



# LIBRARY PERSPECTIVES

A Newsletter of the  
Oberlin College Library

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## Taylor Branch to Speak at Friends Dinner

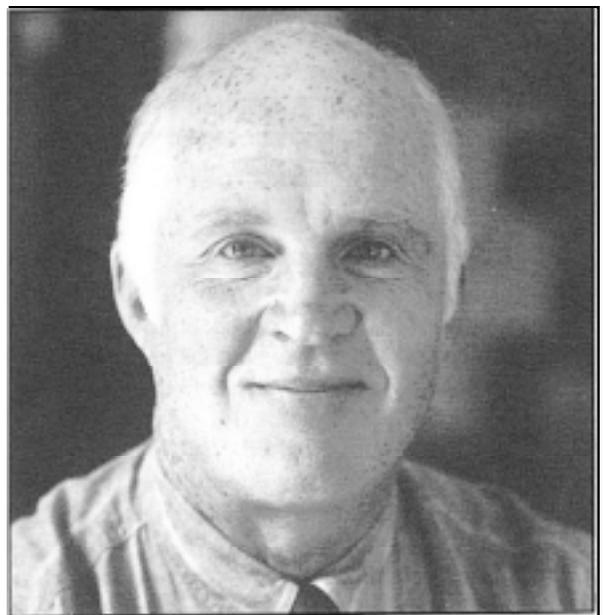
Pulitzer Prize winner Taylor Branch will be the featured speaker at the Friends of the Library dinner on Saturday, November 4.

Mr. Branch is the author of a monumental three volume study of America in the Martin Luther King years. The first volume of the trilogy, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63*, received the 1998 Pulitzer Prize for History, the National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction, the Los Angeles Times Book Award, and was a finalist for the National Book Award for Nonfiction. The second volume, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-65*, won both the Sidney Hillman Book Award and the Imus Book Award in 1999. Both volumes were national best-sellers. Mr. Branch is currently working on the third and final volume of the trilogy, *At Canaan's Edge*.

Branch's trilogy is both a powerful biography of King and a telling portrait of the Civil Rights era in broad social and political context. In the words of one reviewer, it is "an indispensable account not just of King but of the events that he shaped and was shaped by."

Mr. Branch is the recipient of numerous awards and honors. President Clinton awarded him the National Humanities Medal in 1999 and he received a five-year MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 1991. With Harry Belafonte he is Executive Producer of the forthcoming ABC miniseries, "Parting the Waters," based on the first two books in his trilogy, *America in the King Years*.

Mr. Branch will be available for a book signing at the Oberlin Bookstore that Saturday morning at 11 a.m. He will also participate in a panel discussion "Martin Luther King and Religion" at 2 p.m. in King 106. Other panelists will be A.G. Miller, Associate Professor of Religion, and Pamela Brooks, Instructor in African-American Studies. Mr. Branch's talk following the Friends dinner will focus on King's core message.



Taylor Branch

Its title is: "Freedom on Two Feet: Equal Souls, Equal Votes."

Mr. Branch's visit to Oberlin is jointly sponsored by the Friends of the Oberlin College Library, the President's Office, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the African-American Studies Department, the History Department, and the Mead-Swing Lecture-ship Committee.

## Library Receives Major Grant for Diversity Initiative

The Oberlin College Library has been awarded a two-year grant in the amount of \$139,732 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), an independent federal agency. The grant will support the establishment of an internship program designed to attract students from diverse backgrounds to the field of librarianship. The

award was one of ten national leadership grants made by the IMLS Library Services Division in the area of education and training.

"As the demographics of the United States continue to change, libraries will need to recruit increasingly diverse professional staffs in order to effectively serve the country's heterogeneous popu-

lation," notes Ray English, Oberlin's Director of Libraries, who will co-direct the grant with Reference Librarian Haipeng Li.

The grant builds on the College's strong history of maintaining a diverse student body, its excellent record of educating future librarians, and the

*continued page 5*

## Noted Historian to Speak on Abolition

James Oliver Horton, Benjamin Banneker Professor of American Studies and History at George Washington University and Director of the Afro-American Communities Project of the National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian Institution, will deliver three talks related to abolition on Thursday and Friday, September 28 and 29.

His Oberlin visit will begin with a 4:00 p.m. gallery talk on Thursday for the exhibition "Free At Last: A History of the Abolition of Slavery in America."

Professor Horton is co-curator of the exhibition, which will be on display in the Main Library during the month of September. On Thursday evening at 7:00 p.m. he will speak at the New Union Center for the Arts on "The Abolitionist Underground and the War on Slavery." His final talk, "Presenting Slavery: The Perils of Telling America's Racial Story," will be presented at noon on Friday in Wilder 101.

The author of numerous books related to African-American history,

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## "Free At Last" Exhibition on Display During September

"Free At Last: A History of the Abolition of Slavery in America," a traveling exhibition drawn largely from the Gilder Lehrman Collection on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, will be on display in the Main Library during the month of September.

The exhibition traces the issue of slavery from the framing of the Constitution through the Civil War. The exhibition includes photographic reproductions of a rich variety of documents that illustrate various sides of the debate over slavery. Highlights include an early fragment of Lincoln's "House Divided" speech and letters and manuscripts from leading abolitionists, slaves, and soldiers who fought in the Civil War. "Free at Last" is curated by David Brion Davis, Sterling Professor of History at Yale University, and James Oliver Horton, Benjamin Banneker Professor of American Studies at George Washington University, who will deliver the talks related to the exhibition on September 28 and 29.

The exhibition was developed by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. It was made possible by a grant from the Jacob G. Schmidlapp Trusts, administered by the Fifth Third Bank of Cincinnati, and with the assistance of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. The appearance of the exhibition in Oberlin is co-sponsored by the Oberlin College Library and the Oberlin Historical and Improvement Organization.

### Friends of the Oberlin College Library Fall 2000 Programs

#### September 1 - 30

"Free at Last: A History of the Abolition of Slavery in America"

A Traveling Exhibition developed by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, Main Level, Mudd Center

#### Thursday, September 28, 4:00 p.m.

"Struggling Against the Slave Power," Gallery Talk by James Oliver Horton, Co-Curator of the "Free at Last" Exhibition, Main Level, Mudd Center

#### Thursday, September 28, 7:00 p.m.

"The Abolitionist Underground and the War on Slavery," James Oliver Horton, New Union Center for the Arts, 39 South Main Street, Oberlin

#### Friday, September 29, 12 noon

"Presenting Slavery: The Perils of Telling America's Racial Story," James Oliver Horton, Wilder 101

Harold Jantz Memorial Lecture, "German Cinema and Opera in Weimar and Hollywood," Mark Weiner, Professor of German Studies, Indiana University, King 106

#### Saturday, November 4

10:00 a.m. Friends Council and Membership Meeting  
Goodrich Room, Mudd Center

11:00 a.m. Book signing with Taylor Branch, Oberlin Bookstore

2:00 p.m. "Martin Luther King and Religion" Panel discussion with:  
Taylor Branch, A.G. Miller, and Pamela Brooks, King 106

5:45 p.m. Friends Annual Reception and Dinner, Root Room, Carnegie

8:00 p.m. Address on Martin Luther King by Taylor Branch  
"Freedom on Two Feet: Equal Souls, Equal Votes"  
Root Room, Carnegie

#### Thursday, December 14 7:00 p.m.

A Participatory Reading of Charles Dickens *A Christmas Carol*

*Library Perspectives*, a newsletter for users and Friends of the Oberlin College Library, is issued two times a year. Printed from an endowed fund established by Benjamin A. and Emiko Custer. Editors: Ray English, Jessica Grim, and Megan Mitchell.

## Friends Update

1999-2000 was another very successful year for the Friends of the Oberlin College Library. Over \$33,000 was contributed to the Friends organization during the year. This very generous level of contributions enabled the Friends to fund many important acquisitions for the Library's collections, in addition to sponsoring ongoing programming of interest to the membership and the College community.

Friends' purchases included several major reference works; first editions and rare books (some in facsimile form); titles supporting new faculty and new curricular areas, such as architectural history; and primary source materials.

Programs sponsored by the Friends included the very successful Oberlin Alumni Librarian Conference; an address by Yale University Librarian Scott Bennett '60 at the Friends annual dinner; talks by Marlene Merrill, Jessica Grim, Scott McMillin, and Barbara Wolanin; and a celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of *Shane*, written by Jack Schaefer '29.

The Friends had a total of 679 current members in 1999-2000, including 484 regular members who contributed directly to the Friends organization, 72 who donated to other library funds or gave gifts-in-kind, 92 student members, 27 life members, and 4 honorary members.

## Recent Gifts

The Oberlin College Library gratefully acknowledges the following gifts and gifts-in-kind.

A grant of \$15,000 has been received from the **Lucius N. Littauer Foundation** to establish an endowed book fund for Jewish Studies.

**William G. Roe '64**, has made a major gift in support of the Library's collection preservation program.

The **Clowes Fund** has made a gift of \$750,000 to support construction of Oberlin's new Science Library, which will open in August 2001.

The Library has received a major gift from the estate of **Wallace A.**

## Conservatory Library Construction and Renovation Nears Completion

The Conservatory Library is taking on a new look. A major construction project to complete the second floor of the new (1988) wing and also renovate other portions of the Library is nearing completion. The construction will provide an additional 6,000 square feet of public space for the Library, an expanded electronic resource center, a "smart" classroom, a teleconference room, and elevator access. Compact shelving, which will be installed on the second floor of the new wing and also in the recordings area behind the circulation desk, will create substantial additional space for the Library's growing collections.

The project, which began immediately after the end of the spring 2000 semester, required that the Library be closed for public use during the summer.

In order for construction and renovation to proceed, the majority of the Library's collections had to be boxed up and stored in locations outside the Conservatory Library. As soon as the spring classes ended, a professional moving company (with lots of help from the Conservatory Library staff!) packed books, periodicals, scores, recordings, and other materials, and moved them to spaces in the Conservatory, the Main

Library, and the Max Kade German House.

Because of the anticipated needs of various summer programs, such as the Baroque Performance Institute and the Institute of Voice Performance Pedagogy, a satellite service point was created for the summer in Room 34 of the Conservatory. For a few hours each day, staff provided reference assistance and a paging service for the portion of the collection still accessible. Despite the limitations, the service was very popular with local users as well as institute participants.

Renovations on the first floor include the creation of an electronic resource center, where patrons can use OBIS and other resources at research workstations, and the conversion of the seminar room into a "smart" classroom that will have data projection, a high-quality sound system, and an instructor's workstation console.

In addition to housing portions of the collection, the second floor of the new wing will have study carrels and other seating, cabinets for storage, restrooms, and a small teleconference room.

Although the Library is re-opening to the public at the beginning of the fall

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**Sprague '38** to establish an endowment for Special Collections.

**Paul and Louise Erler**, both of the Class of 1932, have established a two-life gift annuity that will ultimately benefit the Friends of the Library.

A current use book fund has been established in memory of **Florence Balcomb**, former library assistant and long-time library volunteer.

**Ann Sherif**, Associate Professor of East Asian Studies, has given the library over 100 new books related to Asian studies.

Professor of Philosophy **Robert Grimm**, who recently retired from

teaching at Oberlin, has donated a large portion of his personal collection to the library.

**Mrs. Colette Spycher** has donated to the Library a substantial portion of the collection of her late husband **Peter Spycher**, former Professor of German at Oberlin.

**Professor Katherine Linehan** has given over 800 volumes from the personal library of her late husband, **Thomas Linehan**, former Professor of English.

The **National Central Library of Taiwan** has given the Library a gift of 76 volumes.

## Ed Vermue is New Special Collections and Preservation Librarian

Edward R. Vermue joined the Oberlin College Library staff as Special Collections/Preservation Librarian in July. A native of Ontario, Canada, Ed comes to Oberlin from the State University of New York's Oswego campus, where he was the Coordinator of Special Collections.

Ed received both the Bachelor of Arts, with honors in philosophy, as well as the Master of Arts in religion and culture from the Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. His Masters of Library and Information Science degree is from the University of Western Ontario. In addition to his background in special collections, Ed also brings experience working with archival materials, including consulting work with local governments in New York.

As he settles in, Ed is gradually learning about the many unique items in the Library's Special Collections. He eagerly anticipates working with faculty and students, helping them make use of our rich and varied materials,



*Ed Vermue*

which he refers to as our "crown jewels." Ed is particularly interested in exploring ways to use digital technology to both preserve the collections and improve access. Expanding informa-

tion about the collections on the Library's web pages and digitizing key portions of the collections would raise the visibility of the Library's rare and special materials and also improve service to both local and remote users.

While at Oswego, Ed pursued his interest in preservation by undertaking an internship at the Olin Library at Cornell University, where he had the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in various areas of preservation work. "I'm excited about having a job that allows me to work on a daily basis with the aspects of the profession that interest me most—history of the book and preservation of collections. One of the most attractive things about this position is the fact that there is already a preservation program in place,

and one that seems to be running smoothly."

Ed, his wife Kim, and their two daughters are looking forward to getting to know the Oberlin community.

## Electronic Reserve System Expands

The Library is expanding ERes, its electronic reserve system, which started in fall 1998. As reported in the Spring '99 issue of *Library Perspectives*, ERes allows faculty to make course materials available to students 24 hours a day via the Web, from any networked computer on campus.

Until now use of the service has been limited to 12 to 15 courses each semester due primarily to the time-consuming work involved in scanning materials into electronic form prior to loading them on the ERes server. In order to address that problem, the Library has decided to have the scanning handled by an outside vendor, who will receive photocopies of reserve materials in quantity and convert them to electronic files on CD-ROMs. Once the CD-ROMs are received, the reserve staff

will mount the electronic files on the ERes server, keeping both the CD-ROMs and original paper materials as back-ups. With the most labor-intensive aspect of the process being handled in this way, Reserve staff look forward to concentrating their efforts on expanding the service and streamlining in-house procedures.

To date, faculty have used this service primarily to provide electronic access to traditional reserve materials, such as journal articles and book chapters. Some have provided links to their online syllabi and lecture notes, adding them as the semester progresses. It is also possible to provide links to other Websites, slides or other digital images, and to articles already available in electronic form through the OhioLINK Electronic Journal Center and JSTOR. Fac-

ulty who use Blackboard/CourseInfo, the College's new electronic course management system, can also link directly to ERes. Access to the materials mounted for each course is controlled by passwords, ensuring compliance with copyright regulations.

Response to ERes from students has been enthusiastic. As Julie Weir, Reserve Supervisor, notes, "Once they've used it for one class they want their other professors to use ERes too." The service is popular with students not only because it reduces the competition for access to a limited number of materials, but also because it is available at all times and it eliminates the potential for incurring fines because nothing has to be returned to the Library.

ERes is on the Web at:  
<http://www.oberlin.edu/eres/>

## Oberlin Indexes: Providing Access to Unique Materials

A number of indexes which were compiled by members of the Oberlin College community are now available through the Library's Web pages.

The *Oberlin College Song Index*, which provides access to anthologies held by the Conservatory Library, contains over 39,000 references to individual songs. This index was compiled by Conservatory Library staff, and will continue to grow as new anthologies are purchased.

*Pipedreams® Index* is an index of audio cassettes of *Pipedreams®*, the American Public Radio program created by Michael Barone '71 that is devoted to the organ and its literature. The index currently contains over 1,700 entries, with selected coverage of 1989-1994. The corresponding *Pipedreams®* audio cassette tapes are also available in the Conservatory Library.

According to Conservatory Public Services Librarian Kathleen Abromeit, compiler of the index, this is an important and unique resource for organists, as they can hear organs from around the world, and much of the repertoire on these tapes has not been commercially produced, so is not otherwise available

for listening.

Adding to this rich offering of local music databases, the *Oberlin College Spirituals Index* has recently become available for searching as well. This resource indexes 40 collections of African-American spirituals for the solo voice; all of the collections are held by the Conservatory Library. This project represents a collaboration between Kathleen Abromeit and Francois Clemmons '67, who is the Director of the Harlem Spirituals Ensemble. Due to contractual restrictions this database is only available to local Oberlin campus users. Interested off-campus users may contact the Conservatory Library reference desk for assistance. The print version of the index, *An index to African-American Spirituals for the Solo Voice*, can be found in the Conservatory Library reference collection, and is also available for purchase.

The above indexes can be accessed through the Library's Databases and Indexes Web page under the Music category ([http://www.oberlin.edu/~library/db\\_i/](http://www.oberlin.edu/~library/db_i/)).

Of interest to local history scholars, the *Index to Lorain County News*,

*Oberlin Weekly News*, and *Oberlin News*, covering the years 1860-1912, is now available for searching. This index, compiled by volunteers and currently edited by Elizabeth Rumics, volunteer in Special Collections, offers unique access to this important time period in local history. Each of the newspapers is available in the Library on microfilm, as well as in the original paper (the latter in Special Collections).

Of particular interest to those seeking information related to Oberlin College, the *Index to the Oberlin College Observer* covers the entire nineteen-volume run of that publication (September, 1979-May, 1998). The *Observer Index* was previously available in limited form on the now-retired "VAXA" computer, and is now being reintroduced with a Web-based search interface. Compiled by Linda Grashoff, the index is complemented by the full-text availability of the *Observer* itself for the last several years of its publication (April 27, 1995-May 22, 1998).

These indexes can be accessed through the Library's "News Sources" Web page ([http://www.oberlin.edu/library/news\\_sources/Default.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/library/news_sources/Default.html)).

### IMLS. . . from page 1

Library's strong commitment to diversity. The program will include undergraduate interns, who will receive paid, part-time training in librarianship, as well as a full-time library intern who is a recent Oberlin graduate.

The undergraduate interns (six in each of the two grant years) will be selected to start the program in the spring semester. Their training will include presentations and discussions with staff from various units within the library, observation and hands-on experience with the basic operations of the library system, and site visits to other area libraries. The interns will spend the summer in full-time activity in the Library, working primarily with librarian mentors on projects in the students' own areas of interest. During the fall semester the interns will continue supervised

work on their projects, and in January they will earn academic credit for off-campus Winter Term projects with Oberlin alumni librarians in a variety of library settings.

In the second year of the grant the Library will select one recently graduated Oberlin student to be a full-time library intern. The intern will gain in-depth experience in librarianship, and assist in coordinating the undergraduate program. The intern will also work to enhance Oberlin's library services for minority students in general.

The Library is excited about the potential national impact of the IMLS grant program. With its unique focus on generating interest in librarianship as a career among undergraduates, it should serve as a model for other academic libraries.

### Noted Historian. . . from page 2

Professor Horton has also served as an historical adviser to several museums in the United States and abroad, as chair of the National Park System Advisory Board, and as a historical consultant to numerous film and video productions seen on ABC, PBS, the Discovery Channel, and the History Channel. He is currently appearing regularly on the History Channel's weekly program, "The History Center."

Professor Horton's visit to Oberlin is sponsored jointly by the Oberlin Historical and Improvement Organization, the Friends of the Oberlin College Library, the Zion Community Development Project, and the Oberlin College African-American Studies and History Departments.

The **Friends of the Oberlin College Library** provide significant support for special acquisitions and programs that help the Library fulfill its fundamental role in the academic life of the College.

**JOIN US. BE A FRIEND.**

Members receive the *Library Perspectives* newsletter, invitations to Friends programs, and other privileges. Most of all, Friends have the satisfaction of supporting Oberlin's outstanding Library.

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Friends contributions are tax deductible.

**Conservatory Library. . .**  
*from page 3*

semester, the elevator will be installed during the month of September and materials will be moved into the second floor of the new wing sometime after that.

The most time consuming and labor-intensive aspect of the construction project involved reinforcing the second floor of the new wing in order to provide sufficient structural strength to support the new compact shelving.

The full construction and renovation project, which was budgeted at \$1 million dollars, will provide flexible and attractive spaces for library users and will accommodate more than twenty years of growth for the collections.

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***Library Perspectives***  
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