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A way Through the Woods: The Artful Life and Collection of Sam Edison Woods

— Suzanne Graham, Catalog Librarian, and Peggy Price, Special Collections Librarian

Sam Edison Woods, manual arts educator, multimillionaire, collector, and, oh yes, spy, began donating antique furniture, tapestries, paintings, and books to The University of Southern Mississippi a year before his death in 1953. Woods, great friends with then-president R.C. Cook, was connected to the University in many ways. The Sam Woods Rare Book Room in the McCain Library honors Woods and houses his eclectic array of books and art.

Born in Texas in 1892, Sam Woods grew up in Purvis, Mississippi, where his father worked as a mill operator. Woods earned a degree in manual arts from the University of Valparaiso in Indiana before returning to Mississippi to study and teach at USM, which was then known as Mississippi State Teacher's College. He taught for seven years, serving as head of MSTC's Department of Manual Arts from 1917-1919. Woods received a B.S. from MSTC in 1920, and he further enhanced his education by attending the University of Wisconsin and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology during summer semesters. During this period, Sam married Katie Rose Anderson of Hattiesburg.

Woods' life as a young man would not naturally suggest the exotic career of intrigue he would go on to pursue overseas. World War I was the catalyst for a dynamic shift in the life of Sam Woods. After serving in the aviation section of the U.S. Marine Corps, Woods remained abroad to lead the vocational education efforts of the U.S. Army in France and, later, Czechoslovakia. Outside of a six-year stint as the supervisor of rehabilitation for the Mississippi State Department of Education, he would work in a variety of diplomatic capacities in Europe for the rest of his life.

An appointment in 1929 as assistant trade commissioner in Prague, Czechoslovakia, eventually led to a position as commercial attache-at-large in Berlin eight years later. Hitler and his Nazi followers had taken control of Germany, and by 1940 war was raging in Europe. Woods continued to work, but added a new duty to his job description: channeling secret documents to the United States. Sam Woods became a spy. His ticket broker would reserve a seat for a performance in a local theater, and Woods would arrive alone. A German sitting next to him would wait for the cover of darkness to slip Nazi war plans and other classified materials to Woods, who would send them on to Washington.

In January of 1941, Sam Woods realized the dramatic significance of one file and brought it to Spain himself

to be sent to the U.S. State Department by courier, instead of the usual diplomatic pouch. When Cordell Hull, then Secretary of State, opened the document, he discovered Hitler's plans to invade Russia. Germany had been bombing England relentlessly; an attack on Russia would be a complete surprise. The State Department notified the Soviet ambassador of the imminent attack, giving the Soviet Union advanced warning of the June invasion.

Woods was still working in Berlin when the United States declared war on Germany later that year, and he found himself interned, along with colleagues and journalists, by the German government for five months. After his release, Woods obtained a post as consul general in Zurich, Switzerland, and continued his clandestine activities. Sam Woods broke another crucial piece of information when he supplied the United States with documents revealing Germany's secret heavy-water experiment plant. England would later destroy the facility, disabling the Nazi's progress on A-Bomb research.

Downed American pilots, soldiers escaping the clutches of Germany, and others on the run found refuge in the Woods home. Sam Woods orchestrated an elaborate escape system of passwords, female disguises and tunnel crawls. Forged Swiss documents, contrived dinner parties, false-bottomed apple carts, and every sort of scheme helped usher Americans out of Switzerland to freedom. Soldiers would meet Woods in churches and wait for the signals: a cough, a dropped handkerchief. A password might be, "I'm an alumnus of Washington University," or the whistling of an American tune. With the help of Swiss sympathizers, Woods also assisted American soldiers already held in Switzerland jails by passing along escape kits.

After the war, Sam Woods served as consul general in Munich until his retirement in 1952. Woods lived a life of luxury with his third wife, Wilhelmina "Minnie" Busch, heiress to the great Anheuser-Busch fortune. His first wife, Katie Rose, had died in 1918 after the birth of their daughter, also named Katie Rose. Woods had married for the second time in 1923, to Milada P. Vondracekova during his time in Prague, but would later divorce. In 1948, he married Minnie and lived with her in what was considered one of the most beautiful homes in the world, "The Castle of Hohenried," an exquisite mansion at the base of the Bavarian Alps.

Mr. and Mrs. Woods welcomed American friends into their home, including USM's R.C. Cook and his wife, who delighted in gifts from the marvelous collection at Hohenried. Woods, who had become a great collector of books and art, wanted to share his treasures with the University where he had trained and taught as a young man.

After Minnie's death in 1952, Sam Woods—now a multimillionaire--planned to return to Hattiesburg where his daughter, Katie Rose McClendon, still lived. Woods shipped furniture, art, and hundreds of books from

Germany, but he suffered a stroke before he could follow his collection overseas. Sam Woods died in Munich, Germany, in 1953.

The Woods Collection came to The University of Southern Mississippi. Though the University had always intended to dedicate a room specifically for these remarkable items, an appropriate space was not available until 1976, when USM added the McCain Library to its Hattiesburg campus. The Woods Rare Book Room—named for Sam and his brother, Clarence, who served as USM’s business manager for many years—holds more than 1,100 books ranging from the 15th to the 19th centuries. In addition, it houses two antique Czechoslovakian throne chairs, maps, etchings, paintings, a sky globe, and even a Viking helmet.

In 2002, the USM Libraries began the challenging process of creating descriptive records for the rare and wonderful books of the Woods Collection for addition to the Libraries’ online catalog, Anna, and for inclusion in the OCLC international library database. Making these items more visible to a worldwide audience will enable professional bibliographers and students to appreciate some of the USM Libraries’ most treasured holdings.

Books, like those contained in the Woods Collection, accrue value beyond the intellectual content of their printed pages. Scholars and collectors define a book as “rare” based on its age and obscurity, its place in history, and its unique or aesthetic physical qualities. The Woods collection contains artifacts exhibiting each of these characteristics.

The Woods Collection contains several excerpted pages of text and illustration from various incunabula (early published works, generally from the 15th century) and a facsimile of the *Gutenberg Bible*. These items offer students and scholars an opportunity to feel the paper and appreciate the craftsmanship of the book-making industry over five centuries ago.

One of the oldest complete works in the USM Libraries is a 1532 printing of Titus Livius’ Latin history of Rome, printed in Paris. Classics students can review the original text and read the Latin marginalia added by one of the book’s early owners. This holding is especially important since USM offers the only known copy without imperfections in the United States.

The Libraries house a publication by John Calvin on the letters of St. Paul, *Ioannis Calvin in Omnes D. Pauli Epistolas* (1551). Only five known copies of this printing exist in the United States at the University of Chicago, the Episcopal seminary in New York, Folger Shakespeare Library, Harvard University, and The University of Southern Mississippi. The collection also contains the first French translation of a collection of

Greek comedies by Aristophanes, which includes added dramatic interpretation and staging notes for the Parisian theatre, printed in 1684. USM offers a Greek and Latin printing of Euripides' *Orestes* from 1753 held by only Brigham Young University and USM.

Books may also be notable for their influence on human history or as commentaries on contemporary events. The collection contains beautifully illustrated Bibles dating from the early 17th century. An excerpt from the original edition of the King James Bible in 1611 crowns the collection, but complete texts with ornate bindings and gilt edges span two centuries of printing in Europe and the United States.

In the arena of political history, Sam Woods collected a variety of histories of the New World published in the late 18th century. The collection includes an interesting, but less rare, set of volumes titled *The History of America*, written by Englishman William Russell and published in 1778. The ending of the subtitle captures the set's historical curiosity ". . . containing an account of the rise and progress of the *present unhappy contest between Great Britain and her colonies.*" This work provides a unique window into the understanding and assessment of the American Revolution from the perspective of a contemporary Englishman. The collection contains the French and English versions of William Robertson's series, also titled *History of America*, which focuses on the colonization of Spanish America through the 18th century.

In addition to religious and political history, books can provide windows into the social climate of an earlier age. USM houses a four-volume set by the Countess Stephanie Genlis (1780) on the pursuit of moral uplift in leisure activities. The series, which describes and defends the educational merits of the theater for all classes of people, is one of four complete sets in the United States. The Libraries' numerous miniature books of popular fiction and poetry from the 18th century provide examples of how printers made books more accessible by making them less expensive and more portable. French editions of Sir Walter Scott's *Lady of the Lake* (1827) and of Victor Hugo's collected works (1835) measure less than five inches in height.

The aesthetic value of a book merits special note as well. From the imposing large metal clasps and leather-wrapped wooden boards of the 15th century Spanish antiphonal manuscript to the detailed portrait of Rome hidden in the fore edges of a history of the ancient city, the collection shows that books can be visual works of art. The hand-tooled leather cover on Johann Brentius' *Homilies* (1554) and many fine gilt calf bindings deserve special note. Various samples of marbled endpapers, popular typefaces, and bindings offer samples of the binding and printing styles of the hand-press era.

The Woods Collection, located in the Cleanth Brooks Reading Room on the third floor of the McCain Libraries and Archives, provides a unique opportunity to interact with the past through books that have

enlightened or entertained people for centuries.

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Celebrating Sixty Years of Curious George: The Art of H. A. and Margret Rey

— Dee Jones, Curator, de Grummond Collection

Curious George is on the road again. An exhibition honoring the 60th anniversary of this inquisitive monkey is currently touring the United States and Canada. The exhibit contains 63 framed pieces of original art that document the multi-faceted career of H.A. and Margret Rey, creators of Curious George, with sketches, watercolors, pencil drawings, linoleum prints, color separations, and typescripts.

Featured are materials that explore the entire creative process – from preliminary sketches, to dummy pages, through revisions, to final art and color separations. Highlighted are full-color drawings from *Curious George*, *Cecily G. and the Nine Monkeys*, *Katy No-Pocket*, and the recently discovered *Whiteblack the Penguin Sees the World*. The exhibit begins with early works – a watercolor painted by H.A. Rey when he was just eight years old and a linoleum print created by Margret in the 1930s.

Celebrating Sixty Years of Curious George opened at the Children's Museum of Manhattan in October 2001 and became part of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade advertising campaign. It seems that the 60th anniversary of Curious George coincided with the 75th anniversary of the parade, and leading the way down Broadway was a giant 57 foot George filled with 11,600 cubic feet of helium. From New York, the exhibit will travel to the Los Angeles Public Library in March, the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee in August, and finally, to the Toronto Public Library in Ontario, Canada, in November 2002.

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A Snowy Day in Sunny Mississippi

— Dee Jones, Curator, de Grummond Collection

Forty years ago, children's author and illustrator Ezra Jack Keats created *The Snowy Day*, a groundbreaking picture book that earned the prestigious Caldecott Medal in 1963. Original illustrations for *The Snowy Day* are currently on exhibit in the McCain Library and Archives as part of *Collage: An Ezra Jack Keats Retrospective*. All items in this major exhibition are a part of the Ezra Jack Keats archive held by the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection.

In addition to *The Snowy Day* illustrations, the exhibit features Keats' childhood drawings, sketch books from his sojourn in Paris, original oil paintings for the book jackets that introduced him to the world of children's publishing, and the actual brushes and paints he used to create his art. There are sketches, book dummies, color separations, typescripts, galleys, and finished art for more than 20 books written and illustrated by Keats. Photographs and other personal items complete the exhibit.

The exhibition will run through the end of July 2002 and is open to visitors Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in room 405 in the McCain Library and Archives.

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USM Libraries Joins Library of Congress Cooperative Authority Control Program — Kathleen Wells, Senior Catalog Librarian

Have you ever encountered a “see related headings for” reference in Anna, the USM Libraries’ online catalog? Or searched under the subject “Interpreters” and been referred to “Translators” instead? If so, you have experienced the results of a process called authority control. No, it has nothing to do with dog training, or with curbing the power of people in authority. Authority control is the process by which library catalog entries for authors, titles, and subjects are created in standardized forms, with cross-references being made from possible variants. Just as your bank recognizes only one official form of your name, the online catalog recognizes one official or authorized form of a catalog entry. This authorized heading, together with any cross-references connected to it, resides in an authority record which, though invisible to the public, controls how the entries and references appear in the online catalog. An accurate file of authority records, then, provides valuable assistance in connecting catalog users with the information they seek.

USM Libraries has recently become a participant in the creation of authority records on an international scale. Following a weeklong training session last November, USM joined the Library of Congress’s Name Authority Cooperative Program (NACO). Gracie Gilliam, a catalog librarian with the Library of Congress (LC) Cooperative Cataloging Team, came to Hattiesburg to provide NACO training to USM catalogers Ann Branton, Tracy Englert, Robert Fowler, Suzanne Graham, Kathy Wells, and Irmie Wolfe, along with catalogers from Delta State University and Mississippi Valley State University. This marks the first participation in NACO by Mississippi libraries. Following international cataloging codes, NACO participants create and modify authority records in the Library of Congress’s online authority file in the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) database. Individual libraries can then download the records for use in their local online systems. After an initial period of review by catalogers at LC, USM catalogers will be able to add records directly to the OCLC online authority file, which is used by libraries around the world.

USM’s NACO involvement grew out of the creation of headings in our local authority file in conjunction with the cataloging of Mississippi oral histories. Noting that the OCLC authority file often lacked headings for less well-known Mississippians (such as authors and political figures) and Mississippi place names and subjects, Ann Branton, Head of Bibliographic Services, contacted the Library of Congress about the possibility of NACO participation, which led to an intensive and interesting week of training. USM joins more than 330 libraries in the United States and throughout the world that are contributing to this valuable online

resource. While USM librarians are working only with name authority records at this time, we hope to obtain additional training that will enable us to join LC's Subject Authority Cooperative Program (SACO) and to submit proposed subject headings, particularly in the area of African-American studies. USM catalogers look forward to a long and productive association with the Library of Congress and the worldwide library community in this cooperative effort.

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DVDs are Here!

—
Tracy Englert, Catalog Librarian

In 2001, The University of Southern Mississippi Libraries began collecting DVDs. Very similar to compact discs in appearance, DVDs, or digital video discs, may contain full-length movies with extras such as interactive menus, instant chapter or scene access, interviews with stars, filmmakers' commentaries, theatrical trailers, deleted scenes, bonus short films, and links to associated Web sites. The DVDs are located with the other media items in Cook Library on the second floor in the Reading Room. DVD players are available for viewing the discs in the Reading Room.

DVDs are very popular items and circulate often. They may be checked out for 10 days for faculty, staff, and graduate students and three days for undergraduate students. Currently, the Library has more than 60 DVDs, with more being added all the time. Nearly all of the DVDs are feature films and include titles such as *Dark City*, *Crooklyn*, *Clueless*, *Heaven Can Wait*, *The Player*, *Straw Dogs* and *Yellow Submarine*. They are located in the open media shelves in the Reading Room and are classed in the PN 1997s. Check one out today!

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New To USM Libraries

— Barton Spencer, Head, Electronic Resources

Would you like to see what new books are being added to the shelves of USM Libraries? In response to requests from library users, a new service has been added to Anna, the Library's online catalog, that will list newly received books and other materials.

It now takes only a few clicks of a mouse to discover new materials acquired by the library during the past month. The "New to USM Libraries" section of the library catalog arranges the new materials according to library classifications such as Education, Technology, and Political Science, among many others.

The library catalog is located at <http://anna.lib.usm.edu>. When you arrive at Anna's opening screen simply click the "Search Anna" link or login to the "User Services" area. Either method will take you to the "New to USM Libraries" service.

When you reach the search screen within Anna, take a look at the left frame. This is where the "New to USM Libraries" link appears. To see all subject categories, either click on this link or the "+" sign to the left of the link. A list of categories will appear and you can click on each category to see what books are listed within.

Kay Wall, associate dean of Libraries, says this service gives our patrons exactly what they requested. "The 'New Titles' feature on Anna is the result of responding to faculty and student requests to know what library materials are new," Wall said. "Rather than a physical shelf of titles that one must visit, the 'New Titles' feature provides an electronic site for everyone to review. We have received several compliments from our patrons about the convenience and completeness of the new titles information."

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