BOTANICAL SCIENCE
UNDER GLASS

Arts and Crafts from Woodstock

EDMUND MORGAN ON CULTIVATING SURPRISE

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
HEN WE DECIDED TO PRODUCE A MAGAZINE highlighting the research and educational aspects of this remarkable institution, we thought long and hard about what to call it. The Huntington is a place of rich history and tradition and, of course, spectacular collections. But it is much more. The Huntington is a dynamic, thriving place. Every day, dozens of scholars come through our doors to study rare books, historical manuscripts, and art objects—including paintings, sculpture, tapestries, furniture, and ceramics. Their research results in countless works of nonfiction, documentaries, articles, essays, and even the textbooks that young people read in the history, social studies, and political science classrooms across America. In the botanical labs, researchers examine and propagate rare plants. And in the gardens and galleries, students and their teachers experience the wonders of the Huntington’s collections firsthand. It is a place that functions on the frontiers of knowledge—where new things are learned every day.

It is with this notion of frontier—on the edge of discovery—that we introduce this new publication.

What happens behind the scenes here? What are scholars and students learning? What issues are they confronting as they sort through information and develop their own new findings?

Every person who experiences The Huntington creates a new story of interaction. This magazine celebrates such stories. While no collection of articles can encapsulate the full range and breadth of The Huntington, these offerings attempt to show how The Huntington intersects with the world around it.

One such story is a profile of Literary Manuscripts Curator Sara S. (Sue) Hodson, who attempts to strike a balance between a researcher’s access to library materials and the right to privacy of an author or subject. Another is a look at the new Rose Hills Foundation Conservatory for Botanical Science and how educators are testing and retesting hands-on science exhibits to make sure they stand up to the tough scrutiny of middle school students.

Working on the frontiers of knowledge, to varying degrees, involves risk taking. The Huntington has never before attempted to capture its stories in a magazine format. And yet we do know that what goes on here is extraordinary.

We are grateful to the Annenberg Foundation for providing generous support to strengthen the Huntington’s communication efforts. The magazine is an opportunity to offer insight into what makes The Huntington special. Please let us know what you think.

STEVEN S. KOBLIK
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A Page from the *Revenge*

COMMEMORATING THE 200th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

by Robert C. Ritchie

Shortly after noon on Oct. 21, 1805, HMS *Revenge*, a newly commissioned 74-gun British battleship, moved sluggishly in light breezes and a heavy swell. Across the horizon, 26 more ships under the command of Adm. Horatio Nelson sailed relentlessly toward 33 Franco-Spanish ships commanded by Adm. Pierre Villeneuve. England had spent years in a fierce and costly war of opposition to Revolutionary France and the ambitions of Napoleon. The two fleets would collide in an epic battle just off Cape Trafalgar near the Spanish port of Cádiz. The stakes were high. If the Franco-Spanish fleet won, Napoleon might finally be able to invade Britain. And if the Royal Navy triumphed, he would lose all hope of expanding his empire.

On board the *Revenge*, Lt. Lewis Hole turned the page in his logbook and took note of the typical conditions at sea—“Light Breezes and Clear.” Although his commander, Capt. Robert Moorsom, kept the official log of the ship’s activities, Hole and all young officers like him maintained logbooks as part of their training. Usually, Hole recorded the position of the ship, the weather conditions—especially the wind—and any notable activities that occurred on board. This would be a busy day, however, and Hole had little time for details. Nonetheless, his laconic entry—now part of the Huntington’s rich holdings from the Napoleonic era—provides a backdrop to the Battle of Trafalgar and the death of its hero, Lord Nelson.

Lt. Hole had participated in the Battle of Copenhagen four years earlier, one of Nelson’s great victories, and was now serving with Nelson in what would be the last battle for both of them. On board the lead ship, HMS *Victory*, Lord Nelson had ample time to consider the innovative strategy that would assure an outcome worthy of his ship’s name. In the age of sail, naval tactics called for enemy fleets to form opposing lines before slowly approaching one another. The fleet that was upwind had the advantage since it could pick the timing of the clash. The battle would thus play out as a series of ship-to-ship actions. The fleet that captured the most ships or forced the enemy to flee would earn the victory. But unpredictable winds, fog, and currents—not to mention differences in sailing skill—could lead to indecisive outcomes.

Nelson sought a crushing strategy. Rather than forming his vessels into a single line for a ship-to-ship clash, he divided his fleet into two squadrons—one that he would lead in the *Victory*, the other led by Adm. Cuthbert Collingswood in the *Royal Sovereign*. The two squadrons would attack perpendicular to the Franco-Spanish fleet,

Opposite page: Logbook entry of HMS Revenge for the day of the Battle of Trafalgar, Oct. 21, 1805. Lt. Lewis Hole’s remarks actually fell under the heading of Oct. 22, since Royal Navy practice dictated that a new day began at high noon and continued through the following morning. 

thereby cutting it in two places. An attack to the middle and rear of the enemy fleet would render the lead ships helpless since they would be forced to reverse course in order to join the fray. The time needed to complete such a maneuver would all but remove them as a factor in the battle.

There were formidable risks in such a strategy. The *Victory* and *Royal Sovereign* would be subject to a brutal cannonade from multiple ships before they could bring their guns to bear. Nelson trusted that the Franco-Spanish ships, many of which had been penned up in Cádiz for some time, lacked the necessary gunnery skills to aim accurately in the heavy swell. The Royal Navy, on the other hand, took pride in its masterful skills after years of practice. The British ships could thus crash through and start doubling up on the enemy ships, confronting them from both sides.

Nelson’s plan would work best if the Franco-Spanish fleet were in a single-line formation. Unfortunately for Nelson, Adm. Villeneuve had steered south after leaving Cádiz and then changed his mind and turned north to face the British. As his fleet reversed course, the line split into separate squadrons. Ships overlapped one another, presenting a great danger to the British as they broke through and found themselves doubled up. But Nelson was committed to his strategy and had confidence in his ships, his men, and, above all, his gunnery.

Lt. Hole and the *Revenge* sailed in Collingwood’s squadron. Since the *Revenge* was new and fast, Collingwood ordered it to move up the line. As it came upon the enemy ships, Hole had time to record Nelson’s famous signal to the fleet, which was delivered through a series of flags flying from the *Victory*: “England expects every Man will do his Duty.” Then all he and his shipmates could do was wait as the *Royal Sovereign*, Collingwood’s flagship, took a pounding at 25 minutes after noon and then pushed its way through the line wreathed in smoke. One by one the other British ships crossed through. As the *Revenge* sailed into the melee 10 minutes behind its lead ship, it was surrounded by four 74-gun enemy ships—the *Aigle*, *Achille*, *Indomptable*, and *San Justo*—and the 112-gun *Príncipe de Asturias*. The *Revenge* drew heavy fire, losing the ability to steer as the rudder was shot away, and suffered 79 dead and wounded while keeping up a deadly cannonade against the enemy ships. Once free of this maelstrom, and aided by the *Polyphemus* and *Dreadnought*, the ship sailed into quieter waters to begin an extended period of repair. Of this hurricane of action, Hole notes only that the *Revenge* found itself at 4:45 p.m. with “4 French Ships and one Three Decker on us at once.” Then Hole is silent until he records the signal to take ships in tow at 5:30 p.m.

Nelson’s strategy had worked and English gunnery proved decisive, but he paid for his great victory with his life. Nineteen enemy ships were captured, one destroyed, and many others heavily damaged. What remained of the Franco-Spanish fleet crept into Cádiz; a number of ships were later captured while trying to leave. As was the custom, Hole took note of the weather and his ship’s activities before beginning a new page: “At noon Fresh Breezes… Clearing away the Wreck.”

Robert C. Ritchie is W. M. Keck Foundation Director of Research at The Huntington.
A Palatial View

SHEDDING LIGHT ON AN EARLY LOS ANGELES DAGUERREOTYPE

by Jennifer A. Watts

At first glance, this picture doesn’t look like much. A low-slung adobe building sits at the edge of a deserted plaza. The image’s most distinctive feature is the “Johnson & Allanson” merchant sign at left, just enough evidence to help pinpoint the location as Los Angeles around 1858.

Further investigation reveals the structure to be El Palacio, the fashionable residence of Don Abel Stearns, the pueblo’s wealthiest citizen.

The recent discovery of a photograph of El Palacio in the Huntington’s archives raises the total number of known Los Angeles daguerreotypes to an astonishing two. But neither still exists. Like the other daguerreotype image, a view of San Pedro in 1852, this image is a photographic reproduction of the original. Actual daguerreotypes depicting 19th-century Los Angeles do not appear to have survived over time. Because the Huntington archives boast nearly 1 million photographic images, it is not unusual for staff members to make surprising discoveries as they go through the process of cataloging the collection. But this find stands out simply because of the extraordinary rarity of any Los Angeles images from the 1850s.

What accounts for this stunning lapse in the visual record? Part of the reason may be that Los Angeles in the 1850s was neither bustling nor prosperous. It had a reputation for its violent lawlessness as much as anything else. It is unlikely that many landscape images of the hard-scrabble village of only a few thousand souls were made in the first place. Even so, an enterprising few decided to give the photography profession a go. Dr. William B. Osborne and Moses Searles opened the city’s first studio in August 1851, a makeshift affair located in El Palacio itself. Portraiture was their stock-in-trade, but more lucrative ventures, or at least steadier work, soon beckoned. Only six men would follow suit in the ensuing decade, and the majority remained in business less than a year. Not until the mid-1870s did photography become stable employment in Los Angeles.

Jennifer A. Watts is Curator of Photographs at The Huntington.
Cultivating Surprise

AN EMINENT HISTORIAN REFLECTS ON THE SERENDIPITOUS EXPERIENCE OF RESEARCH AND OFFERS A LITTLE ADVICE TO BUDDING SCHOLARS

by Edmund S. Morgan

DO NOT EMPLOY MUCH OF A METHOD in doing historical research except to read indiscriminately everything I can lay my hands on that may relate to whatever topic has excited my curiosity. I have no system.

For me The Huntington has always been a good choice as the place to satisfy my curiosity in my own disorganized way. For one thing, it was a long way from home, away from academic duties, where I could not even be consulted about them. More importantly it had all the resources in books and manuscripts that I was likely to need. It always had a company of scholars with whom to talk and walk at lunchtime, not to talk about what I was doing—I never do that—but about ideas great and small. I have never had such stimulating conversation anywhere else. The reason I do not like to talk about my own research while doing it is that I lose the impulse, the necessity, of putting what I think I have found in writing. I firmly believe that too much discussion amounts to “talking your book away.” But talking about other ideas excites my own thought processes.

If you have studied any part of history enough to be curious about it, enough to want to do some research, you already are aware of the generally accepted views, the orthodox views, the controversies among the experts in the field, what is taken for granted and what is in dispute. You want to learn a little more about some question, and you go to the source materials that are presumably the foundation of the orthodox views. You come across something that you had not known about, something that surprises you a little. Cultivate that surprise. Do not say to yourself, “Oh, I didn’t know that,” and go on with your reading. Stop right there. Ask yourself, Why did I not know that? Is it contrary to what I had been led to expect? Is it because I did not know enough? Or is it because the people who crafted the orthodox interpretations did not know enough? Or perhaps their angle of vision was limited by what came before.

The most exciting research I have done has come from cultivating what was at first a mild surprise. An example: The first time I taught a course on the American Revolution, I was prepared to offer the received opinions I had been taught in college. The orthodoxy then was that

The Repeal, Or the Funeral of Miss Americ-Stamp, 1766. One of the most famous and popular satires commenting on the Stamp Act. From Collection of British and American Historical Caricatures (London: 1762–90), plate 25, Huntington Library.
that act and instead imposed external taxes, such as import duties, the colonists shifted their argument to include all taxes.

In order to prepare reading assignments for the course, I wanted to use selections from original sources. I went to the pamphlets that historians often cited to illustrate the shifting colonial position. When I could not find any clear examples, I was a little surprised. I was teaching at Brown University, where I had the resources of the John Carter Brown Library at hand. I began reading other pamphlets and newspaper articles against the Stamp Act. Soon I was more than a little surprised and more than a little excited. There was no real shift. From the beginning to the end the colonists objected to all taxes. Maybe they meant what they said. (It is a good idea to assume that people do.) After several years of shotgun research, reading everything I could find, British or American, from the appropriate years (much of which I found at The Huntington), I was able to write, with the able assistance of my first wife, Helen Mayer Morgan, a book on the Stamp Act crisis.

**Write while you still have the excitement of discovery.**

I could cite other examples of cultivating surprise from most of the books I have written. But I want to offer a couple of other pieces of advice to anyone drawn to intellectual pursuits—from young scholars to armchair historians. First, and probably most idiosyncratic, try to forget philosophies of history and theories of historical causation: Marxist, Straussian, postmodern, or whatever. You probably have one, conscious or unconscious, but try not to let it get in your way. Cultivate that surprise when the documents don’t seem to support your views. Next, try to keep your research and your writing together. Don’t wait until you think you have entirely completed your research before beginning to write. As soon as you begin to see connections between things that you had not noticed before, start writing what you think you have found out about them, even if these writings seem fragmentary. Don’t get too systematic. Don’t make elaborate outlines with headings and subheadings. Don’t spend a lot of time arranging your notes. Stop stalling and start writing.

This is especially important if you are following the shotgun approach. Write while you still have the excitement of discovery. You may later have to scrap what you write. I do a lot of scrapping before I finish: paragraphs, pages, chapters. But I don’t really know what I think until I try to write it. If I have great difficulty putting an idea into words, it is probably because the idea is fuzzy and needs thinking through. I have sometimes been embarrassed to find that I was holding two inconsistent ideas at the same time. It can be very helpful to have someone go over these preliminary drafts, not necessarily a historian, but someone who can grasp your argument and view it, so to speak, from the outside, which my present wife does. She can be tenacious in questioning possible inconsistencies, large or small, or infelicities in writing. I reason that if she doesn’t “get” the argument, I may need to recast or clarify it.

Besides clarifying your thinking about a subject, writing about it will focus the rest of your research. You will probably have narrowed the target and saved yourself from some irrelevant work. You now have a tentative theme, a more clearly defined question to guide what you do next. You may also discover that the materials have presented you with a different and more interesting question than the one you began with. Don’t hesitate to change. Go with what excites you. Research should be fun. Yes, it requires a lot of scut work, sifting through stuff that yields no gold. But if you lose the excitement, the curiosity that drove you to it in the first place, what’s the point? Unless you feel a compulsion, you may be in the wrong business.

*Edmund S. Morgan, author of more than a dozen books on early colonial American history, is Sterling Professor Emeritus of History at Yale University. He has made numerous trips to the Huntington Library since first serving as a research fellow during the academic year 1952–53.*
T he team of independent evaluators filed into the Huntington’s Brody Teaching Lab, where members of the Botanical education staff waited, somewhat nervously, to greet them. Introductions were made, refreshments were offered, and a brief discussion of the group’s goals and objectives ensued. Once these preliminaries were out of the way, the team members dispersed around the room and took up their stations to begin the work at hand.

Peering into the eyepiece of a microscope, one evaluator adjusted the focus slightly, took another look at the specimen under the lens, then spoke in an excited whisper to a woman standing nearby.

“Mom! Look at this. It’s awesome!”

Mother and son were soon bent over the microscope together, examining a leaf’s stomata in the wondrous topography of 100x magnification.

These “scientific experts,” students from elementary and middle schools in the Pasadena area, are among several focus groups that have conducted field tests of exhibits under development for the Rose Hills Foundation Conservatory for Botanical Science, scheduled to open at The Huntington in October. The Conservatory will feature a series of exhibits and experiments designed to engage youngsters in hands-on science, using real scientific instruments and living plants to explore the mysteries of the natural world. Three distinct environments—tropical rain forest, cloud forest, and bog—will serve as habitats for diverse botanical displays and interactive exhibits that examine the ways plants adapt to their environments. The Conservatory’s educational components are funded by a $1.75 million grant from the National Science Foundation.

Although kids ages 9 to 12 and their families are the Conservatory’s target audience, the development of exhibits is far from child’s play. A three-person team led by Kitty Connolly, Conservatory project manager, has devoted thousands of hours to painstaking research, exhibit design, and field-testing.

“Our goal is to give children a chance to practice science on living plants,” says Connolly. “There’s nothing quite like this in the United States. Other botanical gardens have primarily passive exhibits. In this new space, kids will be building science skills through the use of real tools.”

That means that one of the first things the exhibit team had to do was hit the books.

Connolly and her colleagues Karina White and Katura Reynolds spent months conducting extensive research on everything from biology to educational theory, poring over textbooks, science journals, and scholarly papers as they gathered fresh ideas for presenting science to youngsters. They sought to challenge and inspire young minds without oversimplifying the content. Meeting regularly with members of an advisory board composed of educators, scientists, and consultants, the staff developed exhibits that would explore sophisticated concepts playfully. “Algae Identification,” for example, introduces children to the microscopic world of—forgive the expression—pond scum and uses a kid-friendly matching game to help them hone their scientific observation skills as they compare and identify different forms of algae under powerful magnification.

From nursery to library to drawing board to computer, the exhibit team
conducted experiments with specimen plants, created intricate botanical illustrations, and compiled extensive data. Several file drawers were soon overflowing with notes, sketches, and drafts of label text for exhibits with names like “Listening to Trees,” “Spices from the Rain Forest,” “Hitchhiking Seeds,” and “Gotcha!”

“We like to use the pollen analogy to describe this process,” jokes Reynolds. “Create as much of it as you can and hope that some of it will stick.”

All of the exhibits had to meet specific criteria. First and foremost, they had to present concepts or phenomena that children could actively observe. Living plants—the more diverse, the better—were to be used whenever possible. Exhibits should highlight interdependencies, showing the connectivity between plants, animals, people, and the environment. And they should encourage active involvement through the use of scientific tools, such as meters for measuring humidity in the air or the amount of nitrogen in different soils. The designers incorporated sensory learning through touch, smell, and sound, while also assuring accessibility to visitors with different physical abilities, reading skills, or learning styles. Some exhibits might require a facilitator to lead or maintain them, while others could engage grown-ups in the learning process along with the children. The team even addressed the questions of traffic flow and the durability of exhibit materials.

Connolly and her colleagues continually evaluated and reevaluated each exhibit. Many ideas were abandoned early in the process because they failed to meet the necessary criteria. Others proved impractical for heavy visitor use or for the moist climate of a conservatory. As the winnowing
process continued, the more promising ideas advanced to the next stage: prototyping—that is, the creation of a working model—and testing.

One of the keys to designing appealing botanical exhibits for children is to make the most of your assets: the plants themselves. “We’re using the most charismatic plants we can find to demonstrate each exhibit,” explains Connolly. “Things like pitcher plants really engage visitors’ imaginations.” She slides an exhibit across the table to illustrate her point. Pinned to a board is the dissected form of a long, funnel-shaped leaf filled with dead bugs, arguably exuding more yuckiness than charisma. It’s “Count the Corpses,” a delightfully graphic examination of the digestive habits of the carnivorous Sarracenia plant and one of the most popular exhibits that has been tested to date.

Such charismatic attractions call for equally engaging graphics. Reynolds, a botanical illustrator by training, brought her artistic skills to the project. Many of the exhibits include colorful plant diagrams or depictions of processes that are difficult to show in real time. “Many people learn best when they are able to visualize things,” she says. “It’s one thing to say, ‘This leaf has special glands that create nectar,’ but kids will have a better idea of what that means if they can see a picture of it. Scientific jargon can be off-putting, but a good illustration can get people excited about the topic.”

Perhaps the most critical aspect of the design process was field-testing—observing real kids interacting with the botanical exhibits. The feedback from kids helped identify the hits and misses and pointed out where fine-tuning was needed to move closer to meeting the learning goals for each exhibit. The results were often surprising.

“One of the amazing things is how completely unpredictable the kids’ responses were,” says White. “Sometimes things we thought they might not like turned out to be very popular, and occasionally the reverse was true. But we’re building these exhibits for children, so their responses are what matter most. Putting these exhibits in front of them was a real eye-opener.”

The team conducted a series of evaluation sessions over the course of several months, some taking place in a structured classroom setting at local schools, others offered informally for drop-in Huntington visitors. The boys and girls who participated in the trials represented a broad demographic mix of age groups, ethnic backgrounds, economic levels, and academic achievement.

Johanna Jones led some of the early sessions. She is a consultant with Randi Korn and Associates, Inc., a museum evaluation and audience research firm from Alexandria, Va. “The keystone of evaluation is having clear goals and objectives,” she says. “You want to see if your messages are getting across. How are kids using the exhibits? What are they taking away? Does the information make sense? Are they tripping up on certain terms?”

She discovered, for example, that youngsters frequently stumbled over the word “fertilize.” Its reproductive

“We like to use the pollen analogy to describe the research and planning process: Create as much of it as you can and hope that some of it will stick.”

– Katura Reynolds, botanical illustrator

Erendida Cruz, 9, uses a paintbrush to move pollen from one flower to another. Photo by Lisa Blackburn.
connotation was entirely missed as young imaginations conjured up manure rather than pollen. Jones suggested changes to the label text to put the term in its proper context.

Another exhibit that benefited from field-testing was an exploration of the parts of a flower. In the early prototype, children looked into a microscope to observe a close-up view of a neatly labeled pistil or stamen. Informative, but not very engaging, the education team found. After the first round of evaluations, the microscope was replaced by a goose-necked videoscope that allowed kids to select their own views, manipulate the focus, and project the microscopic images onto a TV screen. A further modification made it even more interactive by the simple addition of a small paintbrush, which kids used to move pollen from one flower to another while observing the pollination process enlarged on the screen.

Taking their assignment as evaluators seriously, the youngsters talked candidly with Jones and the Huntington team. Their opinions were as diverse as the children themselves.

“I liked the moss,” said Ben Symes, 12, who had studied the plants in the “Tiny!” exhibit up close with a magnifying glass. “I never knew there were so many different kinds, and all those different shapes and colors.” He was less enthusiastic about the “Leaf Diversity” display: “Kinda boring,” he offered sheepishly. Ten-year-old Carlos Chan, on the other hand, rated the leaves very favorably. “I liked learning the names of all the different shapes,” he explained, picking up a laminated example of a palmate (or hand-shaped) leaf and comparing it to the featherlike pinnate.

Working with sophisticated tools was a novel experience for many of the participants, who, like Dan Bar-Sever, 11, found that it heightened their interest in both the plants and the scientific process. A sleek chrome and glass refractometer in the nectar exhibit was one of Dan’s favorites. “The way it measured sugar levels was very interesting. It’s really cool, because in addition to learning about plants you have a chance to use the equipment.” Yet even the simplest exhibits attracted their share of enthusiastic reviews. The decidedly low-tech “Drip Tips” employs a plastic squirt bottle to illustrate how rain forest plants shed water by channeling it down the center of their leaves and off the elongated points on their tips. Younger children, in particular, found this activity fascinating. They enjoyed giving the leaves repeated squirts and closely scrutinizing the results.

The thrill of new discoveries caused more than one participant to consider familiar plants in a more inquisitive light. After using a high-tech videoscope to explore “Pollen on the Move” with a flamboyant stargazer lily under magnification, Magdalena Alvarez, 10, shyly suggested the inclusion of “more flowers that we know, like roses.” It was a telling comment, expressing a young girl’s desire to
apply her newfound knowledge to the natural world outside her own front door.

Following field-testing, the education team reviewed the comments, adapting some exhibits while scraping others. The finalized exhibits, more than 50 in all, have now been handed off to fabricators for construction and installation. Plants that have been nurtured in the greenhouses and nursery will soon take up residence in their new home in the Conservatory.

Several dozen youngsters will be watching with proprietary interest as the doors are thrown open to the public for the first time in October. They have a personal stake in the new endeavor.

“I want to go there when it opens,” says Ben Symes, “so I can find out if the exhibits I like are there.”

And that’s only natural. When you’ve helped to plant the seeds, you want to be on hand to see them when they flower.

“We’re using the most charismatic plants we can find.”

– Kitty Connolly, project manager

Lisa Blackburn is the Communications Coordinator at The Huntington.

Above: Reynolds’ illustrations of a carnivorous sundew (Drosera regia) demonstrate how a plant traps an insect on its sticky surface before rolling its leaves around its prey.

Right: Katalina Gamara, 11, looks for victims on a sundew (Drosera capensis). Photo by Don Milici.
A hundred and one years ago, craftsmen at an arts colony in upstate New York assembled a simple, boxy cabinet out of poplar wood. Standing about six feet tall, four feet wide, and slightly less than two feet deep, it remains a handsome piece today, with muted green stain and a carved door panel depicting the large, magnolia-like flowers of the *Liriodendron tulipifera*—also known as the yellow poplar or tulip poplar that grows throughout the eastern United States.
While eye-catching, the panel’s modest surface decoration belies the complex and rich story that can be found beneath the surface. The tulip poplar cabinet—recently acquired by The Huntington—can trace its lineage to the 19th-century British Arts and Crafts movement while simultaneously invoking its authenticity as a fine specimen of early-20th-century American furniture making. The cabinet’s progenitor was British expatriate Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead, whose lofty aspirations to establish an arts colony in the United States culminated in the founding of the Byrdcliffe Arts Colony in Woodstock, N.Y., in 1902. Although he set out to finance the colony by manufacturing and selling furniture, he closed his shop after only two years of operation. Nonetheless, the colony survived in varying forms for many years and still exists today as an artists’ retreat. Its furniture endures as a particularly eloquent testimony to the early intermingling of the British and American art and design reform movements.

The founding of the Byrdcliffe Arts Colony marked the fulfillment of a lifelong dream. Born into a wealthy textile-manufacturing family in 1854 in Yorkshire, England, Whitehead realized early in life that his aspirations were not suited for industry. In 1873 he entered Oxford. Emboldened by his study of the social and artistic philosophies of John Ruskin, he set out to master the principles that underlay the widespread movement to reinvigorate the design and manufacture of goods for everyday use in people’s homes. Ruskin, too, had been born into wealth but devoted energy and money to the Guild of St. George, a utopian community in Sheffield that attempted to combine artistic principles with notions of morality and craftsmanship. He railed against the dehumanizing effects of industrialization, perhaps validating Whitehead’s decision to abandon his family’s business. Ruskin’s influence had also been strong in the career of William Morris, who took Ruskin’s attack on unrestrained laissez-faire economics a step further by espousing revolutionary socialism. Ruskin himself did not adopt strict socialist principles, but he strived to use his wealth to elevate the stature of manual labor. Ruskin’s political views may have been more palatable to Whitehead, who nonetheless regarded himself as equally a disciple of Morris, at least in terms of the design of objects. The exhortations of both Ruskin and Morris to observe nature closely and to use materials honestly thus formed the basis of Whitehead’s approach to art and life.

The Byrdcliffe Arts Colony used watercolors to promote its furniture. Edna Walker’s illustration dates to around 1904, shortly after the completion of the cabinet. The Huntington acquired both items in 2004.
By 1894, Whitehead had settled in Montecito, Calif., with his second wife, Jane Byrd McCall, whom he had married two years earlier. Raised in a distinguished Philadelphia family, McCall spent much of her early life traveling between the United States and Europe. She and Whitehead met in Italy and quickly discovered common interests, both having studied under Ruskin in England. After they married, they continued to travel for a couple of years, eventually deciding to leave Europe for America. Their Montecito home, known as Arcady, became the center of an informal artistic community, attracting local musicians, writers, and painters.

Although an idyllic locale, the Whiteheads’ rustic oasis still fell short of utopia. The couple shared the dream of creating a community of men and women who could create arts and crafts in a healthful, beautiful setting. Whitehead set out to find the ideal location. Accompanied by writer Hervey White and artist Bolton Brown in 1902, he explored sites in Virginia and North Carolina before ending up in Woodstock. Whitehead’s companions were committed exponents of the Arts and Crafts ideology. White had studied at Harvard University with Charles Eliot Norton, a close friend of John Ruskin and the first president of Boston’s Society of Arts and Crafts. Brown had established the department of drawing and painting at Stanford University. Together with Whitehead, White and Brown imagined an Arts and Crafts collective that would take root among the poplars, chestnuts, maples, and oaks near a farming community in the Catskill Mountains.

Whitehead was thrilled with the setting. Writing home, he described the bucolic landscape within five hours of New York City. Indeed, Whitehead knew that a manufacturing operation would need to be in close proximity to its market. He would later use the convenient train service to transport furniture to McCreery’s, a retailer that also sold pieces by Gustav Stickley’s firm United Crafts and by Elbert Hubbard’s Roycrofters. But more important to Whitehead’s grand design, artists would thrive surrounded by nature. He purchased nearly 1,200 acres cobbled together from seven adjacent farms and oversaw the construction of the first five of some 30 buildings that would eventually occupy the principal site at the edge of woods. Faithful to Ruskinian design principles, the rural buildings took shape amid frameworks of exposed oak and chestnut. They included a metalworking shop, a pottery studio, a woodworking shop, a large studio for art classes, a library, a guesthouse called the Villetta Inn, and his own home—White Pines. Whitehead began assembling a team of artists and craftspeople that would make furniture and other crafts for generations to come.

Ralph and Jane named the colony Byrdcliffe, a combination of Jane’s middle name and the second half of Ralph’s middle name. The design of things made at Byrdcliffe also would represent a melding of British and American aesthetic principles. Indeed, the tulip poplar cabinet and other furniture produced at the colony possess a peculiarly “pure,” early Morris-inspired style. They tend to be boxy and rectilinear, with simple lines forming frames for carvings or paintings in the manner that Morris and his cohort promoted for the furnishings of Red House, Morris’ home outside London in the 1850s. Yet at the same time the cabinet doesn’t adhere to the
structural principles of Morris’ “architectural” furniture. For example, the drawer is held together by glue and nails rather than by interlocking elements that could be easily disassembled. Cabinets manufactured by such well-known companies as Craftsman, the Roycrofters, and Rose Valley are all, in this respect, much closer to the classic Arts and Crafts practice. As Byrdcliffe expert Robert Edwards has observed, the working drawings for the furniture came with few instructions—the quality of construction seems to have been, relatively speaking, a matter of indifference.

Whitehead thus differed from his British mentors in a significant way. While other British disciples of Ruskin and Morris sought to place craft and fine art on the same level, thus elevating the importance of the craftsman, Whitehead—like Morris himself—did not actually give credit to the people building the furniture. Authorship went to the artist who designed the carving or painting that adorned the piece. Perhaps as a result, the decoration of Byrdcliffe furniture seems to have been treated with more care than the construction of the forms.

A number of different artists contributed to the ornament of the furniture. Edna Walker was one of the colony’s principal designers. Along with Zulma Steele, another prominent Byrdcliffe artist, she studied under the renowned art teacher Arthur Wesley Dow at the Pratt Institute, a progressive art school in Brooklyn. In keeping with the tenets of Ruskin, Walker made nature studies depicting indigenous flora and plant motifs, such as the tulip poplar, which she adapted as decorations for various forms of Byrdcliffe furniture.

Furniture production was a collaborative process. A floral study would be made into a full-size rendering of the design and transferred onto the wooden panels. The panels were carved, sometimes painted, and the surrounding panels were stained. No other filler, sealer, or finish was typically applied. The wood grain showed through, making it a part of the decorative scheme. Because pieces could be made to order, many are unique. The Huntington’s tulip poplar cabinet is one of only two known examples of the design.

Remarkably, Byrdcliffe’s furniture enterprise folded after two years of production. The furniture was expensive to make and to ship, but that was only one of several factors that contributed to the decision to halt production. Whitehead did not oppose the use of machinery and, in fact, provided equipment for his workshops. However, more industrialized shops at companies such as United Crafts and Roycrofters succeeded in producing uniform products in larger quantities. Other companies had more success

ON DISPLAY IN THE UNITED STATES AND ENGLAND

It is an exciting moment for Byrdcliffe scholarship. An exhibition titled “Byrdcliffe: An American Arts and Crafts Colony” has been organized by Nancy E. Green and curated by Tom Wolf for the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University. It will conclude its tour of five venues at the Winterthur Museum, Garden and Library (June 11 to Sept. 5, 2005). The exhibition is accompanied by a book of the same title, which served as the source of much of the information in this article.

The Huntington’s tulip poplar cabinet has joined a major exhibition examining design reform, “International Arts and Crafts,” organized by Karen Livingston with Linda Parry for the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, where it will be on view through July 10, 2005. That exhibition will conclude at the Fine Art Museums of San Francisco (de Young) from March 18 through June 18, 2006. At the end of that run, the cabinet will return to the Huntington’s collection in the Virginia Steele Scott Gallery of American Art.
with marketing and discovered loyal and wealthy local clientele. The firm of Greene and Greene, founded by brothers Charles and Henry Greene, represented the high end of Arts and Crafts production, offering architecture and interior design for the California homes of wealthy clients. Byrdcliffe furniture was less expensive than that of Greene and Greene, though more costly than average mass-produced wares or items created by more entrepreneurial outfits. As such, it fell into something of a gap in the market.

The enterprise also may have been affected by its deciduous workforce. Every winter, Ralph and Jane packed up and went back to California, while most artists and craftsmen on the property retreated to less rustic environs. Such a seasonal interruption might have its purpose in nature, but it wreaked havoc on a business. The making of furniture at Byrdcliffe ceased in 1905.

In fact, Whitehead had never expressed any great interest in actually selling his furniture. Watercolors—like the one of the tulip poplar cabinet by Walker—were his only promotional tools. They proved much less effective than the commercial catalogs and magazines used, for example, by Stickley. Aside from these drawings, no other advertising for Byrdcliffe furniture is known. The wealthy Whitehead was able to support the community without the added revenue he had hoped the sale of Byrdcliffe furniture would bring.

Examples of furniture created at the Byrdcliffe Arts Colony are quite rare. Only 50 pieces are known to exist. A fortuitous result of Whitehead’s failings as a businessman is the pristine condition of the tulip poplar cabinet. The piece never sold and remained at White Pines until it was inherited in 1983 by the heirs to the estate. The Huntington acquired the cabinet and Walker’s watercolor directly from the family in 2004. Thanks to a long period of benign neglect, the cabinet never fell victim to refinishing. It bears the signs of surface oxidation associated with the natural aging process of furniture.

Ralph Whitehead’s production of furniture was a short-lived experiment. The drawings of the tulip poplar cabinet and all other Byrdcliffe pieces date from 1903 to 1905, but all signed furniture bears the date 1904. Yet the Byrdcliffe Arts Colony continues to exist as a retreat and school for artists, and surviving examples of furniture like the tulip poplar cabinet continue to produce layers of meaning that transcend one moment in time.

Jessica Todd Smith is the Virginia Steele Scott Curator of American Art at The Huntington.
THINGS GET PERSONAL FOR A HUNTINGTON CURATOR WHEN SHE CATALOGS LITERARY MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

It was Lord Kinross who first set Sara S. Hodson, the Huntington’s curator of literary manuscripts, on her path to becoming an authority on privacy issues. Lord Kinross—or Patrick Balfour, 3rd Baron Kinross, as he was officially known—had been a British author and journalist from the 1940s to the 1970s. He wrote widely on history and politics and is perhaps best known for his history of modern Turkey, Atatürk: The Rebirth of a Nation (1964).

Kinross, who died in 1976, had also been a well-connected socialite. He was among the privileged and decadent youth of 1930s British society. The circle included prominent writers and artists of the era, many of whom he met while a student at Oxford University. Throughout his life he corresponded with the photographer Cecil Beaton and the writers Evelyn Waugh, John Betjeman, and Christopher Sykes, among others.
Although The Huntington recognized the overall value of the Kinross archive when it purchased it from a London bookseller in 1980, Hodson particularly coveted the correspondence files as a resource for scholarly research.

As Hodson began cataloging the material, she discovered how much intrigue the files truly held: Kinross had been a confidante to an astonishing number of people who poured their hearts out in personal letters. The wife of a famous Englishman had confided to Kinross that she was pregnant, but not with her husband’s child. Hodson knew that both the husband and wife were still alive and wondered whether they would want this information made public. Also of concern to Hodson were the myriad letters from gay men writing intimately to Kinross about their lives. Many of the subjects might likely still be living, and Hodson did not want to be responsible for disclosing information that could potentially breach their privacy.

“I realized that no archivist could determine whether the private matters in the letters had been confided to Kinross alone or constituted more general knowledge,” says Hodson. “With no family available for consultation, I had to decide whether opening the confessional letters for research would reveal intimate information about people who would have no idea that their private letters had been housed in a research library in California.”

A relatively new curator at the time, Hodson faced a question of ethics that manuscripts curators and archivists have been increasingly confronting in their work with modern literary collections: Should an institution consider the privacy rights of a living person when opening a set of personal papers for research? If so, how should curators and archivists establish restrictions on using the material?

Hodson’s dilemma resulted in part from the increasing tendency of institutions to collect contemporary literary archives, oftentimes by authors still living. The Huntington’s first acquisition from a living writer came in 1987, when it obtained the archive of British author Kingsley Amis (who died in 1995). The Huntington now maintains about a dozen literary archives of living authors who range from the Los Angeles playwright Lucy Wang to British novelist Hilary Mantel (who requested that The Huntington seal her personal diaries during her lifetime).

There are four basic forms of invasion of privacy recognized in law, says Karen Benedict, chair of the Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct of the Society of American Archivists (SAA): Intrusion into an individual’s seclusion or solitude; publicity that places the individual in a false light in the public eye; and appropriation, for another person’s advantage, of the individual’s name or likeness. Public figures or individuals give up their privacy rights when they give or allow information about them to become a matter of public record or to be discussed in a public place.

The courts have held that the right to privacy dies with an individual (the rationale being that the dead can no longer be embarrassed). But what happens to the rights of correspondents and subjects who may show up in the papers of the individual who has died? “The privacy of so-called third parties, people who may be represented in a collection, can be the most worrisome and difficult to deal with, because they had no voice in deciding the fate of the papers,” says Hodson.
of the papers, and because they are unlikely to be consulted about any potential sensitivity in the collection,” says Hodson.

For many years institutions and curators such as Hodson were left to wrestle with their own consciences in deciding whether or not to impose restrictions and seal part of an archive. Most troubling to Hodson was that in the process she has become a noted authority, one of fewer than a dozen within her field across the country. A founding member of the SAA’s Privacy and Confidentiality Roundtable, she speaks and writes regularly on privacy and confidentiality topics, helping other archivists grappling with these issues.

A prevailing reason for the uncertainty among archivists is that the fear of breaching someone’s privacy more often constitutes an ethical concern than a legal one, says Hodson. In fact, rarely is a manuscript repository sued for invasion of privacy or for revealing private information. The more likely party to face suit is a researcher or book publisher. Nonetheless, repositories must still contend with legal ramifications.

Institutions have sought protection in various ways. The Bodleian Library in Oxford had a long-standing policy of sealing all letters by living individuals. The institution came under fire for this policy in 1993 when Eric Jacobs, the authorized biographer of Kingsley Amis, requested copies of some Amis letters housed there. Even after Amis himself requested the copies, the library declined to produce them, citing its firm policy. Ultimately, after much public hoopla, the library produced copies for Amis, who turned them over to his biographer.

“I would be stunned if an American institution sealed all records,” says Hodson. Institutions, after all, don’t want collections that they cannot use. Some libraries even refuse to take collections with any kind of seal, declaring such restricted archives a waste of shelf space.

“When curators and archivists establish restrictions on the use of personal papers, they need to remember that the fundamental purpose for the keeping of archives and manuscripts is to promote their use,” says Karen Benedict of the SAA. This obligation must be balanced with the “privacy rights of both the donors and the individuals or groups who are the subject of the material, especially those who had no voice in the creation, use, or disposition of the material.” She adds that decisions about restrictions on use should be made at the time the institution acquires the collection as an essential part of a written agreement.

The Huntington does accept archives that come with restrictions in place, understanding that most restrictions eventually expire. And Hodson and her colleagues, who generally use their own discretion in privacy matters, tend to ask donors to identify sensitive material. This position has the advantage of drawing on the donor’s intimate knowledge of the people, situations, and issues represented in the archive. Families will often want longer restrictions than curators do, says Hodson, perhaps motivated by a desire to safeguard reputations. The process is then one of negotiation in which donor and curator agree on the duration of a

The right to privacy dies with an individual.
restriction based on how long the subjects are likely to live.

Indeed, the process often involves compromise. For example, in 1999 The Huntington acquired the papers of the author Christopher Isherwood from Don Bachardy, Isherwood’s life partner. Isherwood is best known for The Berlin Stories, about his life in Berlin in the 1930s (later adapted into the musical Cabaret). The collection includes Isherwood’s diaries for most of his adult life, some of which have been published volume by volume in expurgated form since 1996 by HarperCollins. Editor Katherine Bucknell, in consultation with Bachardy, had omitted passages that could be embarrassing to living people named in the diaries. HarperCollins’ attorneys further examined the manuscript for sensitive material. However, a surviving family member threatened legal action after the book was published, claiming it revealed certain inappropriate information. Despite his strong belief in free and open access, Bachardy reluctantly imposed a 30-year restriction on the original diaries in The Huntington’s Isherwood archive (again, based on the ages of the diaries’ subjects). The Isherwood papers otherwise are available for scholarly research and are among the most heavily used collections in the Library.

And what of the Kinross papers? As it turned out, the matter resolved itself with the passage of time and the intrusion of Hodson’s heavy workload. Huntington staff members are just finishing cataloging the collection, which will finally become available to researchers later this year.

Hodson says that since her initial experience delving into privacy issues, her views on the subject have changed somewhat; she is less willing than ever to impose restrictions and more concerned with the possibility of censorship. Still, she concedes, there are few easy answers in the delicate act of balancing the public’s right to know with an individual’s right to privacy. Meanwhile, the SAA revised and updated its code of ethics in February 2005. In the end, though, archivists must simply remember Hodson’s dictum: “It is in our hands to safeguard the privacy of those who cannot do so themselves.”

Traude Gomez-Rhine is a staff writer at The Huntington. For further reading, see Sara S. Hodson’s article in The American Archivist (vol. 67, fall/winter 2004), the semianual journal of the Society of American Archivists.
Captive Minds

WHAT CAN HISTORIANS LEARN FROM FALSE CONFESSIONS?

by Michael P. Johnson

When Jesse and Stephen Boorn were arrested for murdering their brother-in-law, Russell Colvin, they insisted they did not do it. But circumstantial evidence—charred bones, an old hat, a knife, and a button—implicated the two brothers from Manchester, Vt., especially since everybody in town knew that they had wrangled with Colvin for a long time. The year was 1819, and Colvin hadn’t been seen or heard from since 1812. Putting the pieces together, the villagers implored the brothers to face facts and confess to the murder.

With pressure bearing down on him, Jesse caved in, pinning the murder on his brother. He supported his claims with vivid testimony about the crime. Stephen then confessed, describing in great detail how he had clubbed the man to death and then buried him. His ensuing tale about covering his tracks corroborated the circumstantial evidence: he had dug up Colvin’s remains, reburied them under a stable that later burned, and then tossed some of the charred bones in a river. He stashed the rest of the bones along with other objects in a hole under a stump. The jury quickly convicted both brothers and sentenced them to hang.

In a lucky twist of fate, the brothers’ lawyer managed to locate Russell Colvin, who was alive and well on a farm in New Jersey. The brothers’ lives were spared.

Why had the Boorns confessed to a crime they didn’t commit? Their confessions, it appears, had been cobbled together by their accusers—their neighbors. During the seven years since Colvin disappeared, Manchester villagers must have pieced together a murder story from remnants of bone and clothing and suspicious behavior by the Boorns. Collectively scripting the murder—ghostwriting it, in a sense—the villagers then pressured the Boorns to claim that the tale was theirs, confessing to a murder that never happened.

Scholars investigating historical records from other legal cases have much to learn from more recent events. Today, DNA evidence can exonerate suspects who make false confessions. Moreover, strict guidelines have been developed to regulate interrogations, in an earnest attempt to keep the justice system from running amok, as it did so miserably in the Boorns’ case. Even so, while guidelines do not permit physical torture of suspected criminals, they do allow psychological pressure. It is permissible, for instance, for interrogators to lie to suspects to pressure them to confess. Interrogation methods are designed to make suspects feel cornered, to feel that they have no alternative but to spill their story. Confessions, interrogation experts say, come from “cornered minds.” But how, you might ask, do suspects with Interrogators’ questions compose a script the cornered suspect echoes, piece by piece, until a coherent story emerges.

Illustration adapted from S.R. Wells’ New Descriptive Chart, ca. 1869, Huntington Library.
cornered minds invent false confessions that are persuasive? How do they know what to say?

They listen to their interrogators, much as the Boorns listened to their neighbors. The interrogators know the general details of the crime and can imagine how the suspect did the deed. Their questions compose a script the cornered suspect echoes, piece by piece, until a coherent story emerges.

Consider a tape-recorded interrogation of a murder suspect in Florida in 1992. After insisting to seven interrogators for nine hours that he was innocent, the suspect gave two contradictory confessions. He pieced together his story from exchanges such as the following:

**INTERROGATOR:** “O.K., think of [the victim] laying there on the floor. What—what is underneath him? Is there tile, carpet, or something else? Think about it. Close your eyes. I’ve got mine closed. There was something under him. I remember it.”

**SUSPECT:** “[I] wasn’t paying attention. I was scared.”

**INTERROGATOR:** “Was it a blanket underneath that you remember or a…tarpaulin or something like that?”

Can you guess the right answer? The suspect’s cornered mind could, and he spent more than four years in jail awaiting trial on murder charges until his contradictory confessions—scripted by interrogators—were ruled inadmissible by an appellate court.

If interrogation in post-Miranda police stations produces cornered minds, imagine how torture raises the stakes for the accused to say what interrogators want to hear. A Human Rights Watch official recently commented, “Law enforcement professionals in this country understand that torture is a wonderful technique for getting confessions from innocent people and a lousy technique for getting the truth out of guilty people.”

Torture was such a normal feature of slavery that it is seldom explicitly mentioned in the surviving documents of slave conspiracies. During slavery’s 250-year history in the United States, hundreds of slaves were executed for conspiring to rise up against their owners. Typically, the evidence against them came from confessions by one or more slave suspects who had been beaten until they decided to tell their interrogators what they wanted to hear. Such confessions were crucial in the prosecution of the largest and most ambitious slave conspiracy in American history, the Denmark Vesey plot in Charleston, S.C., in the summer of 1822. Confessions by a handful of cooperative slave witnesses—all of them cornered by the court’s threat of execution—sent 35 black men to the gallows, the deadliest civilian judicial proceeding in American history. One witness, a slave by the name of Monday Gell, spent 16 days in jail before admitting his role and identifying dozens of fellow conspirators. The court commuted his death sentence, imposing exile in exchange for his testimony.

Instead of taking those confessions at face value, a skeptical investigator today must assess how the interrogators might have scripted a story like the one told by the Boorn brothers—persuasive, but not true. In the case of
Denmark Vesey and his so-called coconspirators, the courts literally left a paper trail of their script. Shortly after the completion of more than 40 trials in June and July of 1822, the Charleston Court of Magistrates compiled all the testimonies into one record: *An Official Report of the Trials of Sundry Negroes*. In it the court summarized the case against Vesey and his cohorts. The problem, though, is that the so-called *Official Report* contains thousands of contradictions with the actual court transcript. While the report describes Vesey cross-examining the witnesses in his own trial, the court transcript indicates that the witnesses’ testimony took place before Vesey was in custody! The report is a fabrication that simply advocates the position of the prosecution. Historians have tended to use the *Official Report* rather than the actual court transcripts, unintentionally colluding with the entrapment of alleged slave insurrectionists. Thus in the miscarriage of justice, a historical script not only supported the execution of 35 defendants but also held historians captive for more than 170 years.

New conclusions about a cold case such as the Vesey plot have implications beyond guilt or innocence. Certainly this is not to say that confessions by alleged criminals are never accurate. And vindication of Vesey and 34 other defendants does not lead to the conclusion that slaves never resisted their oppressors. Finally, is Vesey no less of a hero? He might not have led an insurrection against slave masters, but he did insist on his innocence until the very end, despite the incriminating “evidence” of confessions from supposed conspirators.

Coerced confessions must be recognized for what they are: the creations of those seeking them. Cornered minds become scripted minds. One shudders to think of the masses of innocent people who have succumbed to such a fate—and the degree to which such horror stories persist to this day. From a human rights perspective, for those long gone, there is little that can be done. But perhaps a more skeptical reading of historical confessions can at least offer a small measure of justice for those who were compelled to say what their executioners wanted to hear.

Michael P. Johnson is professor of history at Johns Hopkins University. He is the Los Angeles Times Distinguished Fellow at The Huntington for the academic year 2004–5 and is conducting research for a book with the working title *Conjuring Insurrection*.

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**Books in Print**

Every year, more than a thousand scholars use the Huntington’s collections in their research. Here is a sampling of recently published books based on research in the collections.

**WHITEWASHED ADOBE: THE RISE OF LOS ANGELES AND THE REMAKING OF ITS MEXICAN PAST** | William Deverell
*University of California Press, 2004*

Deverell shows how a city that was once part of Mexico came of age through appropriating—and even obliterating—the region’s connections to Mexican places and people. *Whitewashed Adobe* uncovers an urban identity—and the power structure that fostered it—with far-reaching implications for contemporary Los Angeles.

**JACKSONIAN ANTISLAVERY AND THE POLITICS OF FREE SOIL, 1824-1854** | Jonathan H. Earle
*University of North Carolina Press, 2004*

Linking their antislavery stance to a land-reform agenda that pressed for free land for poor settlers in addition to land free of slavery, Free Soil Democrats forced major political realignments in New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Ohio. As Earle shows, these political changes at the local, state, and national levels greatly intensified the sectional crisis and brought the nation closer to Civil War.

**BOUND FOR FREEDOM: BLACK LOS ANGELES IN JIM CROW AMERICA** | Douglas Flamming
*University of California Press, 2005*

Flamming takes his readers from Reconstruction to the Jim Crow era, through the Great Migration, the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, and the build-up to World War II. This history evokes community life and political activism during the city’s transformation from small town to sprawling metropolis. Flamming shows that the history of race in Los Angeles is crucial to the understanding of race in America.
Lystra supplements Twain’s own autobiographical writings with the diaries and letters of his daughters. She also draws upon the diary of Twain’s secretary, Isabel Lyon, who failed in her calculated attempt to become the second wife of the widowed author but succeeded in exiling Twain’s youngest daughter, Jean.

Parker has written the definitive biography of Christopher Isherwood, whose novels and short stories (including those that inspired the musical Cabaret) have always been assumed to be largely autobiographical. Parker presents the story of a life that evolved from a conventional English boyhood to that of one of the most acclaimed writers in America.

Between 1640 and 1660, England, Scotland, and Ireland faced civil war, invasion, religious radicalism, parliamentary rule, and the restoration of the monarchy. Pestana connects these cataclysmic events and the development of plantations from Newfoundland to Surinam. She presents a compelling case for rethinking assumptions about empire and colonialism and offers an invaluable look at the creation of the English Atlantic world.

Piker uses the history of Okfuskee, an 18th-century Creek town in Alabama, to reframe standard narratives of both Native and American experiences. By comparing the Okfuskees’ experiences to those of their contemporaries in colonial British America, the book provides a nuanced discussion of the ways in which Native and Euro-American histories intersected with, and diverged from, each other.
On the Cover

HOW SWEET IT IS!

Katalina Gamarra, 11, and Amanda Sandoval, 15, are among the many students who have helped test exhibits for the new Rose Hills Foundation Conservatory for Botanical Science, which is set to open this coming fall (page 8).

The two girls are using a refractometer to measure the amount of sugar in nectar. After dropping a sample onto the window of the instrument, they look through the eyepiece. Light bends into different angles when passing through different sugar solutions. A small scale charts the percentage of sugar in each sample.

Peeking in on the action is an Eucrosia bicolor, a relative of the daffodil from Ecuador.

*Photo by Don Milici*