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Adventures in Librarianship-The Wilberforce Diaries

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17 January 1891: This accruied explosion of information! Last year we purchased fifteen new texts—this year, almost twice that! Where will it end?

2 March: MD cannot be turned from his obsession with subject parsing. I expect he will pare me before a fortnight. Will explore the possibility of hiring hooligans to scatter his notes.

4 March: Purchased two copies of T. Dreiser's Sister Carrie to replace the two stolen last week. A sure sign that "fiction" is fast becoming the lair of layabouts, drunks, and dope feends [sp]. Will we ever return to our ancient and rooted morals?

25 April: I believe it was I who said it best when I said: "If libraries were meant to serve the unwashed, the creator would certainly have given librarians infinite patience. He did not need, therefore, none at all."

5 November: Dreamt last night of MD addressing a mighty crowd, saying that libraries of the world were poised to join hands in a lattice of shared effort, shared texts, and great political clout. Statesmen, he said, would hear our cries and bow to our wms [sp] and no publisher would dare print a word without our imprimatur. The crowd roared for empire and simplified spelling. I woke in a sweat [sp].

17 January 1892: For a week now the ice has kept all patrons from our premises. Though indoors it is nearly too cold to dip ink, the quiet is ethereal. Hammerstein has sent word that a package from Philadelphia will have to wait in Schenectady until the roads thaw. His team cannot pass. Just as well. Blessed peace.

16 February: Publishers of The Herald, The Evening Star, and The Post Gazette claim that thought their dailies have risen to eight cents per issue with delivery, this is a temporary measure. The price, they say, will recede to five cents once the current pulp-paper crisis has passed and will likely stay there for the foreseeable future. Librarians must surely hope so. Sustained at the current level, those prices will cripple the nation's libraries.

25 March: MD is on leave to address a conference in Baltimore. Concerning the "metric system," another of his peevish obsessions. Perhaps the denizens of that corrupt pace will appreciate his tyranny [sp] as much as we do not. Such thoughts are uncharitable, I know, and would mark me as jealous of his fame. But I cannot moderate my disdain for that gaseous bullfrog.

[Albany police records show that on March 31st, shortly after continued on page 61]

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Bits and Bytes
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In a number of outside image sources. However, keep in mind that the clarity of these images is still not as sharp as those available in print. Admittedly, the online images are improving, and are mostly in color while the majority of images in the print version are in black and white. As stated above, deeper concern is the possible confusion caused by references in the text to images that are not available online. Another consideration is the need for user instruction. No matter how good the help, a database this complex is a challenge to the user. There is no satisfactory "easy search" and for full mastery the learning curve is steep, requiring more time and effort than the average patron may want to invest. Obviously, the print Dictionary is a lot easier to figure out.

Of course, the ideal solution is to have both the print and online version, provided the price is right. And if what I hear from Grove is true, it just might be. The combined price for the 34-volume print set, along with a one-year subscription to the online database is $5,000. This is a great deal for those libraries that could not afford, or were unwilling to meet the original $8,800 price tag. If you consider the online subscription being worth at least $1,000 by itself, that means these libraries are paying $4,000 for the print set, a savings of $4,800. That is remarkable. But what about those libraries that took the chance, made the commitment, and dug deep to find the initial asking price? They are getting a break on the price of the annual online subscription of $500, but so are those who opt for the combination print-online deal. Many of those libraries may feel like they have been sucker-punched. Grove may owe them an explanation (or in the words of one collection development librarian, a refund).

In any case, most librarians with any interest in the arts will want to take a closer look. You can sign up for a 24-hour individual free trial or a 30-day institutional trial at: http://www.groveresidence.com/tda/online/Freecial.htm. This page also links to information about the license agreement, how to order, and key features and specifications. It's worth a visit.

NB: For a another review of the Grove Dictionary of Art, with ratings, visit www.charlestonso.com, The Charleston Advisor, for October, 1999.—KS

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Footnotes
1 According to the horizontal merger guidelines (http://www.usdoj.gov/atr/public/guidelines/horiz_book/hmg.html), antitrust authorities "will delineate the product market to be a product or group of products such that a hypothetical profit-maximizing firm that was the only present and future seller of those products ('monopolist') likely would impose at least a "small but significant" increase in price."

2 For example, suppose two publishers of economics titles were merging. If one owned a series of labor economics journals and the second firm specialized in industrial organization, it is not likely that antitrust concerns would be raised.

3 For a more extensive discussion of this model, its predictions, etc., see my working paper entitled, "Academic Journal Pricing and Market Power: A Portfolio Approach," (July, 1999). This paper can be obtained in pdf format at http://www.econ.gatech.edu/~mmccabe/journalWEA.pdf

4 Note that these inflationary trends are not restricted to commercial publishers; in the case of biomedical journals, non-profits and university presses have raised prices nearly as fast.

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from page 52

Dewey's return from Baltimore, Wilberforce and Dewey were detained for "public altercation," "infringing the records" — ed]

13 April: The Macmillans will soon issue Tennyson's new play, "The Forster Robin Hood and Maid Marian," and Mr. Knox's "History of Banking in the United States" will be pressed soon as well. Must decide. Cannot afford both. In this profession, some choices are heavy. The Tennyson would please my colleagues and my self; a bit of beauty for easy夏日. But the gentry will call for Knox. We know, of course, who butters the bread [sp]. Knox it will be.

[Further excerpts may follow as allowed by the publisher]

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