



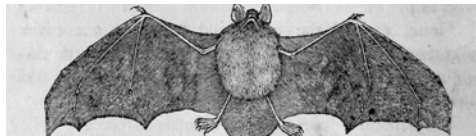
Volume 20, Number 1, Spring 2013

# Books & People

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## Trusteeship and Timbuktu

by Charles G. Berry, Chairman of the Board 2005-2012

As many of you know, Barbara Hadley Stanton succeeded me as Chair of the Board of the Library at the end of 2012. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of our members, staff, and fellow Board members for their support and encouragement over the seven years of my service as Chairman. It has been a labor of love to help guide a library that has meant so much to me and my family for so long, and a great pleasure and honor to lead one of the great cultural institutions of New York. I am heartened that the Library is thriving and confident that it will continue to do so under Barbara's leadership.

It is fitting that Barbara serve as the first woman chair of the board in its 259-year history, a long overdue milestone. I know that her experience, wisdom, and tact—and the respect she has earned from all of you—will enable the Library to continue to flourish. She has already been instrumental in the success of the Library in many ways over many years. She led the capital campaign that enabled us to refurbish our beautiful building and position us for further improvements; she galvanized our fundraising efforts, which have provided crucial support at a critical time; she was a key decision-maker in our retrospective conversion, which computerized our card catalog and led to the development of other online resources. A published authority on trusteeship in nonprofit institutions, Barbara has a keen sense not only of the Library's distinguished



Barbara Hadley Stanton and Charles G. Berry

## New Chair of the Board

The Chairman of the Board, Charles G. Berry, announced in December that he would step down. Mr. Berry has been Chair since 2005; the Board unanimously thanked him for his dedicated service. He will remain on the Board.

Barbara Hadley Stanton is the new Chair of the Board. She has been a member of the Library since 1959 and a trustee since 1988. A graduate of Brearley and Vassar, she has an M.Sci. in Urban Planning from Columbia University.

Ms. Stanton is an experienced trustee whose publications include *Trustee Handbook* (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) for the National Association of Independent Schools as well as professional articles on landscape cognition.

As a Library trustee, she has served under the chairmanships of Henry S.F. Cooper Jr., William J. Dean, and Charles G. Berry. She feels honored to be their successor and looks forward to working with Mark Bartlett and Library staff to maintain this special institution.



Ms. Stanton at the January 23 opening of the *Extraordinary Gifts* exhibition.

history but also of its needs in meeting the future. I know you will all continue to support her as you so thoughtfully did me.

I look forward to continuing to serve on the Board and to working with Mark Bartlett and our dedicated librarians and staff, who make our experience of the Library so enjoyable and meaningful. I was reminded how important they are in both preserving our heritage and ensuring our future when I read the other day of the heroic librarians in Timbuktu in Mali. As you may have heard, the library in that storied city where the Sahara meets the Niger River was the repository of more than 100,000 ancient manuscripts, dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, containing invaluable medieval scholarship on medicine, law, astronomy, botany, history, and other subjects. When the separatist rebels who took control of Timbuktu last April recently retreated from French and Malian troops, the rebels destroyed shrines and started to loot and burn the city's library—a sad parallel to a dark chapter in our own early history, when British soldiers plundered our collection during their occupation of New York City in the Revolutionary War. The wily librarians of Timbuktu, however, managed to remove all but a few hundred of the thousands of rare manuscripts housed in the library. They unobtrusively packed them in burlap bags on donkey carts, which took them to boats on the Niger River down to the safety of the nation's capital, Bamako—not unlike our attentive forbears, who safely stored some 600 volumes of our early collection in St. Paul's Chapel for the duration of the British occupation. The few hundred texts that the rebels did burn, moreover, had been digitally preserved.

I hope and expect that there will be no need for our own vigilant librarians to take such drastic action, but every day they do their part in preserving our heritage and ensuring that we move forward productively in the digital era. As I step down as Chairman and pass the reins to the capable hands of Barbara Stanton, I know that all our members, whose generosity we recognize in this annual issue, share my particular gratitude to Mark Bartlett and all the librarians with whom it has been such a pleasure to serve.

Charles G. Berry

# From the Head Librarian



## Who's in the Building

The Library is full of activity as we head into the spring!

As I write, we are holding fairly steady at 3,042 memberships. Since a majority of those are households (two or more people at one address), this probably represents at least 6,000 people browsing the stacks, catching up on the news in the Members' Room, writing in the Hornblower Room, or attending a Children's Library event. Membership numbers see occasional jumps or dips, but between new faces joining and old ones lapsing or moving away, the size of our member community tends to hover around that 3,000 figure.

## When You Visit

Recently Circulation staff have been asking everyone entering the building to identify themselves. Some members have voiced concern that this seems unlike the Library they know and that knows them. Frequent users may not have been asked for a name for years except when checking out a book or registering for an event. However, staff and trustees have been made aware that a few nonmembers—who are welcome on the First Floor and in the Peluso Family Exhibition Gallery—have been drifting into member-only spaces on the Fifth Floor and elsewhere. We very much value our relationship with members, but it is also unfair to them if we permit those who have not joined to take advantage of member privileges. In addition, we have had some staff transitions at both the Circulation and Reference Desks, and newer staff need some time to learn names and faces.

We hope that this casual security practice will help define some boundaries and allay any need for more stringent measures, such as door guards or membership cards, that would drastically change our welcoming and open style.

We welcome patron feedback about this or any other matter. Comment books are available in all the reading rooms; you're also welcome to email me at [mbartlett@nysoclib.org](mailto:mbartlett@nysoclib.org).

Enjoy your time in this beautiful building. The Library is your place.

## New Trustee

The Board of Trustees is pleased to welcome Timothy N. Wallach as a new Board member. A native New Yorker, Mr. Wallach lives in Manhattan with his wife, Fleur Fairman, who joined the Library in 1997.

Professionally, Mr. Wallach is a Managing Principal of Halcyon Asset Management, a private investment partnership specializing in mergers, bankruptcies and reorganizations. He holds a J.D. (Columbia Law School, 1978) and an M.A. and B.A. in History (Cambridge University, 1974).

Still a dedicated reader of history, Mr. Wallach is a member of the Board of Visitors of the History Department at Columbia University and a trustee of Columbia Preparatory and Grammar School.

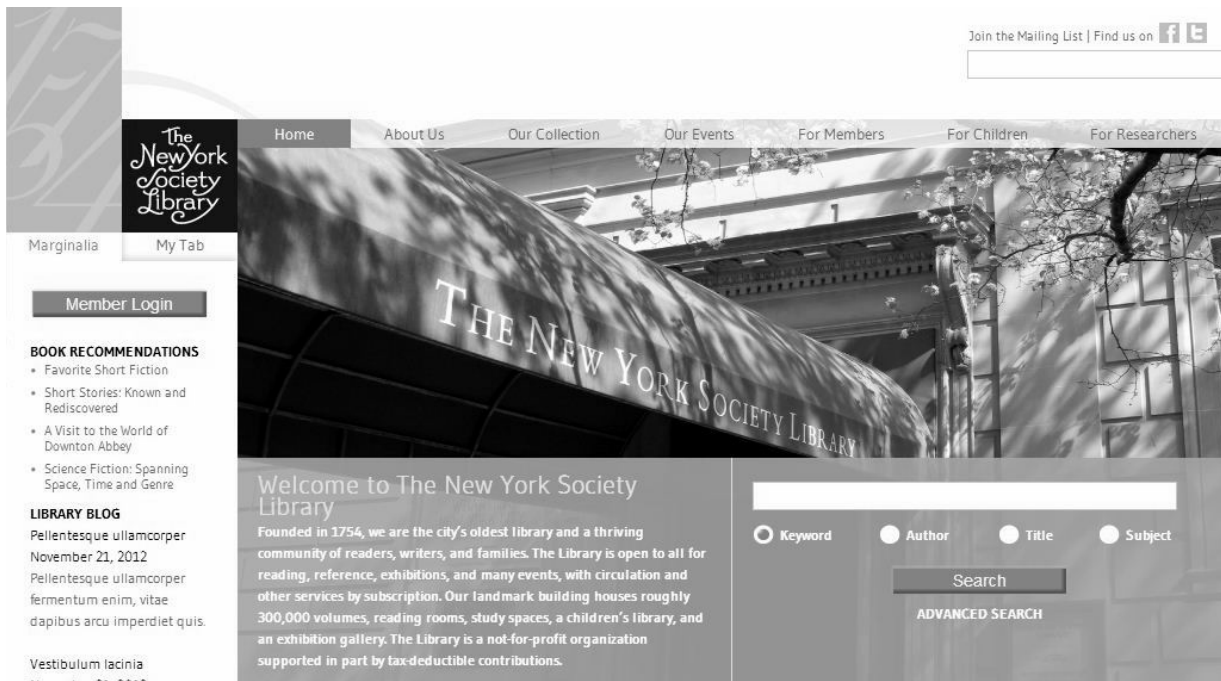
We look forward to his knowledgeable perspective on the Board.





# The Library Launches a New Website

by Carolyn Waters, Assistant Head Librarian



This March, the Library is proud to launch a redesigned website that features a bold new design, exciting and informative new features, and improved functionality and navigability. The URL, [www.nysoclib.org](http://www.nysoclib.org), is not changing.

For the past year, a dedicated group of staffers from around the Library—Matthew Bright, Jennifer Hanley-Leonard, Sara Holliday, Steve McGuirl, Brandi Tambasco, Joan Zimmett, and I—have been working extremely hard behind the scenes to envision and build this new website, making it as welcoming and helpful to online users as it is to visit the Library in person.

But we could not do this work alone. Bernhardt Fudyma Design Group, our principal partner, created the striking new design that highlights the pride we feel in our rich heritage while showcasing the vibrant and stimulating place we remain today. Their new design for the Library now graces all of our print materials as well as the new website. MendozaDesign, our User Experience designers, held a number of focus groups with members, staff, and trustees last spring to discover how people used our existing website and what they'd most like to see in a new site. That feedback informed the layout of the new site and helped us organize it so that users can quickly and easily find the information they are looking for. The web development team of Russell Delacour and Contempt Productions created the website using Drupal, a free, open-source software that is easy to administer and gives us great flexibility to add new features in the future. Many more staff members were invaluable in assisting us with the editing of material and the creation of new content and imagery.

We'd like everyone (members and visitors alike) to take a look and discover the new website. Here's a preview of just a few new things you'll find:

- No more barcodes! Focus group participants told us they disliked having to remember a numeric barcode. On the new site, members will be able to log in easily with a User ID and password to easily check their patron record, place holds, renew books or memberships, or make a donation. In addition, each household member will now be able to have their own unique User ID and password. New login details have been sent to all members with email addresses; if you have not received them, please email [help@nysoclib.org](mailto:help@nysoclib.org).
- A Library-wide blog featuring staff and department profiles, news, notes, and information from around the Library.
- Quick and easy access to articles and staff book recommendations.
- A redesigned events calendar with a monthly view of events and the ability to filter for the events relevant to you.

We hope you enjoy the Library's new website. For questions or comments about the new website or member login information, please email me at [cwaters@nysoclib.org](mailto:cwaters@nysoclib.org).

# The Living History of *A General History*

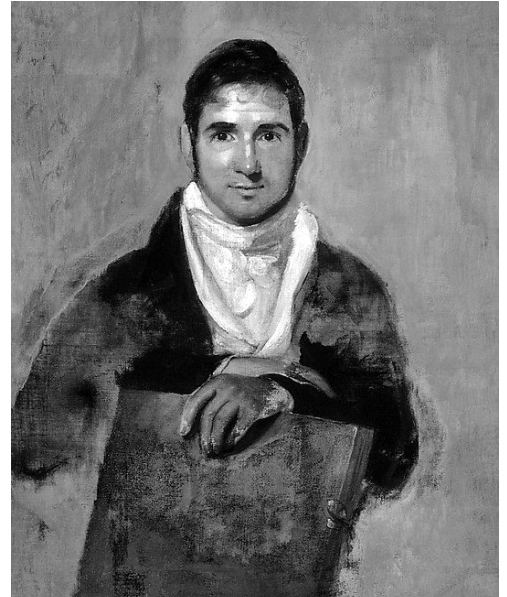
by Erin Schreiner, Special Collections Librarian

Of all of the items on view in our current exhibition, *Extraordinary Gifts: Rare Books Presented to The New York Society Library 1754-2012*, my favorite is *A General History of Quadrupeds* (New York, 1800), though not for the reasons one might suspect. Thomas Bewick and Ralph Bielby's *A General History of Quadrupeds* is not a terribly rare book, but it holds an important place in the history of printing. The illustrator of the American edition, Alexander Anderson, was also associated with the Library as one of our earliest recorded donors, and our copy of that edition is inscribed by its former owner with curious biographical inscriptions written late in his life. These details tie the book to the Library, enriching the stories of both.

Bewick's illustrations and Alexander Anderson's American copies of them may seem unremarkable to us today, but they are the first major appearance in Europe and America of a print medium that would become ubiquitous in popular publications throughout the nineteenth century: the wood engraving. Durable and easy to print, the wood engraving was the medium of choice for illustrated books, magazines, and newspapers. The technique was introduced and made popular by Thomas Bewick with works like *Quadrupeds* and, later, *A History of British Birds*. Alexander Anderson (1775-1870) was the first to adopt the technique in America. Anderson demonstrated a natural talent for drawing as a child and trained as an engraver, selling woodblocks and engravings throughout his early adulthood. Remarkably, he put himself through King's College School of Medicine, now Columbia University Medical School, by working as a book illustrator.

While he seems to have had some success as a doctor, by 1800 Anderson had devoted himself entirely to work as an illustrator. The 1804 edition of *Quadrupeds* was his first major attempt at wood engraving, and from this point forward he worked primarily in this medium to great effect. Anderson found plenty of work in New York, engraving blocks to illustrate books and designing images for advertisements, calling cards, and other popular printed matter, including an image of the Library's building on Nassau Street. Austin Baxter Keep records Anderson as a Library reader with a quotation from Anderson's diary (now at the New-York Historical Society) in his *History of the New York Society Library*, although no other evidence of his membership survives.

Anderson's name does appear, however, in the Library's first Gift Ledger, which notes his donation of the *Nuremberg Chronicle* in 1813. Printed by Anton Koberger in 1493, this book is a landmark in the history of printing. As an incunable (a book printed within fifty years of Gutenberg's invention of movable type), the *Nuremberg Chronicle* is remarkable for its dense illustrations, which show the history of the world as told by the doctor, humanist, and bibliophile Hartmann Schedel (1440-1514). During the publishing process, Koberger's grandson Albrecht Dürer was completing his apprenticeship in the shop; he would go on to define the art of the woodcut. Although the years have not been kind to the Library's copy of the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, it remains a unique and important object in our collection because of its connection to one of the Library's most interesting early members.

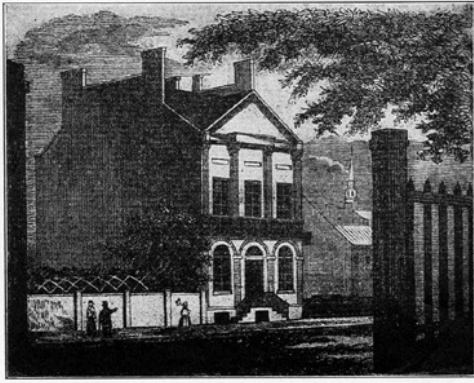


Portrait of Alexander Anderson by John Wesley Jarvis (1780-184) Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Illustration of a monster (woodcut), *Liber Chronicarum* (*The Nuremberg Chronicle*), 1493.



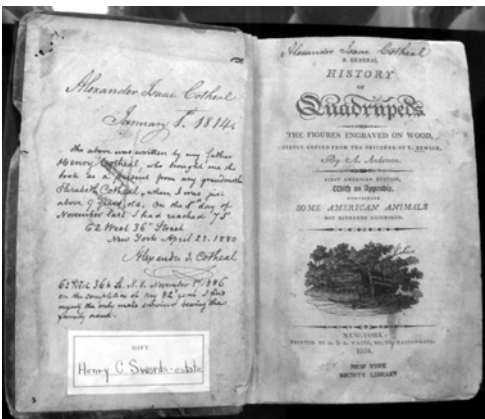


EARLIEST LIBRARY BUILDING IN NEW YORK.  
HOME OF THE SOCIETY LIBRARY 1795-1836.

Anderson's wood engraving of the first building built for the Library, in 1795.



Wood engraving from Alexander Anderson's *A General History of Quadrupeds*. New-York: Printed by G. & R. Waite, no. 64, Maiden-lane, 1804.



The book with its inscriptions and gift plate in the exhibition.

It is the inscriptions in the Library's copy of *Quadrupeds*, however, that stayed with me as I worked my way through the stacks in search of books for this exhibition. They read as follows:

*Alexander Isaac Cotheal*

*January 1st, 1814*

*The above was written by my father Henry Cotheal, who brought me the book as a present from my grandmother Elizabeth Cotheal, when I was just 9 years old. On the 5th day of November last I had reached 75.*

*62 West 36th Street*

*New York April 23, 1880*

*Alexander I. Cotheal*

*62 West 36th St. N.Y. November 5, 1886*

*On the completion of my 82nd year I find myself the only male survivor bearing the family name.*

As reflections on life and mortality, Cotheal's inscriptions illuminate the ways that books are woven into the fabric of a human life. Alexander Cotheal (1804-1894) is best remembered today as a book collector and scholar of Arab language and culture, though as a young man he worked briefly in his father's counting house and later served as Consul General of Nicaragua. James Wynne described Cotheal's collection in *The Private Libraries of New York of 1860*, when it contained over ten thousand volumes. The great strengths of his library were books on what was then known as Orientalism: the history, language, and culture of the Middle East and Islamic cultures. He donated many of these books to Columbia University in 1880, and some of them are coincidentally on view in an ongoing exhibition at the Columbia University Rare Books and Manuscript Library. The Cotheal Fund, endowed by his sisters in his memory after his death, still supports acquisitions of Middle Eastern and Islamic resources there. Cotheal was also a member of several early American learned societies, including the American Oriental Society, for which he served as director, and the American Ethnological Society.

Considering his devotion to scholarship, it is curious that Cotheal chose *Quadrupeds* for these highly personal notes rather than one of the items he most treasured as a scholar, or perhaps a Bible or another work of religious significance. But for this accomplished book collector, the book itself may have held special significance because it was probably among the first he owned. It survived with him as he grew from childhood into adult life, acquiring thousands more books along the way. Large scientific books like this one were more costly than the grammars and prayer books commonly read by children, and in 1814 *Quadrupeds* would have been a very special gift, especially if the book was purchased new. For a man who grew up to be a collector, the books he owned as a boy may have served as living traces of the early formation of his character. *Quadrupeds* was eventually passed down to his nephew, the banker, bibliophile, and Library trustee Henry Cotheal Swords, and was donated to the Library as part of the Swords Bequest after his death in 1924.

Discovering these connections among the institution, its collections, and its members has been one of the most gratifying aspects of my work as Special Collections Librarian. In getting to know our collections, one sees the Library linking seemingly disparate people and books, adding depth and richness to the stories of each player. In another library, the *Nuremberg Chronicle* and *Quadrupeds* would be strange bedfellows. Here, they converse in the stacks.

# A Gothic Treasury, Fully Cataloged

by Laura O'Keefe, Head of Cataloging and Special Collections

In November 2012, a Library project came to an end after five years when the Cataloging Department completed the online cataloging of its Hammond Collection, 1,152 works of fiction, drama, and other popular reading matter from the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The catalog records for them are viewable as a group in the online catalog with an author search for "James Hammond's Circulating Library."

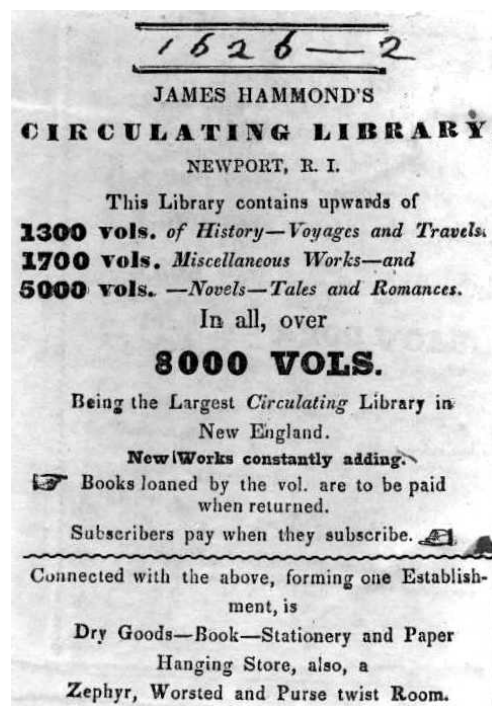
The James Hammond Circulating Library operated out of the general store of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century merchant James Henry Hammond in Newport, Rhode Island. According to the bookplates found within the volumes, Hammond's was the largest circulating library in New England, with "novels, tales, and romances" comprising most of its holdings. Several years after Hammond's death in 1864, his collection was dispersed, and about two-thirds of the Hammond Library books came to the New York Society Library; regrettably, we do not know what became of the remainder of them.

Our Hammond items were published between 1720 and 1854, with the bulk of them dating from 1770 to 1825. The numerous romantic and Gothic titles among them indicate that they probably enjoyed a mostly female reading audience. A high percentage of them were also written by women. Better-known writers among them include Mme. de Genlis, Anna Maria Porter, and Mary Robinson. There is even a copy of the first American edition of Jane Austen's *Emma*, although it is in very poor condition. Predictably, a number of works were published anonymously or pseudonymously, often by "a lady."

That favorite eighteenth-century literary genre, epistolary fiction, is well represented here, with more than a hundred titles. And of course the collection contains many Gothic novels—well over three hundred—with such appealing titles as *Veronica, or, The Mysterious Stranger*; *The Enchanted Mirror: A Moorish Romance*; and *The Three Monks!!!* Both genres are findable through subject searches for "epistolary novels" and "Gothic novels."

Dramatic works in the Hammond Collection range from musical farces to melodramas and tragedies. Elizabeth Inchbald and Joanna Baillie are among the playwrights, as are George Colman, Thomas Dibdin, and John O'Keefe.

Though the Hammond Collection consists almost entirely of fiction and plays, it also includes a handful of religious and inspirational writings, some travel narratives, and biographies and memoirs. Among these is one by the actress George Anne Bellamy, *An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy, Late of Covent-Garden Theatre, Written by Herself; To Which is Annexed Her Original Letter to John Calcraft, Esq. Advertised To Be Published in October 1767, But Which Was Then Violently Suppressed* (London : J. Bell, 1785). Another tells the story of a woman soldier in the Revolutionary War: *The Female Review, or, Memoirs of an American Young Lady : Whose Life and Character are Peculiarly Distinguished—Being a Continental Soldier, for Nearly Three Years, in the Late American War : During Which Time, She Performed the Duties of Every Department, into Which She was Called, With Punctual Exactness, Fidelity and Honor, and Preserved Her Chastity Inviolable, by the Most Artful Concealment of Her Sex* (Dedham, Mass. : Heaton, 1797).

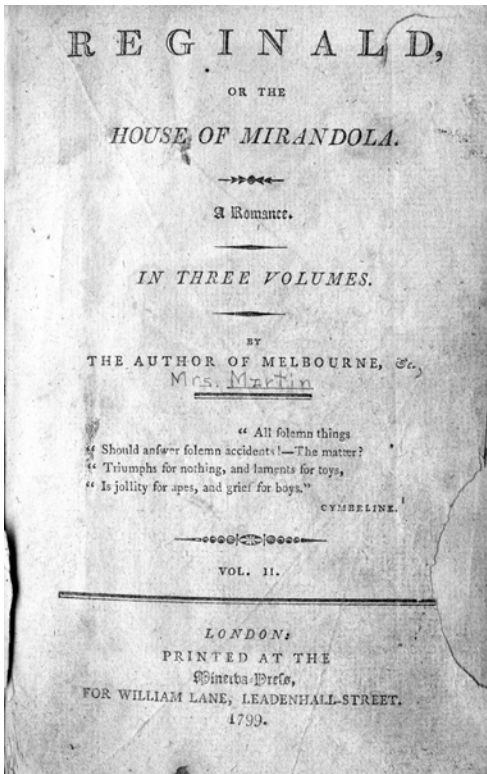


A handbill/bookplate for Hammond's library.



The dramatic concluding illustration from Matthew Lewis's Gothic bestseller *The Monk*.





The title page of *Reginald; or, The House of Mirandola*.

One of the more exciting and unexpected results of this cataloging project was the discovery of about eight titles for which we seem to have the only known extant copy: *The History of Henrietta Mortimer* (London: Thomas Hookham, 1787); *The Countess of Hennebon* (London: William Lane, 1789); Tamary Hurrell's *Tales of Imagination* (London: J. Walter, 1790); *Castle Zittaw* (London: William Lane, 1794); Souza-Botelho's *Emilia and Alphonso* (London: R. Dutton, 1799); Sophia Fortnum's *The Victim of Friendship* (London: R. Dutton, 1801); A. Lafontaine's *Herman and Emilia* (London: Lane, Newman, 1805); and *The Cottage Girl* (Philadelphia: Matthew Carey, 1814).

Evidence that the Hammond books circulated frequently and widely is reflected in their “played with” condition. Readers of the past were more cavalier about writing in books than we are today: a number of volumes in this collection include handwritten comments from borrowers expressing their satisfaction or disappointment with the text. The books were inexpensively bound, chiefly in sheepskin (unlike the more elegant calf leather bindings that we often associate with rare books), which is now crumbling and deteriorating, and in many cases, the covers are loose or completely detached. A preservation project some years ago resulted in the creation of custom boxes to house these volumes, but researchers who wish to consult them should keep in mind that they are fragile.

Because of the physical condition of the Hammonds, we prefer to limit access to them to people with a specific research project in mind. That said, we welcome all inquiries about these items. Please contact us at [rare\\_books@nysoclib.org](mailto:rare_books@nysoclib.org), or call our Special Collections Librarian, Erin Schreiner, at 212-288-6900 x242.



The frontispiece of volume 2 of *Reginald*.



## Visitors Enjoy Extraordinary Gifts

The Library's new exhibition, *Extraordinary Gifts: Rare Books Presented to The New York Society Library 1754-2012* will now be on display in the Peluso Family Exhibition Gallery through the end of 2013. Both members and non-members are welcome to visit any time the Library is open; nonmembers are asked to sign in at the Circulation Desk.

At the opening reception on January 23, members enjoyed a first look at a first edition of *A Room of One's Own*, signed by Virginia Woolf in violet ink, Nathaniel Hawthorne's copy of the poems of Lord Byron, and many other singular items. Remarks included a welcome by Chair Barbara Hadley Stanton and an introduction to the exhibition by co-curators Harriet Shapiro and Erin Schreiner. *Photos by Karen Smul.*



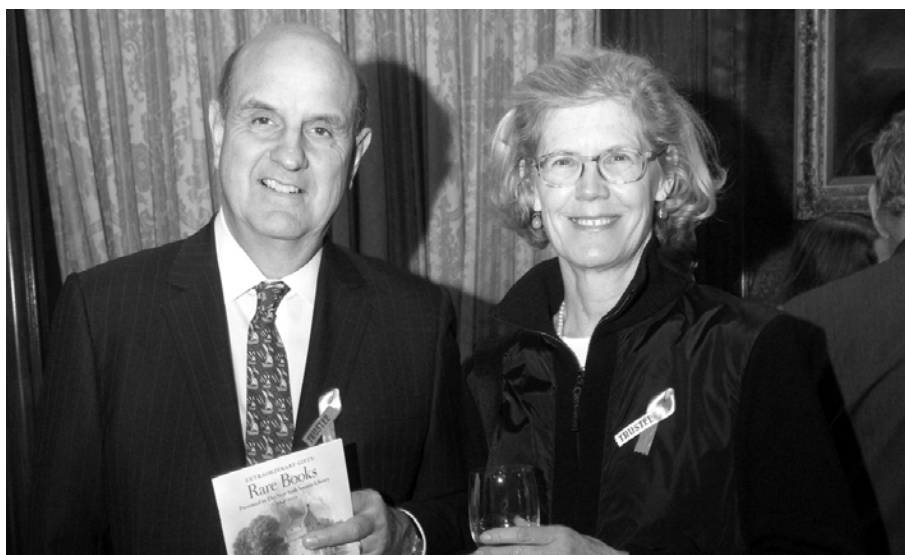
Donald Bandman.



Exhibition co-curator Erin Schreiner shows a rare book to staff member Matthew Bright and members Nancy Krukowski and Jan Krukowski.



Head Librarian Mark Bartlett and Christina Heuer.



Trustees George L.K. Frelinghuysen and Jean Parker Phifer.



Trahern Gemmill and Grace Gemmill.

## One More Picture

The producers and crew of *The Inner House* transformed the Members' Room into Edith Wharton's study on December 2. Here they pose with actress Tod Randolph (in white dress) as Wharton.



Rupert Brooke, one of the writers read by Library patrons during World War I.

### Upcoming Exhibition Seeks Materials

The Library is pleased to announce the working title for a new exhibition to open in January 2014. *On the Western Front: The Writings of World War I* will honor the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of war in Europe in the fall of 1914. The exhibition, to take place in the Assunta, Ignazio, Ada and Romano Peluso Exhibition Gallery, will focus on literature about and influenced by World War I, especially items written or read by Library members during the war years. Although the United States did not join the war until April 1917, events in Europe deeply influenced society, politics, and literature on this side of the Atlantic.

We believe that many members may have personal artifacts from ancestors who participated in or lived through the war that would enrich the exhibition. In addition, the loan of signed first editions by significant writers of the era like Siegfried Sassoon, Vera Brittain, or Alan Seeger would be much appreciated. If you have a book, journal, photograph, or letter that might suit the theme, please contact Harriet Shapiro, Head of Exhibitions, at 212.288.6900 x221 or [hshapiro@nysoclib.org](mailto:hshapiro@nysoclib.org).