



2-2003

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Recommended Citation

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DACUS LIBRARY / WINTHROP UNIVERSITY / FEBRUARY 2003 / NUMBER 24

Of Eunuchs, Formalized Curiosity and Libraries

At some point in this rather odd history, some eunuchs became priests; and those priests later became guardians of the word. In other words, librarians of a sort....The idea of eunuchs and librarians having anything in common, however, is, well, a gun filled with blanks.

Having never been to Hone, I can only relate this story from noetic experience; but the story goes that harems were once run by eunuchs. At the risk of the obvious, it was thought that a hetaera would be served best by those who could do the least ... harm. In this way, the king or ruler could be sure that his personal, er, bevy of beauties, his savory seraglio, his dandy demimondaine, would be safe in just about every sense of that word.

The opulence of odalisques has long since departed from most of the world, save for many famous paintings of same: Francois Boucher's *La Brune Odalisque*, Giovanni Costa's *A Turkish Odalisque* and Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres's *Grande Odalisque* spring to mind.

At some point in this rather odd history, some eunuchs became priests; and those priests later became guardians of the word. In other words, librarians of a sort. The image remained and was helped not at all by Edward Young's immortal lines:

Unlearned men of books assume the care,

As eunuch are the guardians of the fair.

(*Love of Fame*. Satire ii, Line 83)

While I wince at the words, the lines do have a resonance that fall trippingly off the tongue. Mr. Young, an English poet and dramatist (1683-1785), proved a failed politician who took the holy orders. He was author of "three bombastic tragedies," and I for one wish his bombast had run short of that eunuch line!

But the line is hardly true of Dacus librarians. The question most of us librarians hate to hear is, "So, what do you do all day, read?" This is usually followed by a chuckle, and then the eyes glaze over as an explanation is given.

The idea of eunuchs and librarians having *anything* in common, however, is, well, a gun filled with blanks. Not to put too fine a point on it, I thought I would showcase but a few of our many bullets, alphabetically. Bear in mind that we are all on twelve-month contracts, work generally ten hour days—plus some nights and weekends—do not have summers off and must squeeze in our research

whenever and wherever we can.

Mary Rose Adkins, Authority Control Librarian. Although situated in Dacus for only a few years, Mary Rose is in hot pursuit of scholarly interests. With a Research Council grant last year, she and Gloria Kelley pulled together a cataloging workshop which proved so successful that it was oversubscribed. She is also working on a similar workshop for May 2003. Her current written work, an investigation of piano pedagogy websites, will include interactive theory sites for students and teachers, sites on music history and much more.

Bob Gorman, Head of Reference. Bob's research interests outside of the library include baseball and all thereunto fair or foul. Having spent a month at the Baseball Hall of Fame as a resident research assistant a few years ago, Bob runs all the research bases. His current work includes "Kill the Umpire," a case involving an on-field murder in Kentucky in 1913, which he'll present at the Nine Conference in Tucson, Ariz., and then for publication. A pacifist by heart, Bob has also written "I

Guess I Forgot to Duck: On-Field Fatalities in the Minor League Baseball,” published by *Nine: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture* (Spring 2003). Bob, along with David Weeks (see below), also published in the same journal “Foul Play: Fan Fatalities in Twentieth-Century Organized Baseball.”

With former Dacus employee, Lois Stickwell Walker, Bob wrote “Partners in Progress: Joseph B. Felton, the African American Community and the Rosenwald School Program” (*Carologue*, Fall 2002). In 2001, he published “David Mobley and the Rock Hill Chiefs: The Jackie Robinson of South Carolina” (*The National Pastime: A Review of Baseball History*). A piece on controversial player Art Shires will cover his brief career of scandals that includes killing a fan, assaulting his manager and allegations of murder.

Antje Mays, Acquisitions Head.

Antje’s research spans a broad spectrum of interests both in and out of the library. *Against the Grain*, a library publication in South Carolina, has published two of Antje’s articles. Williams S. Hein & Company, a prestigious law publisher, will release her major work, *International, Federal and Local Law* (Legal Research Guides) later this year. Antje will hold forth on assessment and accreditation at the upcoming Association of College and Research Libraries in Charlotte.

Susan Silverman, Head of

Public Services. Susan’s major work, co-authored with Lois Stickwell and widely celebrated, is *A Documented History of Gullah Jack Pritchard and*

the Denmark Vesey Slave Insurrection of 1822 (Edwin Mellen Press). She has written with husband Jason for *North and South*, *The Official Magazine of the Civil War Society* on “Blacks in Gray: Myth or Reality?” Both husband and wife are now under contract with Mellen for *Attempts by Southern States to Encourage European Immigration after the Civil War*.

David Weeks, Bibliographic Instruction Librarian. When David is not teaching his research classes, or playing with two-year old Sarah, he teams up with Bob Gorman for baseball history and presentations. He interviewed Eddie Freed, a Rock Hill Chiefs minor league player. The article, “Eddie Freed Made His Mark in Phillies History,” appeared this year in *The National Pastime*. Last spring, former Archivist Ron Chepesiuk and David worked on a piece about high density storage for the referred journal *Information and Resource Sharing Networks*. The article will appear later this year. Other efforts include reviews for *Library Times International*.

Gina White, Director of Archives and Special Collections. When Ron retired in December, there was never any question who stood in line to take over the job. For 15 years Gina White has served Dacus Archives well as the archives’ girl Friday. Gina is no stranger, however, to publication. In addition to dozens of presentations to civic clubs, church groups and area schools in York and Chester counties, she has also kept her pen in the ink well. Gina and her sister, Glinda Price Coleman, co-

authored a pictorial history of Chester County. Her research on the Revolutionary Battle of Beckhamville was turned over to the Great Falls Hometown Association at their request. It was later turned into a play by someone there, and plans for a reenactment are underway. Likewise, Gina researched how a Covenanter church service would be conducted for a re-enactment in June of 2002 and provided historical commentary at the service itself. Later this year, Gina will turn over more research to the Beckhamville Committee for its long-awaited re-enactment.

Not mentioned here are many other examples that could be provided from Jean Wells (Webmistress) and Gloria Kelley (head of Technical Services) as well as others. It goes without saying that former head archivist, Ron Chepesiuk, produced a body of work (showcased in another *Dean’s Corner*) equal to the work of an army of writers! Of course, Winthrop is a *teaching-learning* institution; and that takes precedence over all else. In our spare time, on nights and weekends and even vacations, the Dacus elucubrators are burning the midnight oil in other ways that enrich our work, strengthen our profession and hone our professional skills.

MY Herring Dean of Library Services

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