What the University Curator does

Rob Emlen
October 15, 2015
What curators do

• Acquire collections
  – Through gifts, bequests and purchase
• Research and record information
  – Through inventories and web sites
• Protect Collections
  – Through object handling and conservation
• Exhibit collections
  – At Brown, in campus buildings
• Interpret collections
  – Through teaching and publication
We acquire collections by purchase
We acquire collections by donation
We acquire collections through bequests
Managing how artwork is handled
Managing conservation of artworks
THE METCALF RESEARCH LABORATORY
NAMED IN HONOR OF THE DONOR
JESSE HOUGHTON METCALF
IN RECOGNITION
OF HIS GENEROUS BEQUESTS TO
BROWN UNIVERSITY
IN SUPPORT OF INSTRUCTION AND
RESEARCH IN CHEMISTRY

DEDICATED DECEMBER 23, 1933
THE

METCALF RESEARCH LABORATORY
NAMED IN HONOR OF THE DONOR
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OF HIS GENEROUS BENEFACIONS TO
BROWN UNIVERSITY
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RESEARCH IN CHEMISTRY

DEDICATED DECEMBER 28, 1938
Interpreting the campus collections
Teaching with campus collections
The University's Portrait Collection dates to 1815, the year Brown acquired its first portrait — a painting of its founding president James Manning. As the collection has grown over the years the subjects of these portraits have included administrators, faculty, students, trustees, and benefactors. Many are Brown graduates, although some are community leaders, military heroes, or other figures with only tangential connection to the University but still thought worthy of emulation. Most of the people portrayed in these images lived lives that in some way benefited Brown, and consequentially have been meant to serve as an inspiration.

These likenesses date from every period in Brown's history, from its founding years to the present time. The portraits represent aspects of the culture of the University over time, serving as vignettes of the University's concerns and priorities throughout its history.

Today the catalogue of the Brown Portrait Collection totals over 300 paintings, drawings, and photographs.
Clocks are extraordinary rich ingredients of our material culture, layered with meanings relating to wealth, status and power. They are Man's first precision engineering and first mechanical arts expressing the desire to provide temporal ordering to our lives, and to relate our history to the rhythm of stars. The development of the clock was related to both astronomical science and navigational science, and its earliest inventors like Galileo, were revered for their scientific knowledge and technical skill.

Choose a location:

- Pembroke Hall 100
- University Hall 106 (President's Office)
- University Hall 115 (Provost's Office)
- University Hall 301 (Registrar's Counter)
- University Hall Room 104 (Dean of the College's Office)

Throughout the 20th century, the gift of large and expensive clocks retained its symbolic public value as a magnanimous gesture undertaken at special times and special places; its subjective value in relating the identities of donors and recipients, and their feelings and beliefs to a larger social system, in this case, Brown University (Pembroke College), resisted the test of time.

While the makers of the works get to sign on the dial, it is really a combined effort of the clockmakers, cabinetmakers, inlaymakers, brassfounders, silversmiths, engravers, and decorative painters that make the clock. Similarly, this catalog came about thanks to the invaluable guidance of Prof. Robert Emlen, who was introduced to me by Prof. Dian Kriz and the help of Raymond Butti, Hay Archives Assistant.

Credits:
Text and photographs by Yannling Lim '03, Brown University.
XML development by Ann Caldwell and Patrick Yott, University Library.
This project was undertaken as an independent study, Spring 2003.
Brown 250th Events at the Haffenreffer Museum

Creating Relics for Brown and the Search for a Useable Past

Robert Emlen
Brown University

DATE: Saturday, September 27, 2014
TIME: 11:00 a.m.
LOCATION: List Arts Center, room 120
64 College Street, Providence

The ancient objects we associate with the history of Brown University are physical manifestations of the veneration we feel about this place. Like sacred religious relics, the time-worn buildings and portraits and ceremonial artifacts we have enshrined are touchstones that enable our sense of connection to Brown. In this talk University Curator and Senior Lecturer in American Studies Rob Emlen examines the history and the meanings for Brown of those objects we have chosen to venerate. Sponsored by the Friends of the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology and the Brown 250th Committee.
to follow up on this presentation:

• University Curator web page
  • [http://library.brown.edu/cds/curator/](http://library.brown.edu/cds/curator/)

• The Brown Portrait Collection
  • [http://library.brown.edu/cds/portraits/index.html](http://library.brown.edu/cds/portraits/index.html)

• Historic Clocks at Brown
  • [http://library.brown.edu/cds/curator/clocks/](http://library.brown.edu/cds/curator/clocks/)

• Picturing Brown: The First Views of the College

• and coming soon: Marble Portrait Busts at Brown