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Cultural History and Comics Auteurs: Cartoon Collections at Syracuse University Library

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SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY ASSOCIATES COURIER

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In Memoriam

Cultural History and Comics Auteurs: Cartoon Collections at Syracuse University Library

BY CHAD WHEATON

What the comics had, and have, was and is an intimacy, a direct contact with their creators. The photograph involves a mechanical and chemical agent, but only human hands could put those drawings there, each unmistakably unique.

Leonard Starr (creator of *On Stage*)¹

IN FALL 1999 *Peanuts* creator Charles Schulz retired after fifty years at the drawing board. News of Charlie Brown's swan song garnered headlines in daily newspapers around the world and a spot on *Newsweek's* first cover for the year 2000; Schulz's death weeks later merited a similar response. Who can doubt the pervasive influence of the comic strip on American culture, and the undeniable importance of the comics auteur?

Cultural critics once dismissed comics and cartoons as a subject for serious study.² But within the past few decades comics have "ar-

Chad Wheaton is a doctoral student in history at the Maxwell School for Citizenship and Public Affairs. His dissertation-in-progress is about the history of the New York State Fair. Carolyn Davis, whose cartoon list follows Wheaton's essay, has been a librarian in the Department of Special Collections since 1972.

1. Quoted in Jerry Robinson, *The Comics: An Illustrated History of Comic Strip Art* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1974), 181. I use the terms "cartoon," "comic," and "comic strip" interchangeably.

2. A handful of books and articles concerning comics were published in the period from 1920 to 1960. Generally speaking, these texts centered on the question of whether comics (and especially comic books after the mid-1930s) were a sign of cultural debasement. Exceptions to this point of view are noted elsewhere in this article. See Kirk Varnedoe and Adam Gopnik, *High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1990), 437-40, for an extensive annotated bibliography of comics-related materials, and pp. 187-208 for an insightful analysis of the critical attention paid to comic strips and books after

rived” on a small scale, as part of a trend to study previously neglected aspects of popular culture, such as pulp literature and television shows. The number of journal articles and books concerning comics has grown steadily from the 1960s to the present.³

Scholars have studied cartoons as reflections of capitalism, consumerism, ethnic assimilation, religion, and the depiction of the disabled. They have investigated such topics as Barney Google’s role as a “deviant” member of society, Harold Gray’s Little Orphan Annie and the idea of the Orient, and Chester Gould’s Dick Tracy as a stand-in for stay-at-home thrill-seekers.⁴ A cottage industry has arisen both in the United States and abroad to decipher the meaning of George Herriman’s *Krazy Kat*.⁵ Reflecting worldwide inter-

the “pop art” creations of Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and others in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

3. An analysis of journal citations for the term “comic strips” in the database *America: History and Life* reveals one related article in the 1950s, two in the 1960s, seven in the 1970s, eleven in the 1980s, and sixteen in the 1990s. In the Syracuse University Library a similar search for books falling under the subject headings “comic books, strips, etc., history and criticism,” and “comic books, strips, etc., U.S., history and criticism,” also reveals a pattern of growth in writing on the subject since the 1960s. A slight drop-off in comic and comic strip books acquired by the Syracuse University Library in the 1980s compared to the 1970s is the only deviation from this pattern of decade-by-decade increase. Two additional sources, the monthly magazines *Comics Journal* (published 1977–), edited by Gary Groth, and *Nemo: The Classic Comics Library* (published 1983–), edited by Richard Marschall (both published by Fantagraphics Books), underline the recent interest in comics as the focus of serious study.

4. See Edward Sagarin, “The Deviant in the Comic Strip: The Case History of Barney Google,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 5 (1971): 179–93; Gene E. Hamaker, “Alla-Ca-Zaba! Gazah! Presto! Some Observations on the Role of the Orient in Little Orphan Annie (1924–1968),” *Journal of Popular Culture* 9 (1975): 331–40; Arthur T. Broes, “Dick Tracy: The Early Years,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 25 (1992): 97–122.

5. This particular branch of study has old roots. Gilbert Seldes (“The Krazy Kat That Walks by Himself,” in Seldes, *The Seven Lively Arts* [New York: Sagamore Press, 1924]), was an early and energetic fan of Herriman’s work. This critical love affair with *Krazy Kat* has continued in more recent times. See Umberto Eco, “On Krazy Kat and Peanuts,” trans. William Weaver, *The New York Review of Books* 32 (13 June 1985), 16–7; M. Thomas Inge, “‘Krazy Kat’ as Pure American Dada Humor,” *European Contributions to American Studies* 10 (1986): 173–7; Peter

est in the art form, scholars writing for journals in the Netherlands, Australia, and Finland have produced articles detailing the cultural import of a wide range of other cartoon topics.⁶ Still, in this young field there is much bibliographical, historical, and interpretive work to be done.⁷

Syracuse University Library's cartoon collection is a largely untapped resource for scholars of the genre. Housed in the Department of Special Collections, the cartoon holdings occupy approximately 500 linear feet and represent more than 150 American artists from the late nineteenth century through the present day.⁸ The 10,000 items that comprise the collection were acquired from the mid-1960s through the mid-1970s; selective collecting continues today.

In Special Collections one can study the original and published strips in sequence and surrounded by supporting primary documentation. One can look at an original strip and detect the first, rough, penciled-in sketches beneath the final, thick black ink of a

R. Sattler, "Ballet Mechanique: The Art of George Herriman," *Word and Image* (Great Britain) 8 (1992): 133–53; Edward A. Shannon, "'That We May Mis-Unda-Stend Each Udda': The Rhetoric of Krazy Kat," *Journal of Popular Culture* 29 (1995): 209–22.

6. Tom ter Bogt, "Imitation—Adaptation—Inspiration: Americanism in Dutch Comics," trans. J. Ch. M. Nijssen, *European Contributions to American Studies* (Netherlands) 30 (1996): 62–81; Ian Gordon, "Mass Market Modernism: Comic Strips and the Culture of Consumption," *Australasian Journal of American Studies* (Australia) 14 (1995): 49–66; David Kunzle, "Uncle Scrooge's Money Bin: Carl Barks' Satire on the Capitalist Ethic in the Disney Comic," *Taidehistoriallisia Tutkimuksia* (Finland) 16 (1995): 125–36.

7. Inge, *Comics as Culture*, xvii, xviii. A monumental effort on the historical front has been put forth by Kunzle in the first two installments of his planned multivolume study of the genre, *History of the Comic Strip Volume I: The Early Comic Strip: Narrative Strips and Picture Stories in the European Broadsheet from c. 1450 to 1825* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), and *The History of the Comic Strip: The Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

8. See Paul P. Somers Jr., *Editorial Cartooning and Caricature: A Reference Guide* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1998), 113–60, for an extensive listing of other important comics research collections around the nation, as well as M. Thomas Inge, *Comics as Culture* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1990), 147–60.

cartoonist's pen, or read the faint remnants of word-balloon dialogue that were erased and replaced with something more suitable for a "family newspaper" or more attuned to the author's intentions. Only in a repository of this sort can scholars examine the artists' correspondence and family photos. One can read long runs of much loved comic strips now sadly vanished from newspapers. The only other way to read cartoons of yesteryear, save for the rare printed collection in bookstores or libraries, is to scroll through hazy microfilmed newspapers searching for the comics sections.

That the collection has uncharted regions is suggested by occasional "discoveries." A notable example occurred in 1992 when a Library staff member found eleven previously unknown original pen and ink drawings by late nineteenth-century comic strip pioneer R. F. Outcault. The drawings were for *The Yellow Kid*, the nation's first successful newspaper cartoon.⁹

One particularly rich resource for visiting scholars is the daily newspaper humor strip, that bastion of falling anvils and inspired lunacy. The Syracuse collection contains original drawings from such widely syndicated comics as Mort Walker's *Beetle Bailey*, a good example of a "sequential" or "multipanel" strip in which action develops as the comic is read from left to right, with a punch line concluding matters in the last panel. There are some 1,000 *Beetle Bailey* items encompassing original daily and Sunday strips from 1950 to 1964.

Walker's strip about the challenges of Army life helped set the pattern of humor for modern gag comics, a significant accomplishment, especially when one considers the predominance of the humor comic in today's newspapers.¹⁰ With their iconic figures, "bigfoot" drawing

9. See Richard D. Olson, "'Say! Dis Is Grate Stuff': The Yellow Kid and the Birth of the American Comics," *Syracuse University Library Associates Courier* 28 (spring 1993), 19–34.

10. Robert C. Harvey, *The Art of the Funnies: An Aesthetic History* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994), 205, mentions that by the mid-1980s *Beetle Bailey* was in third place in newspaper circulation among all comics, appearing in 1,660 newspapers. Most telling about the post-World War II ascendancy of joke-a-day or gag strips was the fact that the comics in first and second place were also humorous, noncontinuity strips: *Peanuts*, appearing in 1,941 newspapers, and *Blondie*, in 1,900.



By Dave Bregar, ca. 1943. Cartoons in this article are from
Syracuse University Library.

style, and joke-a-day dialogue, the *Beetle Bailey* originals show the strip's namesake progressing from laconic college student to just-as-laconic army private. The endless confrontations between the leisure-loving Beetle and the hard-driving Sarge propelled the strip into one

of the largest syndications of the Cold War era—not a surprise to anyone who ever served in the Armed Forces or lived through a time when things military were pushed to the forefront of public consciousness.

The work of Dave Breger presents an interesting counterpoint to Walker's depiction of military life. A cartoonist before World War II, Breger joined the U.S. Army in early 1941 and created his single panel humor cartoon *Private Breger* for *The Saturday Evening Post* in 1942. *Private Breger* details the adventures of its eponymous hero, a slight, freckled, and bespectacled young enlisted man who is as energetic an individual as Beetle Bailey is enervated. Where Beetle's ability to avoid work angers Sarge, Private Breger is more likely to annoy his superior, Colonel Cole, due to comic overzealousness. Breger is so meticulous, for example, that one night he attacks fireflies with a fire extinguisher to prevent them from giving away his company's position, and is so hyperactive that he must be rocked to sleep in his bed. Where Beetle is surrounded by a cast of characters who often take center stage themselves, Breger's mischievous but well-intentioned namesake always dominates his cartoon's spotlight. Furthermore, the two comics differ in their characters' proximity to combat. Beetle and company remain an ocean away from Korea and Vietnam, while Private Breger fires his gun in battle, dodges bullets, and captures the occasional Nazi. Breger's observations must have been humorously on target, for *Private Breger* was a hit with both civilians and military personnel. *Private Breger* was so well received, in fact, that the military publications *Yank* and *Stars and Stripes* contracted Breger to draw a coterminous strip featuring the same hero. Breger named both the new strip and its star character "GI Joe," thus popularizing the nickname for the American soldier.¹¹ Following the conclusion of the war, *GI Joe* ceased publication and *Private Breger* became the civilian *Mr. Breger*. The Library holds nine linear feet of original *Private Breger* and *Mr. Breger* strips.

A smaller humor-strip collection concerns *Marmaduke*, a comic about a large and adventuresome dog. Winner of the 1976 National

11. Jonathan Evan Lighter, ed., *Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang* (New York: Random House, 1994), 892, lists Breger's *GI Joe* as the second published appearance of the phrase, the first having come as a humorous aside in the October 1935 issue of *Our Army*.



By Vaughn Shoemaker, 1967.

Cartoonists Society Award for Best Panel, *Marmaduke* was created by Brad Anderson, a 1951 graduate of Syracuse University. Other humor strip collections include those of Bil Keane and Dik Browne. Keane's *Family Circus* panel portrays the frivolity of family life and especially the antics of children. Browne's *Hagar the Horrible* observes the daily life of a group of fun loving Vikings (only in the



By Robb Armstrong, ca. 1989.

comics, folks). This category also includes *Tizzy*, by Kate Osann, one of the few women whose artwork is represented in the collection.

The Library possesses original artwork by Morrie Turner, whose *Wee Pals* was one of the first comics by an African American artist to portray an integrated cast of characters. It used “race relations as a major theme for humor in a nationally syndicated strip.”¹² Robb Armstrong, a 1985 Syracuse University graduate, is one of several young African American cartoonists whose humor strips are currently distributed to newspapers around the nation. In 1992 Armstrong donated seventy-one original panels from the 1989–1991 run of his strip *Jump Street*, a comic detailing the daily lives of a young African American family and their friends.

The work of Walker and Armstrong is representative of the current humor-strip dominance in the comics pages. Other humor comics in the University’s holdings are the creations of past masters and innovators who penned strips that were in their heyday before Armstrong was born, and when Walker’s venerable *Beetle Bailey* was in its infancy. The Library has one linear foot of original *Mutt and Jeff* cartoons by cartoonist Bud Fisher, who in 1907 created the classic strip, and also has holdings from Al Smith, Fisher’s assistant and successor on the daily comic.¹³ In addition, Special Collections

12. Ron Goulart, ed., *The Encyclopedia of American Comics* (New York: Promised Land Publications, 1990), 371.

13. Harvey, *Art of the Funnies*, 35–47, lists *Mutt and Jeff* as the “first successful daily,” and credits Fisher with advances in storyline continuity and the use of adult themes. Fisher, the genre’s first millionaire, was also instrumental in establishing an artist’s legal rights to his creations. Finally, Harvey writes that Fisher’s use of the “brick-thrown-to-back-of-head” convention predates by several years

holds a few 1929 to 1934 originals from the pen of Murat (Chic) Young, creator of *Dumb Dora*. Young also originated one of the most popular, long-running, and influential strips about family life, *Blondie*. Fellow humorist Jimmy Hatlo's collection, measuring fifteen linear feet, holds many of his original drawings. They were done during the years 1939 to 1964 when he was illustrating the frenetic feature *They'll Do It Every Time*, a panel exposing the humorous side of everyday hypocrisies and inconsistencies. Hatlo's classic "kid strip," *Little Iodine*, also resides in the collection. The strips of Fischer, Smith, Young, and Hatlo are valuable as artistic statements and irreplaceable as records of a particular time and place.

Bob Montana's *Archie* (begun as a comic book in 1941), is yet another important collection. It occupies four linear feet and comprises both daily and Sunday strips from 1946 to 1970. This well-rendered and always inventive strip raises questions about postwar society and the place of the teenager within it. Archie has been a window on American gender roles, teenage mores, consumerism, and ideas of beauty. It is a testimony to the strength of Montana's characters and the universal issues they subtly address that his series continues today more than two decades after his death.¹⁴

Another Special Collections artist and writer who created long-lasting, world-famous, and culturally important comic characters is Jerry Robinson. His collection, four times larger than Montana's, includes original panels of the artist and comic historian's Sunday feature, *Flubs & Fluffs*, and his daily *still life* from 1953 to 1974. In 1939 the seventeen-year-old Robinson was *Batman* creator Bob Kane's first assistant, lettering and inking the entire comic, as well as drawing some secondary characters. Robinson also named "Robin, the Boy Wonder," a character almost as important to the comic as the Caped Crusader himself. *Batman*, of course, became a television hit in the 1960s, as did a contemporary comic housed at Special Collections: the 1961-1964 NBC television program *Hazel*, starring Shirley Booth, originated from a single-panel cartoon in

its appropriation (and conversion into an art form if critics are to be believed) by the redoubtable George Herriman in *Krazy Kat*.

14. See Charles Phillips, *Archie: His First 50 Years* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991) for a history of everything Archie.

the *Saturday Evening Post*. The prolific magazine cartoonist Ted Key created the *Hazel* strip in 1943. Now the artwork resides with other original Key cartoons, writings, fan mail, and memorabilia from 1942 to 1968.

Among the Library's single-panel cartoons are a few boxes of original drawings (1948–1969) from the prolific Syd Hoff, another great periodical cartoonist whose strips have appeared in *The New Yorker* and whose drawings have graced the pages of favorite young-people's books like *Danny and the Dinosaur*. The typical Hoff cartoon concerns "a single quintessential moment," frozen in time, as opposed to the movement and development of action found in the comic strip.¹⁵ There are many representatives of this cartoon genre in the Syracuse University collection, including the urbane and witty cartoons of Gluyas Williams. Williams illustrated books for Robert Benchley and other noted writers, and published his fine-lined and graceful art in *Cosmopolitan*, *Life*, and *The New Yorker*. His collection contains materials from 1922 to 1949.

Other Special Collections alumni of *The New Yorker* include Otto Soglow and Robert Kraus. Soglow created the silent monarch of *The Little King*, which later became a Sunday newspaper strip praised for its "gentle, civilized, and sophisticated, but uncomplicated humor" and "rhythmic flow . . . executed with a pure economy of line and a precise spotting of black."¹⁶ Syracuse University has twenty-eight Soglow originals, and one linear foot of Kraus's *New Yorker* cartoons and illustrations for children's books.

The gem among the single-panel cartoon collections is the papers of Alan Dunn and Mary Petty, a married couple whose twenty-one linear foot holdings represent one of the Library's larger and more comprehensive comics assemblages. Dunn contributed to *The New Yorker* approximately 1,900 cartoons and nine covers between 1926 and 1974, making him the magazine's most published cartoonist. His graceful style facilitated commentary on such favorite topics as the cold war, science, urban and suburban life, museums, ships, tourism, and his hobby of architecture. Petty, who was published 271 times and contributed thirty-eight covers

15. Robinson, *Comics*, 225.

16. *Ibid.*, 134.

to *The New Yorker* between 1927 and 1966, is at least as admired among aficionados of the genre as her prolific husband. Her elegant cartoons show a humorous concern with the lives of the self-centered and rigid American Brahmin class, typically depicted as dressing well, living in mansions, and taking high tea while discussing a topic like the difficulty of finding good help. Dunn and Petty's materials include correspondence, memorabilia, exhibition catalogs, notebooks, business files, financial records, and of course many of the cartoons and drawings that they created in their three-room, ground-floor apartment in New York City.¹⁷

Apart from panels and strips having humorous themes, there are many cartoons that treat serious subjects and make more frequent use of daily and weekly storyline continuities. Such "dramatic" or "adventure" comics, as rich in masculine and feminine stereotypes as any Hollywood film noir, had their glory years from the 1920s through the 1940s, when a reorganization of newspaper space shrank the strips' printed size and crammed more onto each page.¹⁸ The strips' majestic sweep and grandeur were truncated; their careful rendering of detail was lost in the tiny reproductions. It was a bit like watching a film on a wide movie screen one day and a tiny television screen the next. Those wanting to see these comics in their full, unshrunk glory are advised to examine the papers of master practitioners Roy Crane, Hal Foster, Milton Caniff, Frank Robbins, Stan Drake, and Leonard Starr.

In 1924 Roy Crane created the early and influential adventure

17. My source for part of these descriptions is Maurice Horn, ed., *World Encyclopedia of Comics* (New York: Chelsea House, 1980), 210–11, 442. Dunn and Petty's artwork, and the artwork of many of the other artists mentioned in this article, was included in a January 1993 show at Syracuse University's Lowe Art Gallery. See the exhibition catalog "Cartoons, Caricatures and Comics" for details. The Department of Special Collections is not the only place on campus that holds Dunn and Petty materials. When their collection was transferred to Syracuse University in 1969, the University Art Collection established the Petty-Dunn Center for Social Cartooning, which includes more than 4,000 cartoons by that couple as well as other *New Yorker* cartoonists.

18. Bill Blackbeard and Dale Crain, eds., *The Comic Strip Century: Celebrating 100 Years of an American Art Form* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: O. G. Publishing, 1995), 30–1.

strip, *Wash Tubbs*, out of which grew the 1933 Sunday comic *Captain Easy*. These two helped originate the adventure strip. Crane's advances in plotting and artwork paved the way for the later accomplishments of Chester Gould, Alex Raymond, Hal Foster, and Milton Caniff, to name but a few.¹⁹ In 1943 Crane invented *Buz Sawyer*, a similarly robust action strip. Crane's exciting stories, roiling fight scenes, and carefully rendered backgrounds were lightened in tone by a drawing style that made his human figures less "realistic" and more humorously appealing than characters in other adventure strips of the day. Crane's character Captain Easy was so well received that he has been claimed as the model for later comic strip heroes like Pat Ryan of *Terry and the Pirates*, and comic book stalwarts *Superman* and *Batman*.²⁰ Special Collections owns fifteen linear feet of Crane's correspondence from 1918 to 1965, as well as scrapbooks and master copies of his 1934–1957 daily and Sunday strips.

A contemporary of Crane from the 1930s onward was Harold (Hal) Foster, creator of the adventure strip *Tarzan* (1929) and originator, author, and artist of *Prince Valiant* from 1937 until his retirement in 1971. This Sunday-only saga about the days of King Arthur was the most richly illustrated of adventure strips. About his detailed drawings Foster said, "Research has taken me to most of the countries Val has visited to gather authentic material."²¹ Foster also used *Prince Valiant* to comment obliquely on the events of the day. At times in the 1930s and 1940s strips the "Huns" attacked Camelot; and in the 1960s Val ingested a mind-altering substance.²² The Library owns twenty linear feet of Foster scrapbooks and correspondence, along with the 1937–1969 production series of original *Prince Valiant* cartoons, and the 1945 cartoon *Medieval Castle*. Along with Crane's *Buz Sawyer*, *Prince Valiant* is the strip most requested and reprinted by researchers who visit Special Collections.

19. See Judith O'Sullivan, *The Great American Comic Strip: One Hundred Years of Cartoon Art* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), 17, 77, 83, for comments on Crane's artistic innovations; see Harvey, *Art of the Funnies*, 71, for Crane's other adventure strip followers.

20. Harvey, *Art of the Funnies*, 71. Harvey adds that Crane has often been under-rated by those assessing the history of comic strips.

21. Goulart, *Encyclopedia*, 139.

22. O'Sullivan, *Great American Comic Strip*, 77, 81.

As influential as Foster was Milton Caniff, creator of *Steve Canyon* and *Terry and the Pirates*, two action-adventure strips that captivated readers from the 1930s to the 1980s. Syracuse University owns one small box of 1950s newspaper proofs for *Steve Canyon* and some 1,500 original Terry strips (1947–1969) written and illustrated in the Caniff style by his successor, George Wunder.

One comic artist whose style was related to Caniff's was the accomplished illustrator and painter Frank Robbins, who began the popular adventure strip *Johnny Hazard* in 1944 and concluded it in 1977. Some six linear feet of materials from the series' 1963 to 1966 period reside in the Syracuse University collection. Robbins also did a great deal of other writing and illustrating for comic books in the 1970s, including a much-remembered, delightfully unique version of Batman. Robbins's strips display a striking interplay between light and shadow, with a powerful use of black and white patterns and rangy, expressive human figures—like Austrian Expressionist Egon Schiele in panels. A study of the Library's six linear feet of original *Johnny Hazard* strips reinforces the notion that comics appear in the daily newspaper only after much intense effort; for Robbins the creation process was a painstaking combination of pencil, ink, correction fluid, experience, and inspiration. Knowing that such beautiful works of art were achieved under the pressure of daily newspaper deadlines, month after month and year after year, increases one's estimation of the effort put forth by Robbins and the other artists in the collection.

Only human hands could have created Stan Drake's realistically illustrated romance *The Heart of Juliet Jones*, Leonard Starr's *Mary Perkins on Stage*, Vincent Hamlin's comical caveman *Alley Oop*, James Berry's *Berry's World*, Raeburn Van Buren's sublimely rendered *Abbie an' Slat's*, Gus Edson and Irwin Hasen's tale of a young war refugee in America, *Dondi*, or Stan and Jan Berenstain's *It's All in the Family*, *Lover Boy*, and *Sister*. Selected originals of all these can be found in the cartoon collection.

Another facet of American comic art that is well represented in Special Collections is the political (or editorial) cartoon. The richness of the University's collection in this category is astounding, with over fifty artists represented. There are two original cartoons

and letters from the father of American political cartooning and famed opponent of the Boss Tweed ring of late nineteenth-century New York City, Thomas Nast. Top flight editorial page virtuosos like Gere Basset of the Scripps-Howard Newspapers, Roy Justus of the *Sioux City Journal* and *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, the *New York Post's* John Pierotti, Arthur Poinier of the *Detroit News*, and Art Wood of the *Richmond News-Leader* and *Pittsburgh Press* have materials in the Library (selected collections also have finding aids, with the Justus guide being particularly well-organized and comprehensive), as do fourteen Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonists from many different locales and eras.

One of the most important political cartoonists in the Syracuse collection is Clarence Daniel Batchelor. After years of toil for various newspapers and magazines in the Midwest and on the East Coast, Kansan Batchelor found a home as an editorial cartoonist with the *New York Daily News* in 1931. Both the newspaper and the cartoonist supported the New Deal in its early years, but became increasingly conservative and critical of the Roosevelt administration by the late 1930s. Winning the Pulitzer Prize in 1937 for his cartoon foreshadowing the arrival of another European war, Batchelor coupled master draftsmanship with a moralizing message that condemned the foibles of Democrats, appeasers, communists, and hypocrites of all political shadings. While fond of using such stock political cartoon fare as Columbia, the Trojan Horse, the Republican elephant, the Democratic donkey, and the Russian bear, Batchelor had a skillful realism that raised his work beyond that of typical editorial page fare.²³ His talents allowed him, for instance, to copy accurately a public figure's face and then surround the poor character with all sorts of telling or embarrassing elaborations. Beyond tweaking the politically famous with face-reddening imagery, Batchelor was also compelled to attack Soviet tyranny. Typical Batchelor cartoons depict Joseph Stalin as a hyena skulking around Hawaii in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, and Nikita Khrushchev as a hooded "executioner of the arts" standing beside an axe that drips blood. Batchelor concluded his career at the *Daily News* in the early

23. Horn, *The World Encyclopedia of Comics*, 103–104.

1970s, and spent the last years of his life working for the *National Review*. Special Collections has thirty-two packages containing over 3,000 original Batchelor drawings.

Finally, the collection includes the work of two comics word-smiths, one known for his power of both typewriter and brush, the other for his connections to superhuman powers. There are nine linear feet of the artwork and writings of influential painter, cartoonist, and historian of the comics genre Coulton Waugh. Waugh illustrated the innovative *Hank and Dickie Dare*, and is perhaps best remembered today as the author of *The Comics* (1947), “still the best overall history of comic strips,” according to one observer.²⁴ Waugh’s literary efforts find their compositional kin in the papers of New Yorker Mort Weisinger. This is a small collection (one linear foot) comprised mostly of stories Weisinger wrote for popular magazines from the 1930s through the 1950s, though it also includes one story he penned for *Superman* comics in 1943. Weisinger later became the longtime editor of all *Superman* titles.

This description presents but a small number of the artists whose work is preserved there—it would take Superman to discuss them all.²⁵ In lieu of that, the following list, prepared by Carolyn Davis with help from Bill Lee and Paul Barfoot, provides basic information on each collection.

24. Goulart, *Encyclopedia*, 380. Waugh’s volume is also exceptional for its lack of moralizing on the supposed failings of the genre.

25. My thanks go to Carolyn Davis and Bill Lee of the Syracuse University Library Department of Special Collections for help in answering questions regarding this article.