



Winterthur LIBRARY

NEWS SUMMER 2020

Greetings from the library my dining room table!

The library staff and I truly hope that this finds you all safe, well, and in the midst of a summer season that brings a greater peace of mind. Suffice it to say that we have dearly missed our community of researchers: students, research fellows, colleagues from across the Winterthur campus, and members of the public. Being away from the library since mid-March has renewed my appreciation of our day-to-day work, from watching researchers walking through the door needing our assistance to having access to the library's vast special collections within steps of our offices. We work hard to provide a comfortable environment that fosters exploratory conversations, and our daily reward is seeing new project ideas sparked by the library collections, receiving copies of books that were made possible through our research assistance, and enjoying the simple pleasure of surprise visits from old friends.

That being said, the transition to doing our library work from home was smoother than we ever could have imagined. As we closed, and throughout the first several weeks of the closure, we ensured that our community had the library resources they needed. We offered touchless curbside pickup of books, provided countless scans of collection items, and assisted patrons with finding and navigating databases. Jeanne Solensky has led staff in building our digital collections from home, assisted by Carley Altenburger and Sarah Lewis. Thousands of digital images have been added to our freely accessible digital library. The work has paid off! Visits to the site have increased by 30 percent since early March.

The influence of spending an inordinate amount of time in our homes is evident in this issue. Rebecca Olsen, the library's 2020–2021 graduate assistant, writes about her forthcoming library exhibit on the history of houseplants—from her plant-filled apartment. In the Conservator's Corner feature, Melissa Tedone recounts adapting her front porch into a studio for marbling paper. Our lone "quarantine fellow" Chloe Chapin checks in, and librarian Laura Parrish contributes a wonderful piece about the diaries of Joseph Stidham, a 19th-century rope maker and wire weaver in Wilmington, Delaware.

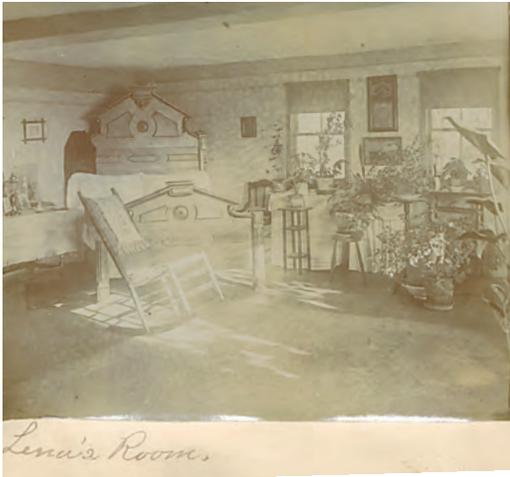
With best wishes,



Emily Guthrie
Library Director, NEH Librarian for the Printed Book & Periodical Collection
Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library

HOME IS WHERE THE HOUSEPLANTS ARE

By Rebecca Olsen



“Lena’s Room” From *Interiors of a house built in 1692: B. Taylor Prescott’s home, Rollins farm, photographs, [ca. 1890–ca. 1900]*, Doc. 857, Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera



Collage album, [ca. 1880–ca. 1900]. Fol. 252, Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera

“Plant One on Me: A History of Houseplants,” an upcoming Winterthur Library exhibit, highlights a variety of holdings connected to American and British house plant culture across the 19th and 20th centuries. There are books and magazines devoted specifically to the acquisition and care of house plants, but plants also appear in photographs of homes, collage albums, and interior design magazines. These assorted printed materials show the growth of “houseplant culture”—which traces many of its roots to 19th-century Britain—and how pervasive houseplants have become in our everyday lives.

Over the spring of 2020, thoughts of how we share our homes with plants became more prescient than I could have imagined. When I selected the topic of this exhibit, I certainly did not expect to complete the majority of the work from the safety of my home. My own collection of houseplants has brought me joy during a time when joy has often been hard to find. While working at home, I’ve been able to witness my *Oxalis triangularis* open its delicate leaves with the sun every morning, and close them again every evening. I’ve observed my slow-growing *Alocasia amazonica* unfurl two new glossy leaves. And I’ve watched my many *Chlorophytum comosum* (the ever-popular spider plant) explode with new babies, and carefully snipped each baby to root so I can give them to friends and family when it is safe to visit again.

Working from home alongside my plants made me view some of my chosen exhibit items differently. Objects that highlight the pleasures of sharing plants, creating art with plants, and living surrounded by plants feel particularly poignant.

Elizabeth Kent writes of the joy of receiving plants from loved ones in her *Flora Domestica*, one of the houseplant-specific volumes of literature included in the display. “As I reside in town,” Elizabeth Kent writes in her preface, “...friends... would bring me consolation in the shape of a Myrtle, a Geranium, a Hydrangea, or a Rose-Tree.” The 19th century saw Britons flock to London for employment and opportunity, often leaving their previous lives in the countryside behind. A London inhabitant herself, Kent tells her readers that potted plants could create a “portable flower garden” to enjoy in city homes or any space without a garden. In *Flora Domestica* she details the history, care, and uses of common domestic plants, with a particular focus on flowering plants (hence the “flora” in its title), which she values for the “beauty,” “luxuriousness,” and “sweetness of perfume” they add to her home.

For some, time at home might mean artistic projects, and those too could feature plants. In this fanciful page from a late 19th-century collage album, houseplants abound. The foreground shows large potted plants, including palms, with the figures of people lounging among them. In the background sits a Wardian case (commonly known today as a terrarium) filled with ferns. Collage albums were assembled with clippings chosen by the creator. This album’s many household scenes are composed using decorative papers and clippings from period publications of furniture, decorative elements, and people. Some of its domestic scenes are realistically displayed, while others—like this one—are more whimsical in scale and contents.

Many of us have plants in our homes, and many of our homes may have sheltered plants long before our time. Built in 1870, the former boarding school that houses my own apartment has seen generations of students, boarders, and apartment-dwellers, some of whom undoubtedly brought plants into their lodgings. I think about not only the people who found comfort and safety within these walls, but the plants that brightened their days. My personal favorite item in this exhibit is “Lena’s room,” a photograph of a Pennsylvania farmhouse bedroom filled with houseplants sitting in windowsills, on stands, and on the floor. Taken between 1890 and 1900, this photograph provides a glimpse of evidently beloved house plants in a woman’s bedroom.

I feel a sense of kinship looking at this photograph, especially at our particular moment in history. Lena may not have experienced self-isolation, but she lived in a time when infectious diseases such as cholera and influenza interrupted everyday life, and she surrounded herself with plants to bring her happiness. As I water the plants in my own bedroom, I think of Lena’s domestic routine and the plants she found joy in growing, and it is a comfort to me.

To those with plants indoors, those enjoying plants outside, and to our whole community—be well, and grow.

CONSERVATOR'S CORNER

By Melissa Tedone



Home setup for paper marbling on the front porch.

Marbled papers have enlivened the European and American bookbinding tradition for centuries. As the demand for printed, hand-bound books grew from the 17th through the early 19th centuries, bookbinders sought more convenient and affordable ways to appeal aesthetically to the reading public. Quarter-leather and half-leather bindings used leather on the spine, or spine and corners (respectively), while the boards were covered with decorated paper. This approach produced visually attractive book bindings that could be made economically with leather offcuts from other binding projects. The cost savings for the binder were often passed along to the consumer, as booksellers' price lists attest.

Hand-marbled papers are monoprints. While certain popular patterns and color combinations were used repeatedly, each individual piece of marbled paper is actually unique. For this reason, book conservators try to save the original marbled paper on a binding rather than replacing it, even when it is possible to find the same pattern and color palette in a modern marbled paper.

My current experimental research into decorated bookbinding papers draws on 19th-century European bookbinding manuals from the Winterthur Library collection. In particular, I have been trying to recreate historical recipes for paper glazes that impart a deep shine and smooth surface texture to marbled papers. These glazes rely on varying proportions of wax, soap, and oils, which can trigger deterioration processes as marbled papers age. The better conservators understand the mechanical and chemical vulnerabilities of bookbinding materials, the better able we are to make effective and ethical conservation treatment decisions.

Since I have been working from home during the pandemic shutdown, I no longer have access to my lab and fume hood for cooking up glazes. So instead, I have been practicing my marbling technique by recreating popular historical marbling patterns at home. Working in the humble setting of my front porch instead of in the well-equipped, climate-controlled Library Conservation Lab at Winterthur makes me feel a sort of kinship with the craftspeople who developed these simple, enduring techniques without modern conveniences. I feel inspired by what can be achieved with a few hand tools, common artist's materials, and a little know-how.



From left: (1) the colors just laid onto the marbling bath; (2) the colors mixed into the "gel-git" pattern that is the foundation of many historical marbling patterns; (3) the colors combed into the "nonpareil" pattern; (4) the marbled paper after drying.



THE WORK-A-DAY WORLD OF JOSEPH STIDHAM

By Laura Parrish

1st Month 1830
1. This being our Monthly Meeting Day we had a good meeting pretty generally attended and I was good & staid in the house in the afternoon Reading
2. Having no work went to the shop and on an errand for John and in the afternoon nailed some strips of leather on a trunk of Joshua Strouds
3. Tolerable Pleasant Day attended Meeting
4. After Breakfast went to the shop and wanting Employment thought I would try to make a Cloth Horse for which I went to the Board Yard and Bought the stuff took it to the shop and slit it up whether Cool

"The amount of work done in the ropewalk in the following years..."
Col. 992. Joseph H. Stidham Diaries, 1828–1868, Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera

Many library special collections collect the papers of notable people such as politicians, writers, and entertainers. Although Winterthur Library's Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera does have a few letters from Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin, our focus, instead, is on documenting the lives of ordinary people, especially craftspeople. Recently, Elizabeth and Henry Gunther supported that mission by donating a collection of diaries kept by a member of Mrs. Gunther's family, Joseph H. Stidham, a rope maker and wire weaver in Wilmington, Delaware. The volumes cover the years 1830–1868 and give insight not only into the life of this one person but also into the lives of working people of the time, as well as what was happening in Wilmington, Delaware.

Joseph was born in 1788, the son of Captain Joseph Stidham. He was descended from Dr. Timen Stiddem, one of the early Swedish settlers in what became Wilmington. Joseph was a Quaker, although the rest of his family seems not to have been. We do not know why he became a rope maker. He never married and he boarded with the Strouds, a Quaker family. Joseph Stidham died in 1870 and was buried in the cemetery of the Wilmington Friends Meeting House.

Joseph was a laborer; he did not own the ropewalks where he worked. He performed different tasks, so he noted in his diary what he did each day, sometimes preparing the fiber (jute, sisal, or hemp) to be spun into ropes, and sometimes making different kinds of rope (lines, twine, cables). Occasionally, he made wire sieves and screens. However, in times of economic downturns, or if it was just too cold to work outside on an unheated ropewalk, there was no work, and therefore no pay. At these times, Joseph scrambled to earn some money by knitting stockings and shrimp nets, making clothes pins, or working as a farm laborer. Because the diaries cover such a long time span, one can see how Joseph's working abilities changed as he aged. In his last years, he more often worked in the store where rope was sold rather than doing the more strenuous tasks in the ropewalk.

Although Joseph's diaries specifically record what was happening in Wilmington, his entries shed light on city life elsewhere. When homes used wood or coal for heating and cooking, ashes accumulated quickly. Homeowners had barrels in which the ashes were collected, and one of Joseph's chores was to set out the full ash barrel for the ash man to empty. Joseph was also in charge of the family vegetable garden, and he scooped up manure from the street to use for fertilizer. Fires were an ever-present danger in towns, and Joseph dutifully recorded when and where fires broke out in Wilmington. (Thankfully, none seem to have raged out of control.) Almost unique to Wilmington were the explosions at the du Pont gunpowder factory outside of town, and Joseph recorded those as well.

Perhaps because he was a Quaker, Joseph did not attend theatrical performances or dances, although he mentioned seeing wild animals that were brought to town. An intriguing bit of history was learned when Joseph wrote that he watched the funeral procession of John Ross, Chief of the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokee have no connection to Delaware, so this was a puzzle. Through research, it was learned that Chief Ross died in Washington, D.C., in the summer of 1866. His second wife had been a native of Wilmington and was buried here the previous year, so he was buried next to her. However, within six months of his death, the Cherokee moved their chief's body from Wilmington back to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma).

Changes in transportation are also recorded in Joseph's diaries. He had family in Port Penn and St. Georges, Delaware. In the early years, he would walk to New Castle to get a steamboat to Delaware City and then walk to St. Georges. Later, he was able to make the journey by train. He enjoyed walking, and perhaps would be pleased to know that his old routes between Wilmington and New Castle and between Delaware City and St. Georges are now paved trails.

Joseph Stidham made these volumes himself, buying the paper, folding it, stitching it together, and making covers for his volumes. In order to preserve them for the future, students in the LACE (Library and Archives Conservation Education) program at the University of Delaware have been stabilizing them, being careful to honor the originality of Stidham's bindings. They are making individual housings for each volume for added protection. The students who have contributed to this project so far are Yan Ling Choi, Karissa Muratore, Lindsey Zachman, Laura McNulty, and Yungjin Shin. Short passages from the diaries have been transcribed and are available online: http://findingaid.winterthur.org/html/HTML_Finding_Aids/COL0992.htm



FEATURED FELLOW



Chloe Chapin, Short-term Research Fellow, Spring 2020

Chloe Chapin

Chloe Chapin is a Ph.D. Candidate in the American Studies Program at Harvard University. Her dissertation, "Full Dress: Masculinity and Conformity in Antebellum America" examines the establishment of masculine evening dress and considers the importance of uniformity in the creation of modern American masculinity. She provided the following report on making the most of her time as a "quarantine fellow" in Delaware:

I have the strange honor of being a "quarantine fellow": after a too-brief time in the archives, I frantically checked out many tote bags full of library books, and have since been holed up in my Airbnb poring over all the secondary literature I could possibly want. Since my next archive visit was cancelled, the Winterthur staff have graciously adopted me as a much longer-term fellow-at-large than they expected, generously allowing me to do a remote fellow's talk and to continue to help provide access to library materials. While certainly not what I was planning for this spring, I'm learning to lean into this global pause and productively slow down the frantic extraction that often comes with archival fellowships.

In the Winterthur Library collection, I have examined (and hope to see more of) the collection of early 19th-century men's clothing catalogues, tailor's account books, dyer's records, and laundry manuals. In my downtime, I borrowed a sewing machine from a local sewing store and have been making masks to donate to local hospitals and Winterthur staff.

ADOPT-A-BOOK

Thank you for supporting the work of Winterthur's community of researchers by considering the adoption a work of recent scholarship for the library's circulating collection. We welcome donations by check, or online at <https://inside.winterthur.org/give>. Within the "Additional Information" section, please use the comments field to specify that the gift is for the library and note the book that you are sponsoring. Checks should be made payable to Winterthur Museum and may be sent directly to Winterthur Library, 5105 Kennett Pike, Winterthur, DE 19735.

Any questions about the books and the adoption process may be directed to Emily Guthrie (eguthrie@winterthur.org/302.888.4630).

***Christopher Wren: In Search of Eastern Antiquity*, by Vaughan Hart. The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2020. \$60.00**

In this revelatory study of one of the great architects in British history, Vaughan Hart considers Christopher Wren's (1632–1723) interest in Eastern antiquity and Ottoman architecture, an interest that would animate much of his theory and practice. In a deft analysis, Hart contextualizes Wren's use of classical elements—columns, domes, and cross plans—within his enthusiasm for the East and the broader Anglican interest in the Eastern Church. A careful study of diary records reappraises Wren's working relationship with Robert Hooke (1635–1703), who shared in many of Wren's theoretical commitments. The result is a new, deepened understanding of Wren's work.

***Cloth that Changed the World: The Art and Fashion of Indian Chintz*, by Sarah Fee (ed.). Yale University Press, 2020. \$33.87**

This beautifully-illustrated book tells the fascinating and multidisciplinary stories of the widespread desire for Indian chintz over 1,000 years to its latest resurgence in modern fashion and home design. Based on the renowned Indian chintz collections held at the Royal Ontario Museum, the book showcases the genius of Indian chintz makers and the dazzling variety of works they have created for specialized markets: religious and court banners for India, monumental gilded wall hangings for elite homes in Europe and Thailand, luxury women's dress for England, sacred hangings for ancestral ceremonies in Indonesia, and today's runways of Lakme Fashion Week in Mumbai.

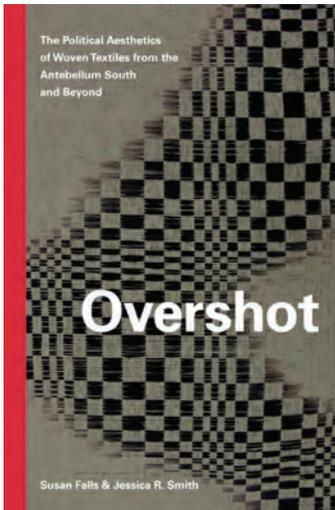
***Crap: A History of Cheap Stuff in America*, by Wendy Woloson. University of Chicago Press, 2020. \$29.99**

Woloson tells the history of 'crap' from the late 18th century through today, exploring its many categories: gadgets, knickknacks, novelty goods, mass-produced collectibles, giftware, and variety store merchandise. As Woloson shows, not all crap is crappy in the same way—bric-a-brac is crappy in a different way from, say, advertising giveaways, which are differently crappy from commemorative plates. Taking on the full brilliant and depressing array of crappy material goods, the book explores the overlooked corners of the American market and mindset, revealing the complexity of our relationship with commodity culture over time. By studying crap rather than finely made material objects, Woloson shows us a new way to truly understand ourselves, our national character, and our collective psyche. For all its problems, and despite its disposability, our crap is us.

***The Lives of Objects: Material Culture, Experience, and the Real in the History of Early Christianity*, by Maia Kotrosits. University of Chicago Press, 2020. \$30.00**

Left-behind objects are a source of fascination for scholars of the ancient world, and the field of Jewish and Early Christian studies is no exception. Maia Kotrosits offers a fresh perspective, looking beyond physical material to consider how collective imagination shapes the formation of objects and the experience of reality. Bringing a psychoanalytical approach to her analysis of material culture in ancient religion and history, she examines objects of attachment—relationships, ideas, and beliefs that live on in the psyche. By looking at objects of attachment, Kotrosits illustrates how people across time have tied value systems to the materiality of life. Engaging with the fields of classics, history, anthropology, and literary, gender, and queer studies, Kotrosits shows how different disciplines address historical knowledge and how looking closely at an expanded definition of materiality—one that considers both physical objects and their subtexts—can help us make connections between antiquity and the contemporary world.





***Overshot: The Political Aesthetics of Woven Textiles from the Antebellum South and Beyond*, by Susan Falls and Jessica R. Smith. University of Georgia Press, 2020. \$32.95 (pbk.)**

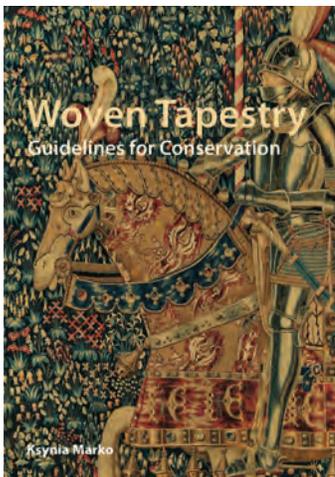
Authors Susan Falls and Jessica R. Smith analyze what we can learn by examining the exhibition and interpretation of ‘overshot’ woven coverlets within American public history. By showing they can be understood in relationship to the global economy and within politicized cultural movements, Falls and Smith demonstrate how these domestic, utilitarian objects explode the art/craft dichotomy, belong to a rich narrative of historical art forms, and tell us far more about American culture today than simply representing a nostalgic past, particularly with regard to ideas about race, class, nationalism, women’s labor, and the separation of private versus public spaces.

***The Oxford Handbook of History and Material Culture*, Ivan Gaskell and Sarah Carter, eds. Oxford University Press, 2020. \$150.00**

Most historians rely principally on written sources. Yet there are other traces of the past available to historians: the material things that people have chosen, made, and used. This book examines how material culture can enhance historians’ understanding of the past, both worldwide and across time. The successful use of material culture in history depends on treating material things of many kinds not as illustrations but as primary evidence. The authors of this volume contribute case studies arranged thematically in six sections that respectively address the relationship of history and material culture to cognition, technology, the symbolic, social distinction, and memory. They range across time and space, from Paleolithic to Punk.

***The Paston Treasure: Microcosm of the Known World*, by Andrew Moore, Nathan Flis, and Francesca Vanke. Yale University Press, 2018. \$75.00**

The Paston Treasure, a spectacular painting from the 1660s now held at Norwich Castle Museum, depicts a wealth of objects from the collection of a local landed family. This deeply researched volume uses the painting as a portal to the history of the collection, exploring the objects, their context, and the wider world they occupied. Drawing on an impressive range of fields, including history of art and collections, technical art history, musicology, history of science, and the social and cultural history of the 17th century, the book weaves together narratives of the family and their possessions, as well as the institutions that eventually acquired them. Essays, vignettes, and catalogue entries comprise this multidisciplinary exposition, uniting objects depicted in the painting for the first time in nearly 300 years.



***Woven Tapestry: Guidelines for Conservation*, by Ksynia Marko. Archetype Publications, 2020. \$104.37**

From the Middle Ages, tapestries with figurative or other ornament were used by royalty and aristocrats to furnish their palaces and houses. Since the vast majority of tapestries are on open display in historic interiors, they pose particular conservation and interpretation challenges. This publication aims to help conservators carry out assessments in order to arrive at appropriate options for treatment by focusing on the techniques of tapestry manufacture, agents of deterioration, and current methods of cleaning, support, and repair.



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Digital Collections: <http://contentdm.winterthur.org/digital>

ACCESSING RESOURCES IN THE WINTERTHUR LIBRARY

Although the library plans to remain closed to researchers throughout the state of Delaware's phase 2 of reopening, the librarians are available and eager to assist in providing access to the library collections through scanning, curbside pickup for researchers with patron accounts, interlibrary loan, and reference consultations. The best way to reach us is by sending an e-mail to reference@winterthur.org. The inbox is checked regularly, and your inquiry will be directed to the appropriate staff member.

Thanks to a recent partnership with the Open Libraries Initiative, electronic access to many titles in the library's circulating collection is now available through Winterthur's homepage on the Internet Archive: <https://archive.org/details/winterthurlibrary>.

We hope that you will stay in touch with us over the summer as our plans to reopen the Winterthur Library continue to evolve!

Masthead from decorative endpapers in Nicolas de Malezieu, *Serenissimi Burgundiae Ducis Elementa Geometrica*. Patavii: Ex typographia Seminarii, apud Joannem Manfrè, Gift of Edmond L. Lincoln 1713. RBR QA464 M24

Decorative motif from *Recueil de Vases, Plafonds, Ornaments et Autres d'Architecture* (1682–ca.1700). RBR NK1340 R31 F