARTIFACT inhabits, whether
physical or digital.

CONVERSATION

An exchange of thoughts, opinions, or feelings on common ground that inevitably leads to...

enhanced outcomes & improved ability to describe those outcomes.

A Priority Issue for Special Collections

To determine “ways to illustrate examples of how special collections contribute to innovative research, teaching, and learning.”

2007 Working Group Charge, see “Special Collections in ARL Libraries: A Discussion Report from the ARL Working Group on Special Collections,” March 2009

www.arl.org/bm~doc/scwg-report.pdf

Engagement Stimulates Outcomes

- Creation of...
 - ▣ New publications (print and online)
 - ▣ New courses or addition of new material to existing courses
 - ▣ New art (literature, visual art, music, theatrical performance, film)
 - ▣ Republication of lost or forgotten cultural material
 - ▣ New encounters between scholars & scholars, scholars & public
 - ▣ ...?

A Scholar on the Scholar's Vocation

“...the scholar's vocation is to preserve and pass on our cultural inheritance. Scholars do it by studying that inheritance and talking – usually among themselves – about what they find. ... These conversations are important because they help us remember how we came to be who we are.”

Jerome McGann, *The Scholar's Art: Literary Studies in a Managed World* (Chicago: The U of Chicago Press, 2006).

CLIR Resources

Postdoctoral Fellowship in Academic Libraries for Humanists

<http://www.clir.org/fellowships/postdoc/postdoc.html>

Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives

<http://www.clir.org/hiddencollections/index.html>

Questions ?

We would like to hear your questions, thoughts and suggestions!