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# Homespun Cultural Artifacts: Collecting Quilts for Fun and Babies

Kirstin Steele  
kirstin.steele@gmail.com

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## A Liesure Cinema Collection from page 40

to use them for their classes or to check out for their own entertainment. The collection development librarian decided that if instructors wanted a title to support their classes the library then would purchase a new copy for the regular academic collection. Other policies set by the collection development librarian included a one week loan period, no fines if overdue, and a nominal fee of \$10 for lost videos.

### Marketing the Collection

The marketing of any library service can greatly aid in its success. This held true for our leisure video collection, and we took several efforts to inform our campus community. We advertised the video collection on the news section of our library's Website, and we also created an information Web page. Our library director marketed the new collection by sending an email to all students. In addition to these efforts, signage proved to be a simple, effective marketing tool.<sup>5</sup> Our library purchased a large sign that read "Popular Video Collection for MSJ Students," and we placed this in a prominent place with the collections. We also initially housed the video rack near the circulation desk so students would easily see the collection when entering or leaving the library.

### Student Reaction

Our modest original VHS collection of 67 titles implemented in August of 2002 was an immediate success. Between August and December of 2002, the videos circulated 660 times. Although we did not formally survey students for feedback, numerous students verbalized to library faculty and staff satisfaction with the collection and asked for more titles. Over the next year, 2003, 30 additional popular titles were added, and circulation counts increased. The videos circulated 694 times in the 2003 calendar year. Informal student feedback remained positive, and in fact, students began requesting titles on DVD video-disc rather than VHS cassettes.

### Format Considerations

We implemented our leisure cinema collection in 2002, which is around the time that the DVD format began to dominate the industry. By 2004 we encouraged the collection development librarian to consider collecting in DVD format, and he concurred. The library continued to accept VHS tapes if donated, but acquisitions for the leisure cinema collection would be strictly DVD format. The DVD portion of the popular video collection began at a modest 26 titles. Circulation for both VHS and DVD formats increased dramatically with 906 checkouts in 2004. In early 2005 the library added 25 more DVD titles, and circulation remains steady at this time.

Since adding the DVDs, the circulation of the VHS titles has substantially decreased. For now, the library is keeping the videocassettes within the popular collec-

tion — as they are in their own display case — but our collection development librarian might consider developing a retention policy for these VHS cassettes in the future.


### Summary & Conclusion

By all accounts, our leisure movie collection has been a resounding success. Through it we have generated good will among our students, and we have been able to use the collection to aid in our marketing efforts of the library and its other services. The library staff recently re-organized the student lounge/group study area. This allowed us to group the movie collection with our existing paperback exchange collection of popular fiction. Due to the success of our video collection, we have considered adding popular music CDs, therefore providing a complete "recreation collection" for our students, but this has not gone beyond the planning stages. For now we will be continuing to add DVDs to the collection provided that funds remain available.

We would recommend a popular video collection to academic libraries interested in a marketing opportunity or as a chance to generate goodwill between the student population and the library. Our collection has helped our library to be seen as a student-friendly environment, as it has generated positive publicity for the library on our campus. The only suggestions we have would be to specify strict collection and discard policies from the start, as we are now faced with the decision on what to do with videocassettes, which are becoming an outdated format. Also, other collection development issues surrounding format includes how long to keep "older" titles (five-years-old or older) once they have decreased in popularity. This is an ongoing issue for any library with a video collection, as interest in even the most popular titles will inevitably decrease with time.<sup>6</sup> We have been able to transfer some titles to our

regular film collection as appropriate, but decisions will need to be made on titles that are clearly only appropriate for a leisure collection. Despite these issues, our leisure video collection has been an unqualified success and we would not hesitate to recommend a similar collection for any academic library.

### Suggestions for a Successful Leisure Cinema Collection

- Establish concrete collection and discard policies
- Establish reasonable circulation policies
- Know your patrons — keep their interests and diversity in mind
- Collect for the patrons, not yourself
- Balance the collection so a range of genres is represented 

### Endnotes

1. **James C. Scholtz**, "Developing Video Collection Development Policies to Accommodate Existing and New Technologies," in *Video Collection Development in Multi-type Libraries* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), p 248.
2. *ibid.*, and **Lois K. Merry**, "The Devil in the Details: An Academic Library Acquires a Video Collection," *Library Collections, Acquisitions, & Technical Services* 28 (2004): 298-311.
3. **James C. Scholtz**, "Developing Video Collection Development Policies to Accommodate Existing and New Technologies," in *Video Collection Development in Multi-type Libraries* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), p 252.
4. **Sally Mason-Robinson**, *Developing and Managing Video Collections* (New York: Neal Schuman Publishers, Inc., 1996), p 47.
5. *ibid.*, p 85.
6. *ibid.*, p 55.

## Homespun Cultural Artifacts: Collecting Quilts for Fun and Babies

by **Kirstin Steele** (Collection Management Librarian, 171 Moultrie Street, Charleston, SC 29409; Phone: 843-953-5837; Fax: 843-953-5190) <kirstin.steele@gmail.com>



Since I've begun assembling stories about people's collections, I've noticed other people have been too. What's the word for that? Coincidence, serendipity? Déjà vu? Anyway, NPR's *To the Best of Our Knowledge* did a show on "Collecting" during February, and the Charleston *Post & Courier* recently put out a call for cookbook collectors. Point being, apparently it's a topic of at least some interest.

**Peg Bradshaw** <pbradsha@wrl.org>, Circulation Services Director at the **Williamsburg (Va.) Regional Library**, has collected quilts for over 30 years. She began when her first son, **Matt**, was born, and has continued to collect through three more children and two grandchildren.

"My collection is mostly of baby quilts and I prefer the traditional patterns. I also love the Amish quilt patterns and colors. I have made several trips to different Amish areas in Pennsylvania for purchases. I also make it a point to visit any antique stores where I vacation or visit. I try to treat myself to a quilt purchase every year... it usually

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takes me a whole year of looking before I will make the purchase but it is worth the effort and is always a great present to myself.

"I don't think of my collection as a significant cultural record, but it is certainly a record of the births and other events that mean a great deal to me and my family. With the births of grandchildren I still purchase special quilts for those overnight sleepovers. There is nothing more soothing than to see a little one all snuggled up in a quilt that was made with so much handwork, time, and love. I loved to watch my kids while they slept under the quilts; they always seemed so peaceful and I still see the same with **T** and **Colby**.

"In 100 years, I hope the quilts will be passed down to my children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and on and on. Till the threads are bare and there are just scraps left."

There are scholars, of course, who think quilts are very significant cultural, albeit personal, records, along with tapestries, cross-stitch, and embroidery. As **Peg** intimates, a quilt can evoke a different era or even a different person; you can almost feel another set of hands tucking the child in and keeping him safe and warm.

I collected a quilt from my neighbor's trash pile this morning. 

## against the grain people profile

Circulation Services Director, Williamsburg Regional Library  
Phone: (757) 259-4063 Fax: (757) 259-4079  
<pbradsha@wrl.org>

### Peg Bradshaw

**BORN & LIVED:** Binghamton, New York, Lived in Chautauqua, New York, Anaheim Hills, California, Walnut Hills, California, Salinas, California ...settled in Williamsburg, VA.

**EARLY LIFE:** Attended Catholic schools my whole school life. Member of **Girl Scouts, CYO, Young Womens Catholic Association.**

**FAMILY:** Married and Divorced. Four Children: **Matthew** (married to **Amanda Elizabeth** (married to **Jason** with two sons **Tristan** and **Colby**), **Nolan** (Senior at **Virginia Commonwealth University**) and **Lauren** (Sophomore at **VCU**).

**EDUCATION:** Graduated from **Catholic Central High School**, Binghamton, NY.

**FIRST JOB:** Long distance operator for **Bell Telephone**, Binghamton, NY... before the automated system, used the old cord boards.

**PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES:** I was liaison for the renovation and building project of the Williamsburg library which opened doors for me to pursue other projects and other committees through **ALA** in the **LAMA** division.

**IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO:** Spend time with my kids and especially with my grandsons. Travel. Veg on the beach.

**FAVORITE BOOKS:** *A Gift from the Sea, Charlotte's Web, A Light in the Attic, The McDuff Stories, Max and Ruby* ... anything by **Rosemary Wells**.

**PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD:** People with no common sense, no sense of humor and being unwilling to laugh at themselves.

**PHILOSOPHY:** One day at a time and laugh everyday.

**MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT:** The completion of the renovation project and coming in under budget.

**GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW:** To maintain my sense of humor and be able to keep up with my grandsons the way I do now.

## From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, Addlestone Library, College of Charleston, 66 George Street, Charleston, SC 29401; Phone: 843-953-8014; Fax: 843-953-8019) <gilson@cofc.edu>

It has taken over 30 years but the classic source *Historical Statistics of the United States* has been fully updated and expanded. Originally published by the **US Bureau of the Census**, the new *Historical Statistics of the United States: Millennial Edition* (2006, 0521817919, \$825) has just been released by **Cambridge University Press**. Available in print (and soon to be online), it is a stunning achievement providing a multifaceted statistical profile of American history that will be valued by students, scholars, and researchers of all types.

Each of the five volumes in the set deals with a broad, but distinct category. Volume one treats population with chapters on characteristics, vital statistics, internal and international migration, families and households, and cohort groups (those born at about the same time). There is an individual chapter on American Indians rounding out the volume. The second volume

concentrates on work and welfare and lists statistics covering labor, education, health, economic inequality and poverty, social insurance and public assistance and nonprofit, voluntary and religious entities. The third volume treats various aspects of economic structure and performance ranging from business cycles, savings, capital, and wealth to science, technology, and productivity. Volume four deals with individual economic sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, and communication, while the final volume covers topics related to governance (elections, etc.) and international relations. This last volume also contains chapters on Colonial Statistics and the Confederate States of America.

Each of the individual topic chapters contains an introductory essay that provide context. Along with the narrative there are useful timelines and graphs. Table arrangement is logi-

cal and understandable but in order to get their full import, readers should refer to the accompanying notes and list of sources whenever they are provided. And because of the multitude of sources and types of statistics employed, the appendices for each chapter are invaluable in explaining and defining specifics. Each chapter also has a worthwhile list of references. This set has a great deal to offer but to get the full benefit requires the time and patience to read the supporting materials. Librarians will do well to point this out to users, especially students less familiar with the demands of statistical research.

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