Scribble, Scribble

This was the response of King George III to Edward Gibbon when the historian presented his great history of the Roman empire. Of course, Lehigh did not exist then, but since the University’s founding in 1865 there’s been a good deal of scribbling here as well, both by faculty and graduates. Part of the job of Special Collections is to capture as much of that as possible.

In this issue of the Special Collections Flyer, therefore, I want to tell you a little bit about the Lehigh Authors Collection: what’s in it, what it tries to accomplish, and how it needs your help.

First of all, the Lehigh Authors Collections seeks to include every separately published item by a Lehigh faculty or staff member (whether or not created while they were at Lehigh), as well as every such item by a Lehigh graduate.

That’s a tall order, because trying to identify all publications by Lehigh faculty and graduates is time-consuming. Publication can happen under a variety of circumstances, and there is no mechanism available to identify them all automatically.

But it’s important to make the effort. Many publications are, to be sure, in Lehigh’s circulating library collection. There they’re subject to the vicissitudes of damage, theft and, perhaps at some point, discard.

The outside world makes the tacit assumption, however, that an institution has copies of works published by its own faculty, and can serve as the repository of last resort when they’re needed. In addition, a comprehensive Lehigh Authors Collection helps the institution understand the history of its own scholarship: where it
Davis spent two years at Lehigh and later achieved renown as a journalist.

Eckardt was a distinguished member of Lehigh's religion department.

Bittel, '40, is a prolific author of popular business books.

Bittel, '40, is a prolific author of popular business books.

Brockman graduated from Lehigh in 1919.

Eckardt was a distinguished member of Lehigh's religion department.

How you can help is fairly obvious. If you have a new book, and have gotten more copies than you need, think about sending us one for permanent retention. Or, at least, send an email to “inspc” and tell us about it.

How do you tell if your publication, or someone else's, is in the Lehigh Authors Collection? First of all, look for the work up in the online catalog to see if we have any copies. If we do, look to see if the call number for any holding begins with “L,” followed by a few numbers and letters, and having the location “L-Bayer.” If there is, we're in good shape. If not, we need help in adding one.

— P.A.M. 

Special Collections materials are available for research and consultation without restriction. For further information contact Philip A. Metzger, Curator of Special Collections, or Ilhan Citak, Special Collections Assistant. Reading room hours are Monday through Friday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. or by appointment. Telephone: (610) 758-4506; fax (610) 758-6091; e-mail: inspc@lehigh.edu.