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Lehigh University
Information Resources

Special Collections *Flyer*

Out of Circulation

Special Collections has several sources for adding to its holdings: gifts (always welcome) and purchase through booksellers or auction are the most obvious. But one source, which costs little and can be quite productive, is transfer from the library's circulating collections. I want to use this SPECIAL COLLECTIONS *Flyer* to explain the rationale and principles used in deciding what should be transferred from the general collection into the more protected but admittedly somewhat less easily accessible confines of Special Collections. Incidentally, the books depicted in the illustrations are all ones which used to circulate but now do not.

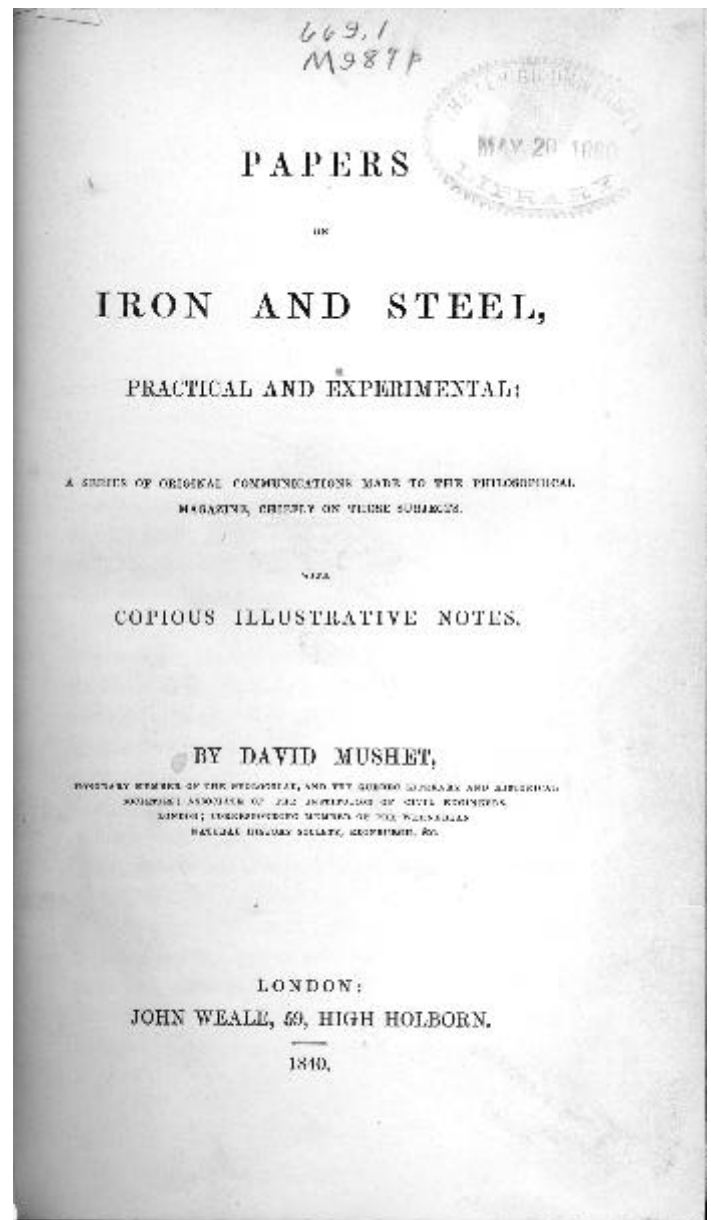
Transfer from the general collection constitutes in fact an important part of Special Collections' mission to preserve and interpret books of artifactual value. "Artifactual value" includes aspects of the object which a copy or facsimile can-not transmit, and which sometimes have the effect of con-ferring monetary value. What was just another publication a hundred or more years ago may now be an important document for purposes the original writer or publisher could not have imagined.

The library has developed a set of guidelines for

transfer, which are based on the date of publication and the nature of the material. These have been used to transfer more than 2500 titles. It is important to understand that these date criteria do not substitute for informed judgement. *The general principle is that any book falling before the applicable date needs a justification for leaving it in the general collection; after the date justification must fall on the side of removing it.*

With this in mind, here are the standards by which Lehigh's libraries make the decision. Other institutions may follow somewhat different guidelines.

1. All books with a publication date 1850 or earlier. However, a textually unimportant edition from the 1840s of a 19th century work would remain in the circulating collection. On the other hand, a post-1850 textually im-portant edition of, say, a Dickens novel



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would certainly be transferred.

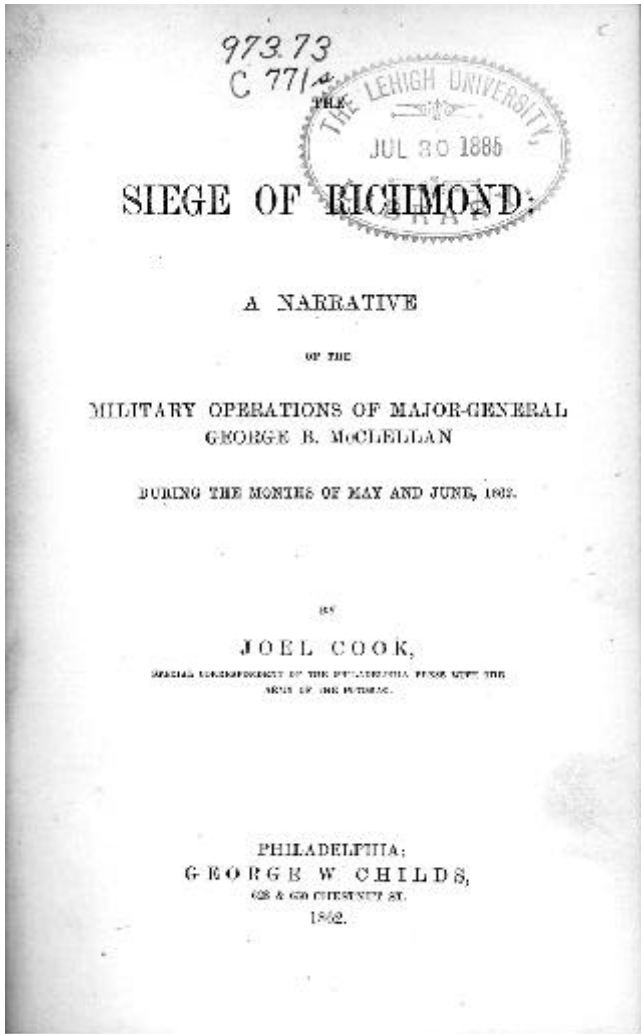
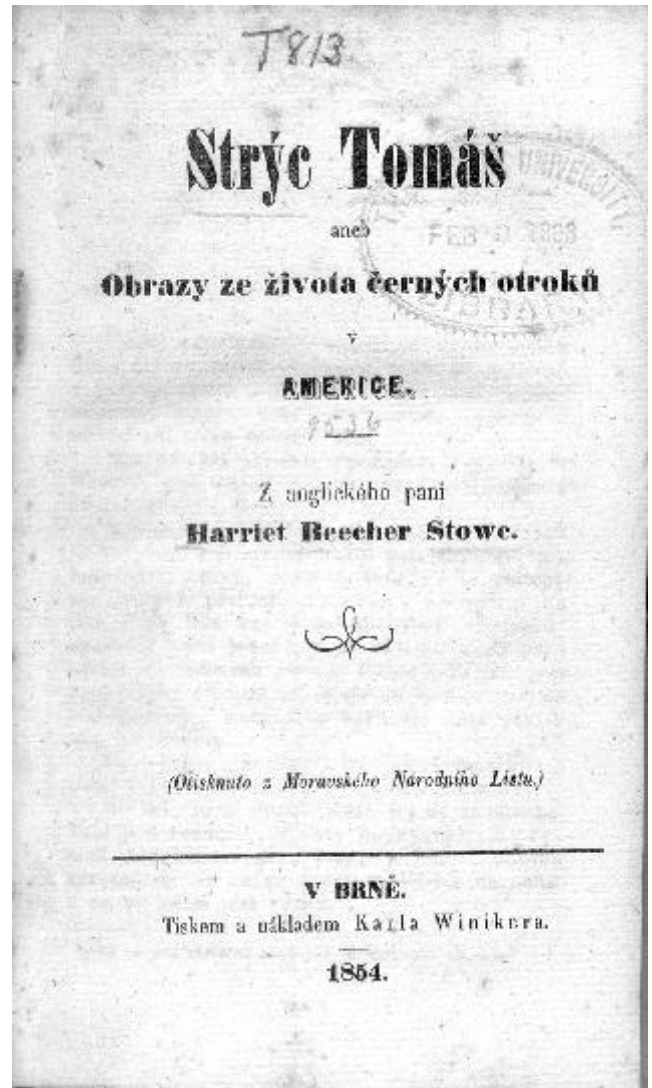
2. United States imprints having a publication date of 1870 or earlier. This date covers the immediate post Civil War period. But the same examples as were cited in no. 1 above apply here as well.

3. Scientific and technical material having a publication date of 1900 or earlier. This is perhaps the trickiest of the principles, particularly in view of the interest in the history of science and technology on this campus. The date may seem late, but includes a lot of seminal work in science and technology. There is much in the early 20th century which may be transferred as well: for example, reinforced concrete before about 1915, television and air conditioning from the 1930s and before, and many others.

4. Any publication with a stated or known edition of 500 or fewer copies.

5. Any publication with a high monetary value on the out-of-print market, and therefore at higher than normal risk of being stolen, coupled with difficulty of replacement.

The illustrations in this issue are of title pages belonging to three books that were transferred from the circulating collection. They are all from the mid-19th century, and are good examples of the elements of a



decision to transfer.

On the other side, for example, is the title page of a collection of papers on iron and steel making, published at a time when the development of the industry was in its infancy. The Civil War narrative was published during the conflict, and is an original source document. The Czech translation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published just a few years after the American original, demonstrates the range of interest in this novel around the world.

Please let us know about books you encounter in the general collection that you think should be transferred. - P.A.M.
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 ÉÉ Special Collections has a new exhibition in the permanent gallery of the Lehigh University Art Galleries in the Zoellner Arts Center. It features selections from among our collection of hand-colored plate books, and includes another volume of Audubon's *Birds of America*, along with seven works depicting flora and fauna recorded as the results of exploring expeditions. The gallery is open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday, and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday.

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Special Collections materials are available for research and consultation without restriction. For further information contact Philip A. Metzger, Curator of Special Collections, or Marie Boltz, 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) 974-6471; e-mail: inspc@lehigh.edu.