

HARVARD UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

letters

SPRING/SUMMER 2007



On the Cover:

John James Audubon (1785–1851)

“Black Capt Nut hatch A. Willson.
Sitta Carolinensis.”

Pastel, graphite, watercolor,
and ink on paper; 1813

MS Am 21 (28), Houghton Library

This pair of black-capped nuthatches (now called white-breasted nuthatches) hungrily eyeing a tasty morsel, was drawn by Audubon near his home in Henderson, Kentucky. Often called the “upside-down bird” because of its unusual habit of moving down the tree head first searching for its usual food of insects and larvae, nuts and seeds, it is a familiar sight in woodlands, and at birdfeeders, throughout the US. Audubon redrew the white-breasted nuthatch nine years later for inclusion in his landmark *Birds of America*.

This life-size study is one of a group of 109 drawings now in the Houghton Library of the Harvard College Library, by far the most extensive collection of early drawings by the noted naturalist. The collection includes what is believed to be the earliest surviving Audubon drawing, of the long-tailed mountain tit-mouse (drawn January 2, 1805), which is also the only surviving drawing from Audubon’s first trip to America. The Audubon collection also includes a large number of letters from Audubon and members of his family to friends and fellow naturalists.

In 1824, in search of a publisher for *Birds of America* and in need of money, Audubon sold many of these drawings to Edward Harris, a gentleman farmer and amateur ornithologist who helped to finance *Birds of America*. Audubon gave others to Harris later, in gratitude for his continued support and friendship. The Harris collection remained intact until 1892, when a large part was purchased from the estate of Edward Harris II by Joseph Y. Jeanes of Philadelphia.

The drawings and letters arrived at Harvard in 1930, the bequest of Jeanes, whose son Joseph was a Harvard graduate (AB 1924, MBA 1929). The drawings, photographed with funds from the Class of 1952 Manuscript Department Fund of Houghton Library, are now browsable in Harvard’s finding-aids catalog, OASIS, at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:Hough:h00007>.

- 3 A Letter from Sidney Verba
- 5 Visiting Committee Announces \$2.5 Million Endowment to Honor Sidney Verba
- 6 Photos from March 29: Honoring Sidney Verba
- 8 Littauer Foundation’s \$1 Million Grant to HCL’s Judaica Division
- 9 The Paul M. and Harriet L. Weissman Senior Photograph Conservator in the Harvard University Library
- 10 Giving to Harvard Libraries
- 11 After Word

A Letter from Sidney Verba



Brian Smith/Harvard University Library

Dear Friends,

In one of the first annual reports that I wrote as director of the University Library, I searched for a profound philosophical note to describe the depth of the Library’s problems. I wrote that the problem of maintaining a great library—and a great library collection—reflects nothing less than the tragedy of the human condition as it is described in the various disciplines whose books we collect.

From theology, we know that human tragedy derives from original sin, which is the pride of seeking more knowledge than we ought to have. From economics, we know that our tragic condition derives from the juxtaposition of infinite wants and limited resources. And from my own field of political science, we know that our tragic condition derives from the difficulty of arriving at a rational and just social order in a world of divergent and passionately held preferences and values. And since we’re at the same time trying to move some of our books from our filled libraries on campus to a new depository, I could have added that it also derives from one of the major principles of physics, that no two objects can fill the same space at the same time.

If you think about what’s gone on in the last two decades, those problems are exactly what we’ve had. The scope of knowledge that we want and desire has

increased tremendously. Disciplines have lost their boundaries; barriers have been broken so that people in different disciplines want much more. Much more is being written on all subjects, and we have to collect it, because that is our job. Material comes in new media, from new areas of the world, and it is the responsibility of the Harvard Libraries to collect it.

Today, information knows no geographic or cultural boundaries to what we have to know. Political scientists used to study the forms of government, what kind of parliament they have, how they ran elections, and so forth. This is still important. But we now know that understanding a society involves the work of many disciplines: political science, economics, anthropology, health science, religion, and many, many other fields. One needs to understand all sorts of things in all disciplines to understand the world.

But we have two problems. One is that we have too little information, and the other is that we have too much information. Much of the most relevant information we have comes in electronic form, which is transitory and hard to capture.

continued on next page

And if we capture it, it becomes very, very difficult to preserve. Libraries have moved from buying—owning materials outright—to creating comprehensive access over time to information in all its forms.

In my 23 years as director of the University Library, we have renovated our libraries on a massive scale. We have continued to increase the quantity and global reach of our print materials. We have created one of the best library preservation programs in the country, and we have worked individually and collaboratively to open our holdings to an increasingly large percentage of the world's population. And we have entered wholeheartedly into the new, complex, and extremely costly world of electronic resources.

Harvard has the great library that it does because of the sustained support, generosity, and very real engagement of its alumni/ae and friends. That's a very simple, very true statement. But it does not do justice to the generosity shown so often to our libraries by so many of you. We couldn't have accomplished much of it without you, the readers of this publication, and your counterparts in generations past, and we can only continue to accomplish it if the tradition of support is passed on to future generations.

It has been my privilege to serve this University, to head its library system, and to know so many of you. You have my enduring thanks and my best wishes for the future.

Cordially,



Visiting Committee Announces \$2.5 Million Endowment to Honor Sidney Verba

Friends and colleagues of Sidney Verba, Harvard's Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor and Director of the University Library, have established a \$2.5 million endowment fund in his honor. Frances D. Fergusson AM '66, PhD '73, president elect of Harvard's Board of Overseers and chair of the Overseers' Committee to Visit the University Library, announced the creation of the fund in Cambridge during a March 29 tribute dinner for Verba attended by current and past members of the Visiting Committee, alumni/ae, and many friends of the Harvard Libraries. Verba, who will retire on June 30, is the longest serving director of the University Library in Harvard history.

According to Fergusson, "Both the duration and the significance of Sidney Verba's tenure are without precedent. His legacy to the Harvard Libraries can be characterized by a sustained and expanded tradition of great collection-building, an unwavering concern for the needs of users, and a commitment to opening Harvard's collections to the world. The new fund honors Sid by ensuring that the Harvard libraries can build on his legacy."

The new Sidney Verba Library Fund will benefit the Harvard University Library, which provides University-wide services, including digital acquisitions and collections, information technology, high-density storage, and preservation. Under the terms creating the fund, Verba will designate the purpose of the new endowment before he retires.

Verba described himself as both "overwhelmed" and "exhilarated" at the March 29 announcement. "Harvard has truly great libraries and superb librarians because of the sustained support and commitment of the University's alumni/ae and its many friends. In my years as library director, I have witnessed many acts of extraordinary generosity, of which this is the capstone. I can only begin to thank you for honoring me by providing flexible, discretionary support for the libraries."

The Sidney Verba Library Fund continues to grow, and additional contributions are welcome. For information on participating in the Fund, contact Peggy Davis Molander, director of development, at 5-8062 or molander@fas.harvard.edu.

Sidney Verba was appointed to the Harvard University Library directorship by President Derek C. Bok in 1984. In the intervening years, Verba has led the Harvard library system—the oldest library in America and the largest academic library in the world—through more than two decades of unprecedented change.

According to Bok, "When I appointed him more than 20 years ago, we were only beginning to realize what the revolution in information technology would mean. Sid's foresight has helped to preserve our valuable collections and opened Harvard's vast resources to scholars, researchers, and students throughout the world. I believe that generations of students will benefit from the doors that Sid has opened."



Brian Smith/Harvard University Library

More than 100 alumni/ae, friends, current and former members of the Library Visiting Committee, and University colleagues, past and present, gathered in Loeb House to honor Sidney Verba on March 29.

March 29: Honoring Sidney Verba

Alumni/ae, friends, current and former members of the Library Visiting Committee, and University colleagues, past and present, gathered in Loeb House to honor Sidney Verba on March 29. After serving as director of the University Library for 23 years, Verba will retire on June 30, 2007.

Visiting Committee Chair Frances D. Fergusson AM '66, PhD '73, greeted the assembled guests, noting that "Tonight we're here to honor a remarkable presence among us, one of those rare Harvard figures for whom acclaim is universal."

While offering a formal introduction of Verba, President Emeritus Neil L. Rudenstine noted, "Sid has been adventurous whenever it could

make a difference. And he has always been willing to leap—riskily—in order to encourage collaboration and broaden access to our collections."

Interim FAS Dean Jeremy R. Knowles proposed a toast: "Our great Shakespearean colleague George Lyman Kittredge is said once to have paused in the Yard, pointed to Widener, and said, 'Every other building here could burn to the ground, but if that library continued to stand, we should still have a university.' Ladies and gentlemen, please raise your glasses to the man who has ensured, more than almost anyone I know, that we still have a great university."



Cynthia and Sidney Verba



Sidney Verba, Scott Nathan '89, JD '95, MBA '95, and Laura De Bonis '91, MBA '99



President Emeritus Neil L. Rudenstine PhD '64, LLD '02, and Harriet L. Weissman



Harriet L. Weissman, Merle Goldman '57, PhD '64, Paul M. Weissman '52, and Angelica Rudenstine



Visiting Committee members Sarah Thomas and Richard Ekman '66, AM '67, PhD '72



Oscar Handlin, the distinguished historian and director emeritus of the Harvard University Library



Nancy M. Cline, Roy E. Larsen Librarian of Harvard College



Chief Information Officer Daniel Moriarty with Dr. Herman Suit AM '70



Provost Steven E. Hyman, Carl H. Pforzheimer '58, MBA '63, and Visiting Committee member Gary Pforzheimer '89, MBA '91



Jeremy R. Knowles, interim dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences



Henry Rosovsky, former dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences



Sidney Verba greets Y. T. Feng, former librarian of Harvard College.

Littauer Foundation's \$1 Million Grant to HCL's Judaica Division

In 1930, Lucius N. Littauer, Class of 1878, presented his first gift to the Harvard College Library (HCL), beginning a tradition of extraordinary support for HCL's Judaica Division. Recently, the Littauer Foundation awarded a grant of \$1 million for the Littauer Harvard Judaica Librarian's Endowment to fund staff positions, bringing total gifts to the division to more than \$5 million.

"The Littauer Foundation's generosity over the years has been all the more vital and appreciated because it has focused primarily on a need for which funding is extremely difficult to secure: support for highly skilled staff," said Charles Berlin, Lee M. Friedman Bibliographer in Judaica and head of HCL's Judaica Division.

Born in New York in 1859, Littauer graduated from Harvard in 1878 and went to work for his father's leather business, which shortly became one of the largest glove manufacturing companies in the country. Littauer later served five terms in the US Congress, from 1897 to 1907. In Washington he served on the House Appropriations Committee and as an advisor to Theodore Roosevelt. A noted philanthropist, Littauer established the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation in 1929. His first gift to the Judaica Collection followed the next year, when he helped the library acquire the Ephraim Deinard Collection of Hebraica, the foundation for what would become Harvard's world-renowned collection.

In the 1930s Littauer presented the library with additional Hebraica, and, in memory of his father, Nathan Littauer, he established the College Library's first endowed Judaica book fund. When Lucius Littauer died in 1944, the Littauer Foundation maintained a generous relationship with the Judaica Collection, eventually establishing seven additional endowed book funds and contributing toward others. Recognizing critical needs for both preservation services and highly skilled library staff, the Foundation established the Harvard Littauer Judaica Endowment to Fund Judaica Preservation,



Harvard College Library

Lucius Littauer, Class of 1878, made his first donation to the Judaica Division in 1930. Today, the Littauer Foundation continues the tradition he began.

a first for the College Library; and the Littauer Hebraica Technical and Research Services Librarianship, the Harvard National Judaica Librarianship, and the Littauer Judaica Student Assistantships.

"The pioneering support for preservation of library resources provided by the Littauer Foundation has been a crucial factor in assuring that Harvard will, in perpetuity, have the ability to maintain its collections in the service of scholarship," said Berlin.

Littauer and his Foundation have also supported Harvard's teaching and research programs. The most significant was the gift in 1925 to establish the Graduate School of Public Administration at Harvard, now the Kennedy School of Government. Other gifts created the Nathan Littauer Professorship of Jewish History and Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (1925), the first chair in Jewish studies at an American university; the Harry A. Wolfson Professorship of Jewish Studies (1975) in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences; the Harry Starr Professorship of Classical and Modern Jewish and Hebrew Literature (1976); and the Harry A. Wolfson Fellowship in Jewish Studies (1989) in the Divinity School. Foundation gifts also supported the Kennedy School's Starr Auditorium and Radcliffe's Louise Littauer Gallery.

Harvard libraries hold the papers of Lucius Littauer and Harry Starr, the Foundation's longtime president.

The Paul M. and Harriet L. Weissman Senior Photograph Conservator in the Harvard University Library

Paul M. Weissman '52 and Harriet L. Weissman, whose generosity created the University Library's Weissman Preservation Center in 2000, have announced vital new support for the Center's growing photograph conservation program. With a \$1.25 million gift announced on March 1, they will support the senior photograph conservator's position in the Weissman Preservation Center.

"We were inspired to make this gift by the generous commitment of the Mellon Foundation towards the photograph conservation program," Mr. Weissman stated. "This rich, but potentially fragile, resource is now receiving the attention it needs to ensure its survival into the future."

Brenda Bernier, who joined the Weissman Center staff in October 2005, has been designated the first Paul M. and Harriet L. Weissman Senior Photograph Conservator in the Harvard University Library. Bernier is the chief conservator for the University's photographic holdings, estimated at more than 7.5 million items in 48 Harvard repositories and dating back to the emergence of photography in the 1840s.

Bernier came to Harvard from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), where she was responsible for assessing the nature and condition of the agency's vast photograph collections, performing conservation treatments, developing plans and guidelines, preparing storage specifications, conducting original research related to the deterioration and treatment of photographic materials, monitoring the work of conservation interns and junior conservators, and serving on NARA's Emergency Response Team.

Previously, Bernier served as photographic materials and paper conservator at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Bernier is a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University and earned an MS in conservation of photographic materials

from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation. She completed conservation internships at the National Gallery of Art, the Baltimore Museum of Art, NARA, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

"Thanks to the vision and the generosity of Paul and Harriet Weissman and the founding support of the Mellon Foundation, Harvard is developing a photograph preservation program of the highest possible caliber," remarked Sidney Verba, Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor and Director of the University Library. "As visual materials continue to grow in importance for scholars of virtually every discipline, the Harvard Libraries will be uniquely positioned to meet their needs."

In addition to their sustained support for the Harvard Libraries, Paul and Harriet Weissman help to underwrite the University's student financial aid program through the Paul M. Weissman Family Scholarship, and they have created the Paul M. and Harriet Weissman International Internship Program to foster the development of Harvard College students' understanding of the global community in which they will live and work.



Harvard University Archives

A circa 1862 photograph of the assembled "Goodies," as the women who cleaned student rooms were known. The image, which is among the holdings of the Harvard University Archives, is one of more than 7.5 million photographs held in Harvard repositories.

For an overview of the University's photographs, visit <http://preserve.harvard.edu/photographs/directory.html>.

Giving to Harvard Libraries

Beginning with John Harvard's 1638 bequest of 400 books, gifts have proven essential to the growth of the Harvard Libraries. Today, the generosity of alumni/ae, friends, foundations, corporations, and other organizations is a dynamic and inspiring force among the University's libraries, their services to students, and their renowned collections.

Much More Than Books

The need for library support is greater than ever. The expansion of resources to include photographs and other visual images, music, poetry, and other audio recordings, as well as a growing number of resources that exist only in digital formats, has placed increasing demand on the Harvard Libraries. In addition to acquisition of both traditional and new formats, today's library must preserve its collections and make them accessible both in reading rooms and online.

Unique Opportunities

A gift to the Harvard Libraries gives you the unique opportunity to make a gift to an area of personal interest or intellectual commitment. The extent of Harvard's library collections, in combination with evolving faculty and student needs, creates an almost limitless array of gift opportunities.

Harvard seeks to increase funding for the Libraries in four crucial areas:

- preservation and conservation
- access and technology
- collections
- positions

Examples of current needs in the Harvard Libraries include

- support to digitize library resources and make them freely available on the web
- acquisition funds for resources in new areas of study and research, including South Asia and Africa, life sciences, and jazz
- gifts designated to preserve Harvard's rare and unique materials, including illuminated medieval and Renaissance manuscript collections

Meaningful Gifts

The Harvard Libraries will work with you to create a gift that is meaningful to you and meets true needs. Endowment opportunities begin at \$25,000. Gifts of any size are greatly appreciated for current support. If you are an alumnus/a, you will receive full class credit for your library gift or pledge.

All gifts to Harvard's libraries are tax deductible under the full extent of the law. You may receive additional tax benefits by making a gift of securities. Please contact the Harvard Management Company at 866.845.6596 or security_gifts@hmc.harvard.edu.

Giving to Harvard Libraries

You may make your gift online by visiting the web site <http://www.haa.harvard.edu>, clicking on "Make a Gift," and selecting the appropriate option.

Planned gifts provide an opportunity for you to make a significant gift to the Harvard Libraries while preserving income or principal for yourself or your heirs. To learn more about these opportunities, contact the University Planned Giving Office at 800.446.1277 or <http://www.haa.harvard.edu/pgo>.

Thank you for your generosity.
Please send your gift or pledge commitment to:

Peggy Davis Molander
Director of Development
Widener Library 110
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA 02138

After Word

The last two decades—and especially the very last—have witnessed what I believe to be the most profound revolution in libraries since the modern research library began to be created approximately two centuries ago. A new cluster of information technologies has developed with astonishing speed. It has made far more data, ideas, and knowledge instantaneously available than one could have possibly ever imagined when Sid was appointed in 1984.

Libraries have had to embrace and then keep pace with these new phenomena, while also doing their best to decide exactly which decisions would be the best to make. Which initiatives in the electronic world should one undertake to gain the most significant yield of intellectual and educational benefits? How might our libraries be structured, and what range of functions might they be performing, 25 or even 50 years from now, given the uncertainty or even obscurity of the future? How much of their space is likely to be physical, and how much virtual? No one could have predicted what would eventually happen, but Sid Verba began to ask all the right questions and to make certain that our long-term planning and thinking took into account as many contingencies—and to leave open as many reasonable alternatives—as were reasonably possible. On all counts, there is no other university librarian who comes close—remotely close—to his record of accomplishment.

Neil L. Rudenstine PhD '64, LLD '02
President of Harvard University, Emeritus
Professor of English and American Literature and Language, Emeritus

Harvard University Library Letters

is published semiannually by the Office of the Director of the Harvard University Library. Its purpose is to provide important information for the many individuals—alumni/ae and friends—who provide critical financial support to the University and its libraries.

Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor and Director of the University Library
Sidney Verba

Associate Director of the University Library for Administration and Programs
Barbara Graham

Director of Publications and Communications
Peter Kosewski

Director of Development
Peggy Davis Molander

Editorial Assistant
Catherine Blatz

Design Consultants
Sametz Blackstone Associates, Boston

Contributors
Beth Brainard, Leslie A. Morris, Jennifer Tomase

Special Thanks
Harvard University Archives
Houghton Library—Harvard College Library

Online Edition
<http://hul.harvard.edu/publications.html>

E peter_kosewski@harvard.edu
T 617.495.7793
F 617.495.0370

©2007, *The President and Fellows of Harvard College*

HARVARD UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

HARVARD UNIVERSITY LIBRARY LETTERS
Wadsworth House—1341 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138



Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 1636
Boston, MA.