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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MAGAZINE
JULY/AUGUST 2014

GLOBAL GATHERING

WORLD COLLECTIONS ••• DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION

INSIDE

Revisiting Another Germany
A Digital Library for the World

PLUS

- ▶ Happy Birthday, Panama Canal
- ▶ Rich Hispanic Collections
- ▶ Nominate for the Recording Registry



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This painted lunette titled "Civilization"—one of four by George Willoughby Maynard that adorn the Southwest Pavilion of the Library's Thomas Jefferson Building—features a torch of enlightenment and an open book. *Carol Highsmith*



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MAGAZINE

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The mission of the Library is to support the Congress in fulfilling its constitutional duties and to further the progress of knowledge and creativity for the benefit of the American people.

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JAMES H. BILLINGTON
Librarian of Congress

GAYLE OSTERBERG
Executive Editor

AUDREY FISCHER
Editor

JOHN H. SAYERS
Managing Editor

ASHLEY JONES
Designer

ABBY BRACK LEWIS
Photo Editor

Contributing Writers
E.L. DOCTOROW
GEORGETTE DORN
MARK HARTSELL
PAMELA HOWARD-REGUINDIN
PETER ROUDIK
JASON YASNER

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ON THE COVER: This spectacular "blue marble" image taken in 2002 is the most detailed true-color image of the entire Earth. *NASA Goddard Space Flight Center Image by Reto Stockli*

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4 The Panama Canal



10 The Library overseas

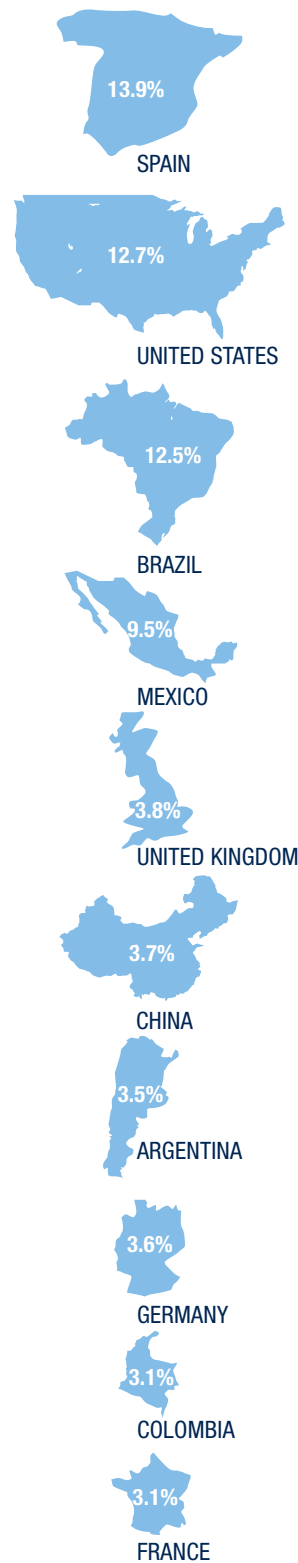


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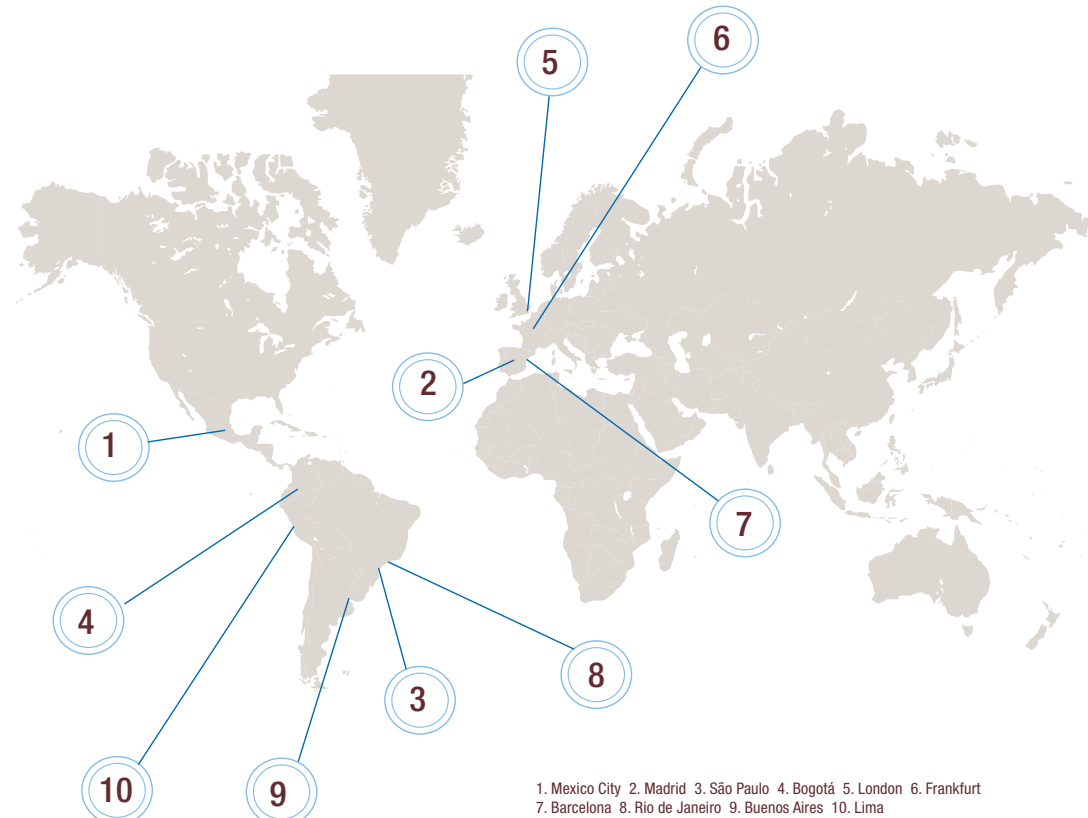
WORLD DIGITAL LIBRARY

WITH 10,000 ITEMS FROM 80 COUNTRIES, THE WORLD DIGITAL LIBRARY WEBSITE IS VIEWED BY MILLIONS OF PEOPLE ACROSS THE GLOBE.

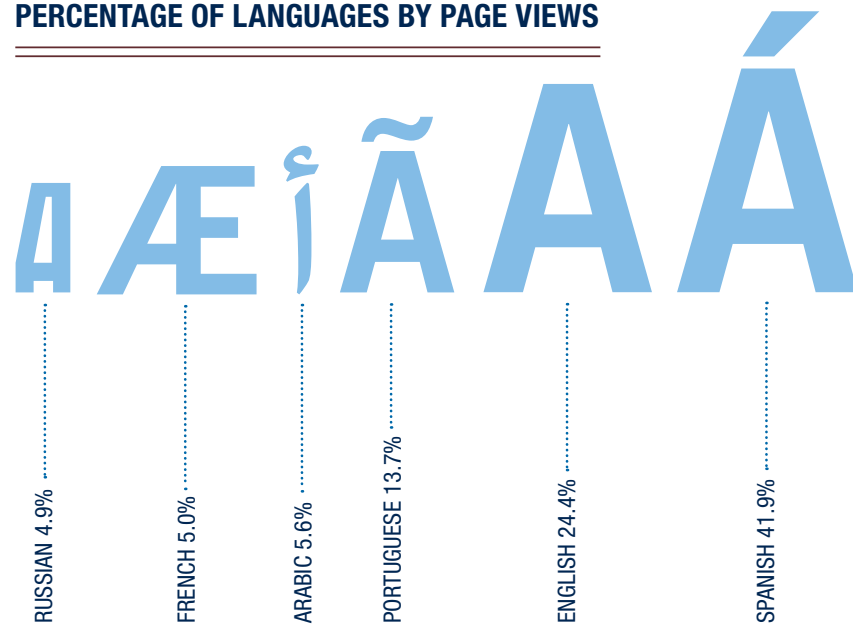
PERCENT OF VIEWERS BY COUNTRY 2013



TOP CITIES BY NUMBER OF VIEWERS 2013



PERCENTAGE OF LANGUAGES BY PAGE VIEWS



MAKING A WORLD RESOURCE EVEN BETTER

THE WORLD DIGITAL LIBRARY WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT TEAM IS LEVERAGING NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO ACCOMMODATE THE SITE'S EXPANSION.

A beta launch of a technologically improved version of the World Digital Library (WDL)—planned for summer 2014—will feature a complete overhaul of the user interface of this online trove of international treasures. The WDL website contains rare primary materials from countries and cultures around the world.

The new version—WDL 3.0—will focus on “responsive design,” an approach aimed at constructing websites that provide an optimal viewing experience across a wide range of devices, from mobile phones and tablets to desktop computers. WDL 3.0 will provide users with new ways to view and search items, along with additional thematic content, interactive maps and timelines.

Initial development of the WDL's website had one overarching goal—to make it easy for users all over the world to explore the spectacular collection of global resources. The WDL website originally offered 1,236 items from a small sampling of partner institutions around the world. Today, more than 10,000 items are online and 183 partners in 81 countries are contributing significant primary materials.

The increase in the site's content has not reduced the level of quality. The team continued to implement several new or revamped processes (translation, partner review and quality review) to accommodate the new content and to maintain the high level of quality in all seven languages. Some highlighted content added to the site includes cultural treasures from the National Library of France, the Bavarian State Library, the National Library of China, the Riccardiana Library of Florence, the Walters Art Museum and the Library of Congress, to name but a few.

In the five years since the site has been in operation, the WDL team has made significant technological advances to support an increase in the quantity and quality of content, improve the way that content is delivered to users around



the world and enhance the experience of exploring the rich, global resources on the WDL website. To accomplish this, the team released version 2.0 in October 2011 with advanced features such as full-text search of digitized content, a new enhanced book viewer, a gallery view for images, and better browse and search options. Version 2.0 also allowed the team to more easily and quickly normalize incoming data in a myriad of formats.

Because the website needs to perform well globally, the team chose Akamai, a company specializing in supporting popular sites requiring 24/7 availability. Akamai stores multiple copies of web pages on 147,000 servers in 92 countries. For its vast storage needs, the WDL development team chose to “go into the cloud,” employing Amazon Web Services for server redundancy and scaling and to receive content deliveries from partner institutions for ingestion. These services have ensured optimal performance for WDL users around the world.

WDL 3.0 will enhance the user experience and allow for continued expansion of the popular site, which has recorded nearly 30 million site visits, totaling more than 172 million page views, since its inception.

—Jason Yasner is operations manager of the World Digital Library in the Office of the Librarian.

MORE INFORMATION

World Digital Library
wdl.org



HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY, PANAMA CANAL

A CENTURY AFTER ITS COMPLETION, THE PANAMA CANAL WILL BE CELEBRATED AND EXPANDED.

Aug. 15, 2014, will mark the centennial of the completion of the Panama Canal, a 48-mile waterway connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The canal is a key conduit for international maritime trade.

Plans by the Panamanian government to celebrate the historic event began more than a year ago. A Panama Canal mobile app was launched to communicate about Panama around the world. Educational and cultural institutions in U.S. cities such as Miami and Gainesville, Fla., will also mark the occasion with exhibits. Nearly every cruise line to Panama has one trip scheduled through the canal this year to mark the centennial.

The Library of Congress has a free, 134-page reference guide to Panama materials in its collections. The guide, which is available as a downloadable pdf on the Hispanic Reading Room website, references the wealth of materials available about Panama in the Library's General and Special Collections (such as maps, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs and legal material). Subjects include civilization and culture, foreign relations, history, literature, politics and government and the Panama Canal. Housed in the Library, the papers of Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson contain a wealth of material about the Panama Canal—its construction having spanned their administrations. The papers of Roosevelt's Secretary of State John Hay and

▲ The seagoing tug, "Gatun" made the first trip through the Panama Canal's Gatun Locks on Sept. 26, 1913. *Prints and Photographs Division*

► Centennial logo from the Panama Canal Authority



the canal's chief engineer George W. Goethals, along with the Panama Collection of the Canal Zone Library-Museum (1804-1977), are just a few of the Library's most significant resources for the study of the canal's construction.

Following the attempt by the French to construct the canal, the U.S. took over the project in 1904, during Roosevelt's administration. Panama had become independent of Colombia the previous year, with the help of the U.S. The decade-long project cost the U.S. nearly \$375 million to complete, with the aid of more than 45,000 workers, many of whom lost their lives. The majority of workers came from the West Indies and Spain. All told, workers from about 40 countries participated in the construction.

After a period of joint American-Panamanian control, the canal was returned to the Panamanian government in 1999 under the terms of a treaty negotiated by President Jimmy Carter and approved by Congress. The canal is now managed and operated by the Panama Canal Authority, a Panamanian government agency.

► MORE INFORMATION

"Reference Guide to Panama Materials at the Library of Congress"
go.usa.gov/kfxR

WHITE HOUSE,
WASHINGTON.

July 1, 1902.

Personal.

My dear Mr. Secretary:

The great bit of work of my administration, and from the material and constructive standpoint one of the greatest bits of work that the twentieth century will see, is the Isthmian Canal. In the negotiations to start this straight I must trust to you and Knox. I hope you will take personal direction.

By the way, when you get the Cuban treaty back, of course Cullom and Hitt will have to be consulted about it.

Faithfully yours,

Theodore Roosevelt

John Hay Papers, Manuscript Division

A PRESIDENTIAL ASSIGNMENT

The establishment of the Panama Canal was one of President Theodore Roosevelt's most ambitious foreign policy initiatives.

The U.S. had a long-standing interest in a passage between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through Central America. The Spanish-American War of 1898 only increased this desire: American ships in the Pacific had to navigate around the tip of South America in two-month voyages to join the U.S. fleet off the coast of Cuba.

President Roosevelt favored a shortcut between both oceans. He believed that sea power was key to global power. During the summer of 1902, the U.S. Senate voted in favor of building a canal through Panama. Several weeks later, Roosevelt instructed Secretary of State John Hay, pictured right, to oversee personally the negotiation to secure U.S. control of the Panama Canal. In his letter dated July 1, 1902, pictured above, Roosevelt referred to the project at hand as "one of the greatest bits of work that the twentieth century will see."

Before the year was out, Hay signed a treaty with Colombian Foreign Minister Tomás Herrán to build the new canal, but Colombia's Congress rejected the offer. Roosevelt responded by supporting Panama's struggle to gain its independence from Colombia.

In 1903, Hay successfully negotiated a treaty with an independent Panama. The Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty gave the United States perpetual control of the canal for a price of \$10 million and an annual payment of \$250,000. The U. S. also agreed to pay \$40 million to the Compagnie Nouvelle du Canal de Panama for the remaining infrastructure and holdings from previous French attempts to construct a canal on the Isthmus of Panama. The project's completion in 1914 made the U.S. the dominant military power in Central America.



J.E. Purdy, Boston, Prints and Photographs Division

HANDBOOK OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

The “Handbook of Latin American Studies”—compiled and edited by the Library’s Hispanic Division—is the oldest and most prestigious area studies bibliography in the world. Continuously published since 1936, the Handbook annually offers researchers an annotated bibliography of more than 3,000 scholarly works on Latin America, which have been selected by more than 130 leading scholars in the field. Subject areas include anthropology, art, geography, government and politics, history, international relations, literature, music, philosophy, political economy and sociology.

The Library of Congress provides free, online access to the Handbook (HLAS Online), which is also available in print (published by the University of Texas Press) and on CD-ROM (produced by Fundación MAPFRE). Updated weekly, HLAS Online provides access to Volume 1 (1936) to the present. (Volume 69 will be published in fall 2014.) The Library also offers access to the continuously updated database “HLAS Web,” containing Volume 49 (1989) to the present.

► MORE INFORMATION

HLAS Online
loc.gov/hlas

HLAS Web
hlasopac.loc.gov

Order the “Handbook of Latin American Studies”
lcweb2.loc.gov/hlas/order.html

Visit the Hispanic Division Reading Room
loc.gov/rr/hispanic



▲ Katherine McCann, humanities editor of the “Handbook of Latin American Studies,” accesses the publication online. *Amanda Reynolds*

for you AT THE LIBRARY

A BEVY OF BLOGS



WHAT: Library of Congress blogs
WHERE: Online
WHEN: Publicly available 24/7
COST: FREE

TWO NEW BLOGS ARE NOW AVAILABLE on the Library of Congress website, bringing the total to a dozen blogs, each devoted to specific Library collections and programs.

“Now See Hear!” features the work of the Library’s National Audio-Visual Conservation Center in Culpeper, Va., and its moving image and sound recording reference centers on Capitol Hill.

“NLS Music Notes” highlights music material—in special formats such as braille, digital braille and large print—available from the National Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and the experiences of those who use the collection.

These new blogs join the Library’s main blog and those focused on copyright, digital preservation, education, folklife, law, performing arts, poetry, photos, and science, technology and business.

 **Library of Congress blogs**
loc.gov/blogs/

FELIZ CUMPLEAÑOS, HISPANIC DIVISION

DATING BACK TO THE MIDDLE AGES, THE LIBRARY’S HISPANIC WORLD COLLECTIONS ARE THE LARGEST IN THE WORLD.

An original 1605 copy of Miguel de Cervantes’ “Don Quixote.” A 16th-century Native American legal document protesting Spanish colonialism. Films of Theodore Roosevelt’s Rough Riders after the Spanish American War in 1898.

These are just a few of the Library’s Hispanic treasures. Comprising nearly 14 million items in various formats, the Library’s Iberian, Latin American and Caribbean collections are the largest and most complete in the world.

The point of entry for these collections is the Library’s Hispanic Reading Room, which celebrates its 75th anniversary this year. The reading room opened its doors in the Thomas Jefferson Building on Oct. 12, 1939, Columbus Day. The Hispanic Division was established three months earlier with an endowment from Archer M. Huntington (founder of the Hispanic Society of America), a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation and a congressional appropriation.

Huntington began donating funds to build the Library’s Hispanic collection in the 1920s. But the Library’s collections from the broad Hispanic world—which date to the Middle Ages—began more than a century earlier. Thomas Jefferson’s personal library, which the Library of Congress purchased in 1815, contained about 200 books about the Hispanic world. Jefferson believed in the basic unity of the Americas—North and South. In 1820 he declared, “I should rejoice to see the fleets of Brazil and the United States riding together as brethren of the same family and pursuing the same objects.”

The Hispanic Division’s first chief, Lewis Hanke, was the founding editor of the “Handbook of Latin American Studies.” Considered to be the father of the field of Latin American Studies in the United States, Hanke became the first Latin Americanist to be elected president



of the American Historical Association. In remembrance of their father, Hanke’s children donated funds to the Hispanic Division to offer online access to the Handbook.

In addition to books, journals and manuscripts, the Hispanic Division holds an original collection of sound recordings. The division has been recording selected readings by poets and writers for more than 70 years. Today the “Archive of Hispanic Literature on Tape” holds nearly 700 recordings from more than 32 countries in some 10 languages. Among the authors are nine Nobel laureates, including Gabriela Mistral, Octavio Paz and Gabriel García Márquez. Cuban-American poet Richard Blanco, who read his poem “One Today” at Barack Obama’s second presidential inauguration, was recently recorded and added to the collection. Using cutting-edge technology at its Packard Campus for Audio-Visual Conservation, the Library is transferring the retrospective recordings from magnetic tape reels to a digital format.

Hispanic Division Chief Georgette Dorn contributed to this story.

► MORE INFORMATION

Hispanic Division Reading Room
loc.gov/rr/hispanic/

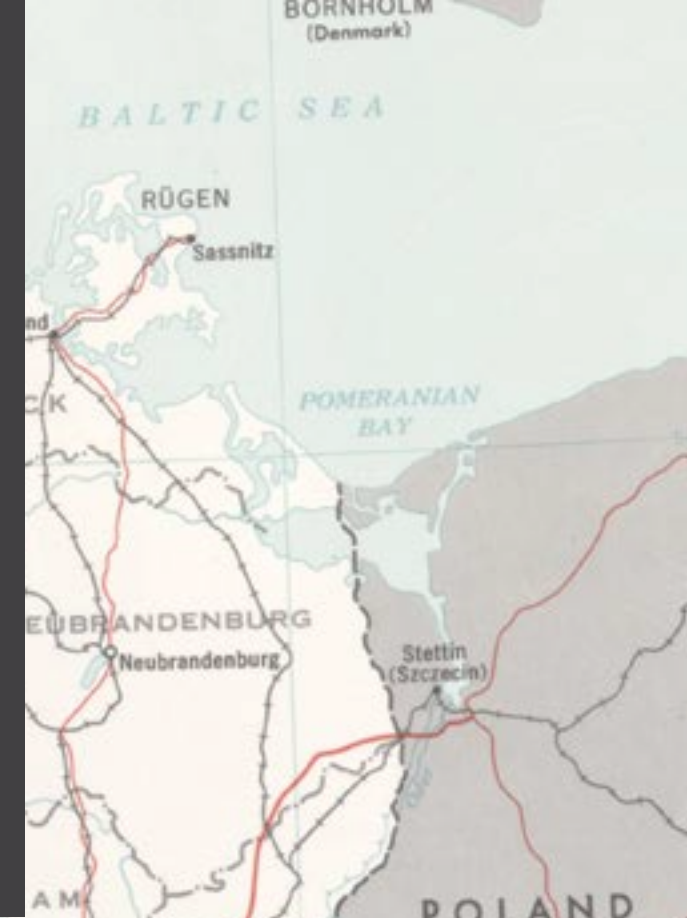
▲ “Entry into the Forest” is one of four murals by Brazilian painter Cândido Portinari in the Hispanic Reading Room. *Carol Highsmith*

The Library holds this 1605 first edition of Miguel de Cervantes’ classic “Don Quixote.” *Amanda Reynolds*

REVISITING THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

THE LAW LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MAINTAINS THE LAWS OF MANY NATIONS—EVEN THOSE THAT NO LONGER EXIST.

BY PETER ROUDIK



The Law Library of Congress houses the world's largest collection of law books and other global legal resources. Many items in the collection pertain to historical jurisdictions that have merged, split or changed their names. The collection also documents “missing” countries—those which have ceased to exist. This includes feudal city states, empires, and republics in 20th-century Europe. Materials in the Law Library's collections are often the only source to study their former legal systems.

A case in point is the German Democratic Republic (GDR)—more commonly known as East Germany—which existed from 1949-1990 as a state within the Soviet bloc, created after World War II.

The GDR was established in the Soviet-occupied zone in the east, while the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was established in the west. The physical manifestation of the split came in 1961 with the construction of the Berlin Wall. With a height of 13 feet, the heavily fortified 96-mile wall was meant to restrict emigration to the West. Many died trying to cross over the wall, which finally came down on Nov. 9, 1989, following a series of radical political changes and peaceful protests. German reunification was formally concluded in October 1990.

Nearly 25 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, researchers can follow all the major events that created East Germany and later led to its fall by consulting documents housed in the Law Library. The collection includes all major pieces of East German legislation, starting with the transfer of power from the Soviet administration to the newly created GDR authorities in 1949 and ending with the Unification Treaty signed between the two German states in 1989. The collection also includes a full set of the *Gesetzblatt*—the official publication of laws and regulations issued by the East German leadership.

Taken as a whole, these documents reflect changes in the East German legal system and give researchers the ability to trace the country's entire legal history from the building of a socialist state to the birth of a democracy after the unification with West Germany. These documents cover the important political events that occurred in East Germany's short but significant history: the workers revolt against communist leaders in 1953, the rise and fall of the Berlin Wall and many other events.

A unique event covered by the collection is a series of round table discussions that showcase the cooperation between the opposition and formal state leadership during the transition period in 1989-90. These historic materials paint a complete picture of the events that took place in the GDR in order to democratize its socialist system.

It is illustrative to compare the legal texts simultaneously published and commented on in the eastern and western parts of Germany—which researchers can do using the Law Library's collections.

► MORE INFORMATION

Law Library of Congress
loc.gov/law/

Peter Roudik is director of legal research in the Law Library of Congress.

ABOUT THE GLOBAL LEGAL COLLECTIONS

About 60 percent of the Law Library's nearly 3 million volumes are in foreign languages. The collection also includes official gazettes, constitutions literature, chronological publications of laws and session laws, hearings, court reports, decisions of administrative courts, finding aids, commentary, legal periodicals and reference titles.

The foreign law component of mostly primary materials makes the Law Library's collection unique and allows scholars to conduct accurate and authoritative research based on authentic sources. The collection of foreign law materials began with the purchase of Mexican legal materials during the Mexican-American War (1846-1848). It continued in the 20th century when Congress ordered the Law Library to acquire official publications of legal acts from other countries. Today, the collection comprises legal material from more than 240 jurisdictions—some of which can be found only in the Library of Congress.

The Law Library's greatest treasures are contained in its rare book collection, which includes medieval commentaries on Roman and canon law, a compilation of ecclesiastical and civil laws made in Byzantium, legal opinions submitted to European courts in the 15th century, illuminated legal manuscripts and original decrees issued by Russian tsars.

Many documents in this collection belong to historical jurisdictions that have ceased to exist. In this sense, the materials from the Law Library's rare book collection serve as a print record of the legal heritage of Western Europe.



From top: Law Library resources include a collection of theses on East German constitutional development; a state treaty between East Germany and the Soviet union; a socialist constitution of the GDR; and a monograph on the legal system in the GDR. *Law Library of Congress*

◀ A Central Intelligence Agency map of East Germany, July 1969 | *Geography and Map Division*



From left: Cairo, Egypt | Andrew A. Shenouda; Jakarta, Indonesia | Jerry Kurniawan, World Bank; New Delhi, India | Roshan Raj

GLOBAL GATHERING

STATIONED IN SIX OFFICES OVERSEAS, LIBRARY EMPLOYEES SCOUR THE WORLD FOR COLLECTIONS MATERIAL.

BY MARK HARTSELL

The sun truly never sets on collecting at the Library of Congress. At any given hour, somewhere on the planet, an employee is acquiring material to add to the world's largest library.

Scattered across 11 time zones, from Brazil to Indonesia, the Library's six field offices acquire hard-to-get publications from developing nations for its own collections and those of other U.S. and global research institutions. It's a vast undertaking that requires knowledgeable people at the source. Wherever material is published—be it Syria, Pakistan, Cambodia, Rwanda, Nepal or Suriname—the Library of Congress is, in some fashion, there.

"Really, for much of what we collect, no other libraries do so on this scale," said William Kopycki, director of the Cairo field office. "We're the only library in the world that has this concept of overseas offices."

In the years following World War II, the Library and U.S. academic institutions recognized the importance developing regions would play in a changing world—and the need to better understand the history, politics, religion and culture of these far-flung places. So, the Library, beginning in the early 1960s, established nearly two-dozen field offices around the globe. Today, six remain, in Cairo;



Islamabad; Jakarta, Indonesia; Nairobi, Kenya; New Delhi and Rio de Janeiro. Their mission: supply the Library and other research institutions with tough-to-acquire primary materials from developing regions to ensure Congress, analysts and scholars get critical information.

A WORLD OF CHALLENGES

Carrying out that mission in developing countries presents serious challenges. War, terrorism, political unrest, censorship, poverty, huge geographic distances, scores of languages, underdeveloped infrastructure, unreliable power grids and a lack of publishing standards all pose difficulties.

In 2011 and again in 2013, massive, violent political protests forced the temporary closure of the Cairo office and the evacuation of its director, Kopycki, from Egypt. The U.S. State Department at times denied approval for acquisition trips for fear that an airport would

From left: Islamabad, Pakistan | Muzaffar Bukhari; Nairobi, Kenya | Olli Pitkänen; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil | José Fernandes Jr.

All photos | Flickr Creative Commons



Librarians in Rio de Janeiro work at the Rio Book Fair at a booth constructed from recycled paper. *Overseas Operations Division*



Students listen to a story being read aloud at the Somali-English family literacy story hour at the USAID-sponsored Garissa Youth Summit in Northeastern Kenya. *Nancy Meaker*



Then-Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) visited with staff in the Library's Jakarta office. *Overseas Operations Division*



Library material may be gathered from venues such as this roadside stall in Pakistan. *Overseas Operations Division*

close and leave Cairo employees stranded – decisions, Kopycki said, “made to keep us safe.”

Islamabad is risky enough that the director oversees that office from 430 miles away in New Delhi, flying back to Pakistan’s capital city several times a year. The Library’s office in Nairobi is located in the U.S. embassy complex built after the 1998 bombing of the old embassy. Last year, terrorists attacked a shopping mall in Nairobi, killing nearly 70 people.

“Just coming into work can be challenging, given the critical threat faced by this country with terrorism,” said Pamela Howard-Reguindin, former director of the Nairobi office, who now heads the Islamabad office. (See story on page 15.)

AT THE SOURCE

Despite the difficulties, the overseas offices collect a huge range and volume of material: government documents, newspapers, magazines, academic journals, monographs, books, maps, DVDs, CDs

and, in recent years, websites—in all, more than 663,000 items in fiscal year 2013.

The offices also cover a vast geographic and linguistic range. In the last fiscal year, they acquired and cataloged material from 79 countries in about 120 languages. Such an effort requires knowledgeable people at the source, wherever on the globe it may be.

“The only way to get some of these materials is to be there and pick them up as they come hot off the press, so to speak,” said Beacher Wiggins, who directs the overseas offices for the Library of Congress. “Particularly in areas where there may be dissident views or dissident groups that challenge the government or espouse a different view, you wouldn’t get these through normal publishing channels. By the time you got that kind of information, it would be two or three years later. Firsthand scholarship would suffer. Congress wouldn’t necessarily get firsthand accounts of what’s going on.”

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE IS KEY

Each office is led by an American director and staffed by locals—about 240 in total—who serve as librarians, catalogers, accountants, information technology specialists, shipping clerks and drivers. Most of the catalogers and librarians have library science degrees or advanced degrees.

The local employees’ knowledge and linguistic skills are invaluable in navigating the myriad cultures and languages, the huge geographic spaces and the sometimes-tricky political terrain. They also possess another important skill: They know what to get and where and how to get it.

“Because the staffers are local, they know the language, they know the culture,” Wiggins said. “They know when it might be imprudent to advertise that they are collecting as a U.S. government employee.”

Each overseas office covers a group of countries in its region. The Jakarta office, for example, collects from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos,

Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. The Nairobi office covers 29 countries over a gigantic swath of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Material is gathered through a blend of methods—relationships with commercial vendors, bibliographic representatives who collect on the offices’ behalf and acquisitions trips made by field office staff.

“We do know the sources, where to get things,” Kopycki said. “It’s how to engage to get the things that are really unique and special.”

The materials they choose—in collaboration with the collections divisions in the Library’s Capitol Hill offices— are selected for the quality of scholarship, the importance of subject and the extent to which it adds to the knowledge of a topic. Sometimes they represent new cultural trends, such as graphic novels produced in North Africa and drawn in Japanese anime style. Other material frequently is controversial and from underground sources.



Ismail Soliman, former head of monograph acquisitions in the Library's Cairo office, searches for library materials in a bookshop in Mauritania. *Overseas Operations Division*



A lift van in New Delhi is loaded with publications for shipment to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. *Overseas Operations Division*

"We spent the last couple of years in particular since the Egyptian revolution gathering ephemera and pamphlets," Kopycki said. "This culture of publishing ephemeral materials with heavy political tones was really unknown in Cairo the past 30 years."

SHARING WITH THE GLOBE

Many institutions benefit from the hunting and gathering done by the Library's local employees.

The offices provide material—some 375,000 items in the last fiscal year—to 80 other U.S. institutions and 24 foreign institutions through the Cooperative Acquisitions Program. Those institutions could acquire major commercial publications from some developing nations on their own. The Library field offices do what they can't: acquire less-accessible material and items from harder-to-cover countries.

"That's really a unique service, not just for our parent institution but for our participant libraries as well," Kopycki said. "We're acting as their eyes and ears to get materials that otherwise are not readily available."

All that collecting requires a lot of other work—cataloging, accounting, processing, packing

Mark Hartsell is editor of The Gazette, the Library's staff newspaper.

and shipping—to make sure everything arrives safely and in the right place. Shipping is a big part of what the offices do. In fiscal 2013, they collectively shipped about 180 tons of material by sea and air freight to the Library and Cooperative Acquisitions Program participants.

"It's all these things that you don't picture a traditional librarian doing that our staff does in order to make sure that book, that newspaper, that DVD arrives in the hands of a researcher in Washington," Kopycki said.

The flow of that material, gathered at the source in countries around the globe, helps ensure that the Library of Congress, and other libraries, have the firsthand resources Congress, analysts and scholars need now, and decades in the future.

"These areas still are in turmoil and, in some instances, changing their worldview or becoming a powerhouse," Wiggins said. "The overseas offices are critical in supplying Congress information as well as supplying research materials scholars might need 10, 50, 100 years from now."

MORE INFORMATION

Overseas Offices
loc.gov/acq/ovop/

PAMELA HOWARD-REGUINDIN, FIELD DIRECTOR OF THE LIBRARY'S ISLAMABAD OFFICE, DISCUSSES THE CHALLENGES OF COLLECTING LIBRARY MATERIALS OVERSEAS.

The Library of Congress maintains six field offices overseas that acquire materials for the Library and other institutions from nearly 80 countries, in more than 120 languages. (See story on page 10) I've had the privilege of serving as field director of the Library's overseas offices in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1996–2005) and Nairobi, Kenya (2005–2014). I recently became the field director of the Library's Islamabad Office in Pakistan.

Many parts of the world present the same challenges for the Library's overseas staff members. Staff in the Library's offices in Islamabad, New Delhi and Jakarta, and more recently Cairo, have all witnessed political unrest and social upheaval. There is certainly a psychological toll on the staff when these events occur. However, they persevere, pick up the pieces and carry on with their collecting, often without missing a beat, as evidenced by production statistics that remain constant or increase. In fact, added to their duties is the task of acquiring materials that document the unrest or important current events. For example, staff in the Nairobi Office worked quickly to acquire material related to Barack Obama's election campaign in the president's father's native Kenya and other African countries.

Overseas collection efforts can be complicated by a number of other factors. For example, in certain parts of the world, it can be a bit tricky to collect from Islamic sources. Both Brazil and Kenya are primarily Christian with Muslim minorities. In Kenya, asking our mostly Christian staff to visit Muslim sources may put them at risk, since those neighborhoods are more prone to attacks. Similarly, Rio de Janeiro's high crime and murder rates are an ongoing safety concern.

Countries with repressive regimes may be suspicious of anyone trying to collect documents, no matter the purpose. More than once I've been accused of being a spy. Once, while I was transporting reels of microfilm to a national library, I was told that the material looked like something from the CIA.

Acquiring government documents in certain regions may be difficult if their political positions are incompatible with those of the United States. But this can change from one moment to the next. For example, when the World Trade Center was attacked, those of us living overseas felt a groundswell of sympathy from our neighbors and



Pamela Howard-Reguindin, field director of the Library's Islamabad Office in Pakistan | Nancy Meaker

colleagues. However, when we invaded Iraq and Afghanistan, the sympathy dried up quickly and obtaining documents in several countries became more challenging.

It pays to be persistent. I was once after an environmental atlas from a government agency. I spent at least an hour talking to two officials who knew they had published the item but would not give or sell a copy to me without a letter of request. I did as they asked, to no avail. I went back a third time and a very cheerful receptionist, who was unaware of my previous visits, said, "Oh sure, we have that atlas. How many copies do you want?" I could have kissed her!

Travel restrictions can also be problematic. So far, field director movements have been very limited in Pakistan, making it difficult to meet with vendors outside of Islamabad. The restrictions are somewhat less for our Pakistani colleagues, who can drive locally or fly to other major cities for acquisitions work.

Clearly, our physical security is a real concern. Hopefully, the security situation will change shortly allowing more freedom of movement. The Islamabad Office will move from a residential building into the new embassy compound in Islamabad's diplomatic enclave in January 2015, which should provide a more secure working environment for the staff.

When you visit pakistanbodycount.org and realize the staggering number of victims of terrorist attacks there, you realize how truly heroic our Islamabad colleagues are as they continue to seek new materials for the Library's collections from a myriad of shops, government agencies and other sources.



THE WORLD WITHIN REACH

SINCE ITS HISTORIC LAUNCH IN 2009, THE WORLD DIGITAL LIBRARY PROJECT HAS DIGITIZED MORE THAN 10,000 CULTURAL TREASURES FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE.

BY MARK HARTSELL



THE FLORENTINE CODEX

“General History of the Things of New Spain,” commonly known as the Florentine Codex, is a 16th-century encyclopedic work describing the peoples of central Mexico. *Contributor: Medicea Laurenziana Library, Florence*



THE NUREMBERG CHRONICLE

This 15th-century volume of world history is one of the most densely illustrated and technically advanced works of early printing, containing 1,809 woodcut images. *Contributor: Bavarian State Library*



GIFTS FROM THE EBB TIDE

“Gifts from the Ebb Tide” contains 36 poems illustrated with woodblock prints of shells, clam-digging and a scene of a shell-matching game. *Contributor: National Diet Library*



AFRICAN OX AND KHOI COUPLE

These sketches are from a set of 27 drawings by an 18th-century Dutch painter discovered in the National Library of South Africa in 1986. The drawings depict the pastoral Khoikhoi tribe of the Western Cape. *Contributor: National Library of South Africa*



The idea was as big as the world itself: Gather and digitize the globe’s cultural treasures, assemble them on one website and make them available to the world for free and in multiple languages.

Such a project, Librarian of Congress James H. Billington said in proposing his concept, contained enormous potential to increase understanding among cultures and countries. “It would,” he said, “hold out the promise of bringing people closer together precisely by

celebrating the depth and uniqueness of different cultures in a single, shared global undertaking.”

In 2009, Billington’s big idea became a start-up reality. The World Digital Library (WDL), an international project led by the Library of Congress, launched with 26 global partners and a groundbreaking mission: gather the world’s important cultural items, explain their significance, present them with ultra-detailed images, provide consistent

bibliographic information—and do so in seven languages.

Today, in its fifth year, the network has grown to 183 partners—mostly archives, libraries and museums—in 81 countries that collectively have contributed more than 10,000 manuscripts, maps, books, prints, photographs, journals, newspapers, sound recordings and motion pictures.

The online collections at wdl.org contain

some of history’s great primary documents: the Japanese work considered the world’s first novel, the magnificent illustrated Bible of Borso d’Este, ancient Arabic works on algebra, and a 2,200-year-old papyrus fragment of Euripides’ play “Orestes,” among many others.

The project’s global appeal, director John Van Oudenaren says, lies in the breadth of the collection and the high quality of the objects and presentation.



▲ Librarian of Congress James H. Billington speaks at the launch of the World Digital Library project in Paris on April 21, 2009.
First Events

“What’s really been striking is how the libraries—some very great libraries—have put forward their top things,” Van Oudenaren says. “They’ve put forward fantastic, rare things. It’s kind of astounding what people send.”

Those fantastic, rare things span the globe. The collection items represent countries from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe and 192 nations in between. Each item is provided with consistent metadata; translated into Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish; and presented with high-resolution, deep-zoom photos that reveal even the paper fibers in the First Folio of Shakespeare’s plays.

Those images—now nearly 500,000 in number—allow visitors to inspect each note of “The Magic Flute” in Mozart’s original handwritten score; navigate each Mexico City street via a map drawn just after the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs;

or examine each calligraphic stroke in a Holy Qur’an from Iran’s national library.

“The World Digital Library is a very intensive, value-added project,” Van Oudenaren says. “There are digital-library projects of all kinds. Some focus on aggregating metadata and putting a lot of content online without really upgrading. The World Digital Library is different. We take content at different levels of enrichment in terms of metadata and raise it to a single level.”

The site’s audience is as global as its content. Over the past five years, the World Digital Library has attracted nearly 30 million users from 231 international jurisdictions around the world—continent-spanning countries such as Russia and Australia and tiny island territories such as Kiribati and Wallis and Futuna. Spain, Brazil, Mexico, the United States and China provide the most visitors, and Spanish, English

THE SIEGE OF GOLCONDA



This gouache painting, created by an 18th-century Indian artist, depicts the siege of the city of Golconda in south-central India by the last great Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb.
Contributor: Brown University Library

ETHIOPIAN GOSPELS



This gospel book, created in the first half of the 16th century, is written in Ge’ez, the traditional liturgical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The manuscript represents the golden age of the Gunda Gunde style, characterized by bold color blocks, delicate linear motifs and highly stylized figures. This contribution to the World Digital Library was part of a set of items that brought the total of online items to more than 10,000.
Contributor: Walters Art Museum

and Portuguese are the most-used languages. Increasingly, visitors come from Arabic-speaking countries across Africa and the Middle East. Arabic now ranks fourth in use on the site.

Going forward, the World Digital Library aims to expand the breadth and geographic range of its collections and partner institutions—ideally gaining at least one partner in each country.

“It’s been fantastic to share all this great cultural material with a global audience,” Van Oudenaren says. “People have fascinating things. You just don’t know what’s out there until you start bringing it together.”

► MORE INFORMATION

World Digital Library Website
wdl.org

Mark Hartsell is editor of The Gazette, the Library’s staff newspaper.

KARYN TEMPLE CLAGGETT

KARYN TEMPLE CLAGGETT, DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS IN THE U.S. COPYRIGHT OFFICE, DISCUSSES THE OFFICE'S GLOBAL OUTREACH EFFORTS.

What are your responsibilities as director of policy and international affairs for the Copyright Office?

I manage a team of eight lawyers who focus on domestic and international copyright law and policy. Each attorney has a portfolio that includes several countries. When a copyright issue arises in a particular country, the lawyer assigned to it will take the lead in evaluating the legal issue. Issues arise for different reasons. For example, trade policy reviews occur through the World Trade Organization (WTO) to assess whether a country's policies and practices, including its intellectual property laws, comply with WTO agreements.

We also contribute to an annual government review of various countries' protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights, and we review amendments to foreign copyright laws. In addition, we participate in U.S. government negotiations involving copyright law, including negotiations for treaties and trade agreements.

Can you describe the career path to your current position?

I earned a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Michigan, where I especially enjoyed creative writing. My JD is from Columbia University School of Law. My interest in creative writing led me to intellectual property law and copyright, but I started out after law school as a general litigator. I then moved to the Recording Industry Association of America, where I litigated copyright matters. After that, I became senior counsel to the deputy attorney general of the United States and helped formulate Department of Justice policy on intellectual property.

Why does the U.S. care about copyright law in other countries?

The U.S. Copyright Office in the Library of Congress supports a strong and balanced copyright system, both nationally and internationally. With the advent of the Internet, copyright is no longer solely a domestic issue—it is by nature an international one. Copyrighted works can be instantaneously disseminated throughout the world with the push of button, and are key exports for the United States economy. So it's important to help ensure that U.S. creators have the same important protections and benefits abroad that they do here at home.



David Rice

How does the Copyright Office coordinate copyright policy on a global scale?

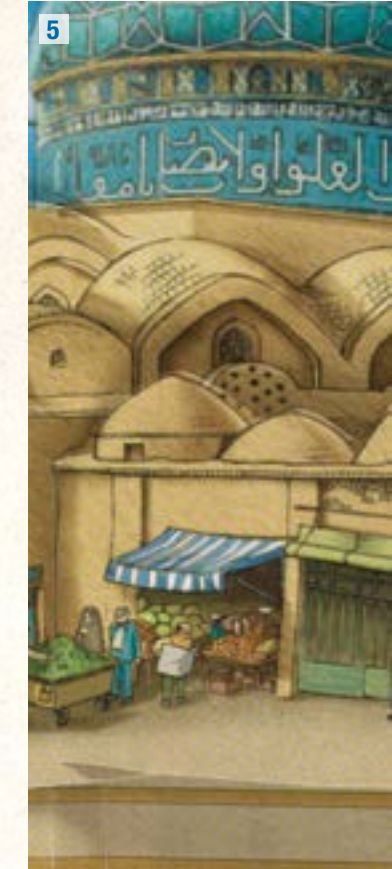
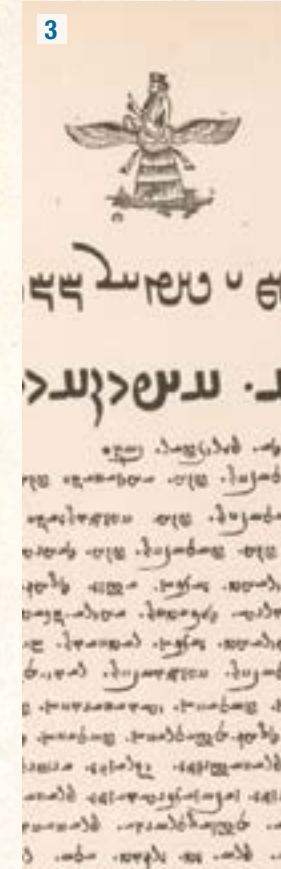
The Copyright Office collaborates closely with WIPO, a United Nations agency with 187 member states that cooperate to safeguard intellectual property rights around the world. Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, WIPO administers about 26 international treaties. I served on U.S. delegations to diplomatic conferences that concluded the most recent WIPO copyright-related treaties. One such treaty, which was signed in Beijing in 2012, protects audiovisual performances. Another, which increases access to printed materials by those who are blind or otherwise print-disabled, was signed in Marrakesh last summer.

Sponsored jointly with WIPO, the International Copyright Institute is one of the Copyright Office's premier training programs. It brings senior officials from developing countries to the Copyright Office for a week of panel discussions, training and information sharing. This year, we focused on collective rights management and invited officials from collective management organizations, which license copyrighted works on behalf of copyright owners who belong to the organizations. Licensing includes collecting royalty fees from users of the works and distributing the fees to copyright owners.

In the United States, collective rights organizations focus mainly on music. But elsewhere in the world, many other kinds of copyrighted works are licensed collectively as well. At this year's institute we explored how to make collective licensing more efficient and ways to improve the governance and transparency of collective licensing organizations.

► MORE INFORMATION

U.S. Copyright Office
copyright.gov



THE PERSIAN LITERARY LEGACY

CURATOR HIRAD DINAVERI HIGHLIGHTS ITEMS FROM "A THOUSAND YEARS OF THE PERSIAN BOOK," ON DISPLAY THROUGH SEPT. 20.

1. Shahnameh (10th Century)

The epic poem Shahnameh, or "Book of Kings," recounts the pre-Islamic history of greater Iran in 50,000 rhyming couplets. "This miniature painting featuring the hero Rustam—the Persian Hercules—and his battles with demons perfectly captures the imaginative tradition of Persian storytelling and illustrated manuscript making."

2. "The Book of Shah Jahan" (1825)

"This grand manuscript is just one example of thousands of Persian-language manuscripts from India." One of the most important works in the Library's Persian collections, the manuscript explores the life of the 17th-century ruler of India during whose reign the Taj Mahal was built.

3. Zoroastrian Religious Text (1927)

The ancient Zoroastrian faith still has followers worldwide, mainly in Iran and India. This text shows the Faravahar, a man and winged disc symbolizing the faith. "Zoroastrian writings and hymns dating back to 500 BCE are some of the earliest examples of religious poetry worldwide."

4. "Another Birth" (1963–64)

Poet Furugh Farrukhzad is probably the most famous woman in the history of Persian literature. Her work discusses topics considered taboo in Iran's conservative society "This edition of Farrukhzad's anthology is the earliest 1960s publication of the title, specially produced to celebrate the poet's work"

5. "The Voyages of Dara and Sara in Iran" (2005)

In the 1960s, Iran's Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Youth began producing high-quality children's books, music and films. "This pop-up title was given as a gift to the Library of Congress by the Iranian National Library, highlighting the value that illustrated children's books hold in Iran today."

► MORE INFORMATION

"A Thousand Years of the Persian Book" exhibition
loc.gov/exhibits/thousand-years-of-the-persian-book/
African and Middle Eastern Reading Room
loc.gov/rr/amed/

All images | Near East Section, African and Middle Eastern Division



NOMINATE A RECORDING FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTRY

THE PRESERVATION ACT OF 2000 requires the Librarian of Congress to select 25 recordings annually that are “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant” and are at least 10 years old. The selections for the 2013 National Recording Registry bring the total number of recordings on the registry to 400, a small part of the Library’s vast recorded sound collection of more than 3.5 million items.

Nominations are gathered through online submissions from the public and from the National Recording Preservation Board, which is comprised of leaders in the fields of music, recorded sound and preservation.



▲ Tupac Shakur’s 1995 “Dear Mama” from his “Me Against the World” album was added to the 2009 National Recording Registry. *Album cover courtesy Interscope Records*

You, too, can nominate up to 50 recordings annually. Here’s how:

- Include as much information as possible about the nominated recording(s). All nominations should include the recording artist(s), title, and record label name/number for published recordings or a brief but specific description for unpublished and broadcast recordings.
- Include a brief justification for each nomination.
- Submit your nomination by mail, fax or email (see below).

Nominations are accepted continuously as the deadline varies each year. Those received too late for the current year’s registry will be rolled over to the next year. Due to the large number of submissions, nominations will not be acknowledged.

◆ Frank Sinatra’s 1954 album, “Songs for Young Lovers” was named to the inaugural National Recording Registry in 2002. *Gottlieb Collection, Music Division*

▶ MORE INFORMATION

National Recording Preservation Board
 c/o Motion Picture, Broadcasting & Recorded Sound Division
 Library of Congress
 101 Independence Ave., S.E.
 Washington DC 20540-4698
loc.gov/rr/record/nrpb/
 Email recregistry@loc.gov
 Fax 202.707.8464



Amanda Reynolds

▶ MORE INFORMATION:

“On These Walls”
loc.gov/loc/walls/

THE NEPTUNE PLAZA

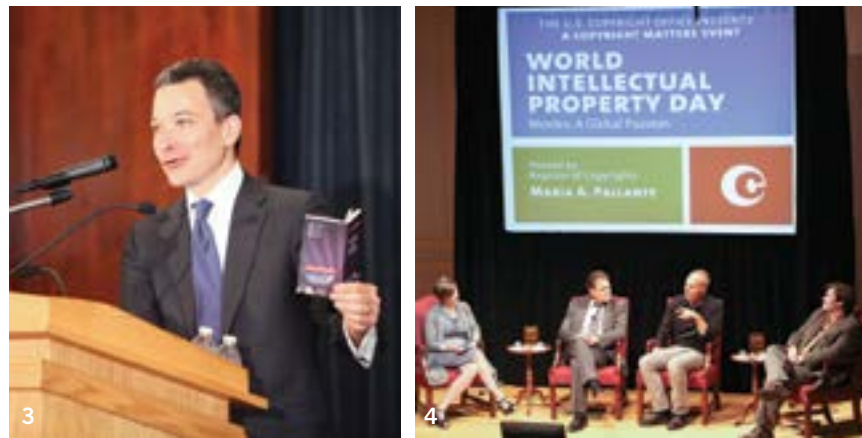
THE NEPTUNE PLAZA, located on the west front exterior of the Library’s Thomas Jefferson Building, is a gathering place for visitors and staff members.

In 1873 the Washington-based architects John L. Smithmeyer and Paul J. Pelz won the first prize of \$1,500 in the competition to design a new building for the Library of

Congress. Their Italian Renaissance-inspired entry beat out 25 others. In the 1870s and 1880s the architects extended their design to include exterior terraces. Reference to the space as the Neptune Plaza would come nearly a century later, when picnic tables were added to the open space above the “Court of Neptune,” the sculptural work by Roland Hinton Perry.



1. Children's book author Lois Lowry (right) and film producer Nikki Silver visit the Library's Young Readers Center in conjunction with Children's Book Week, May 12-18.



2. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey delivers her final reading on May 14 in the Library's Coolidge Auditorium.

3. Law professor Jeffrey Rosen delivers the Law Day lecture on the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts on May 1.

4. The U.S. Copyright Office hosts World Intellectual Property Day on April 23. Participants include, from left, Copyright Alliance Executive Director Sandra Aistars, actor Robert Newman, film and television director Matthew Harrison and Mike Mashon, head of the Library's Moving Image Section.

5. Carly Simon performs at the Library's 6th annual ASCAP "We Write the Songs" concert on May 6.

All Photos | Amanda Reynolds

LIBRARY'S FICTION PRIZE TO E. L. DOCTOROW

E. L. Doctorow, author of such critically acclaimed novels as "Ragtime," "World's Fair," "Billy Bathgate," "The March" and his current novel, "Andrew's Brain," will receive the Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction during the 2014 Library of Congress National Book Festival, Aug. 30.

The annual Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction honors an American literary writer whose body of work is distinguished not only for its mastery of the art but for its originality of thought and imagination. Doctorow's career spans more than 50 years. He has received the National Book Award for Fiction, the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction and the PEN/Faulkner Award.

His body of work has been honored with the National Humanities Medal (1998), the New York Writers Hall of Fame (2012), the PEN/Saul Bellow Award for Achievement in American Fiction (2012) and the Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters of the National Book Foundation (2013).

MORE: loc.gov/today/pr/2014/14-065.html

U.S. COPYRIGHT OFFICE ADJUSTS FEES

The U.S. Copyright Office has amended its fees for certain public services, effective on May 1, 2014. The new fee schedule governs registration, recordation, licensing activities and FOIA services, among others. The Copyright Office revisits its fee schedule every few years to align its fees with the cost of providing services, as required by the Copyright Act. This is the first fee adjustment since 2009.

For many registrations, the fees will rise from \$35 to \$55 per claim. For some services, fees will remain the same or be adjusted downward. The newly adjusted fees will allow greater cost recovery for registering copyright claims and for other services. The new fee structure follows a lengthy process in which the Copyright Office invited and carefully considered public comments on a number of business and policy points.

MORE: loc.gov/today/pr/2014/14-066.html
MORE: copyright.gov/docs/fees.html

RECORDING REGISTRY ADDITIONS

Librarian of Congress James H. Billington recently announced the selections of sound recordings to the 2013 National Recording Registry. Under the terms of the National Recording Preservation Act of 2000, the Librarian, with advice from the Library's National Recording Preservation Board, is tasked with annually selecting 25 recordings that are "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant" and are at least 10 years old. The registry features a diverse array of spoken-word and musical recordings—representing nearly every musical category and spanning the years 1896-1994.

The recent additions, which bring the total number of recordings on the registry to 400, range from the popular 1890 hit, "The Laughing Song," to U2's 1987 album, "The Joshua Tree."

MORE: loc.gov/today/pr/2014/14-052.html

FEDLINK AWARDS PRESENTED

The Federal Library and Information Network (FEDLINK) has presented its 2013 national awards for federal librarianship, which recognize the many innovative ways that federal libraries, librarians and library technicians fulfill the information demands of government, business and scholarly communities and the American public. The awards were presented at the FEDLINK Spring Exposition, held May 13 at the Library of Congress. The award for Federal Library of the Year (in the large facility category) was presented to the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Gaithersburg, Md. The Federal Library of the Year award (small facility) went to the Joint Base Librar-e and Resource Commons of the 87th Force Support Squadron, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J. Brandan Carroll was named Library Technician of the Year for his work at the Veterans Health Administration/Veterans Integrated Service Network 1 in Bedford, Mass.

MORE: loc.gov/today/pr/2014/14-082.html

FROM GLOBES TO TIES, the Library of Congress Shop features items inspired by the Library's international resources.



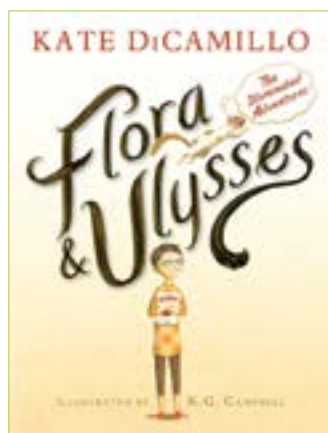
Waldseemüller Desk Globe
Product # 21508258
Price: \$45

This globe (6 inches in diameter) honors the 1507 world map by cartographer Martin Waldseemüller, which is housed in the Library of Congress.



Waldseemüller Map Coasters
Product # 21505273
Price: \$45

Safeguard your furniture with this set of four coasters depicting Waldseemüller's 16th-century map of the world.



Flora and Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures
Product # 21106785
Price: \$17.99

Girl meets squirrel in the 2014 Newbery Medal-winning book by the Library's National Ambassador for Young People's Literature.



Tequila Mockingbird
Product # 21102084
Price: \$15

"Tequila Mockingbird" is the ultimate cocktail recipe book for barflies and book clubs.



Exploration Tie
Product # 21304046
Price: \$45

Designed from old-world parchment maps, this silk tie makes a great gift for cartographers and history buffs.

MORE INFORMATION

Order online: loc.gov/shop
Order by phone: 888.682.3557
Order by fax: 202.707.1771

GROWING A GLOBAL RESOURCE

WITH SUPPORT FROM ITS PARTNERS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THE LIBRARY IS EXPANDING THE WORLD DIGITAL LIBRARY.

The growth and success of the World Digital Library (WDL) reflects the commitment of the Library of Congress and its partner institutions to making freely accessible to people everywhere rare and unique cultural treasures from around the world. (See story on page 16.)

In supporting the WDL, the private sector plays a critical role in helping to build cultural awareness and promoting international understanding, as well as serving the needs of teachers and students. Private sector donors support both the overall development of the WDL and particular geographic and content areas. These include Islamic science and technology, rare books and manuscripts from Italy, American scientific and technological achievements, maps, sacred texts, and the development of new educational features.

The Library also relies on support from public-spirited citizens to help develop the WDL



interface and technology, create interfaces for each language and establish new digital conversion production centers (or sustain existing production centers) at partner institutions around the world.

MORE INFORMATION

Library of Congress Development Office
202.707.2777
loc.gov/philanthropy

▲ World Digital Library Director John Van Oudenaren demonstrates the WDL website to librarians in Nairobi, Kenya. Overseas Operations Division

WORLD DIGITAL LIBRARY SUPPORTERS

The Library of Congress gratefully acknowledges the following for their financial support of this landmark initiative:

- Carnegie Corporation of New York
- Qatar National Library of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development
- Google Inc.
- King Abdullah University of Science and Technology
- Microsoft Corporation
- The James Madison Council of the Library of Congress
- Raja W. Sidawi
- Glenn R. Jones

- Jones International Ltd.
- H.F. "Gerry" Lenfest
- Martha H. Morris
- Consuelo Duroc-Danner
- The Mary Ann and Lawrence Tucker Foundation
- Roger and Julie Baskes
- B.F. Saul
- Susan C. Lehrman
- Buffy M. Cafritz
- Cotswold Foundation

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- Beverly and Lyman Hamilton
- Nancy H. Glanville Jewell
- Albert H. Small
- Bridges of Understanding Foundation
- Kathleen L. Casey
- Legacy Works Foundation
- Tom and Kay Martin
- Thomas M. Perkins
- Robert H. Enslow





AWARD-WINNING NOVELIST E.L. DOCTOROW DISCUSSES THE ROLE OF FICTION AND STORYTELLING—IN THE PAST AND PRESENT.

The story is the most ancient way of knowing. It preceded writing. It is the world's first system for collecting and transmitting knowledge. It antedates all the empirical disciplines of a modern society. For millennia, it was the only thing people had.

In the Bronze and Iron ages purely factual discourse did not exist. There was no learned observation of the natural world that was not religious belief, no history that was not legend, no practical information that did not resound as heightened language. Science, poetry, the law and daily speech were fused. The world was a story.

From their first telling, stories were a means of survival; they were as essential as a spear or a club; they instructed the young, they connected the present to the past, and the visible to the invisible. They distributed the suffering so that it could be borne.

Stories are still a means of survival. As the channels of communication round the world fall into fewer and fewer corporate or government hands, the unaffiliated young writer's witness is a trustworthy form of knowledge.

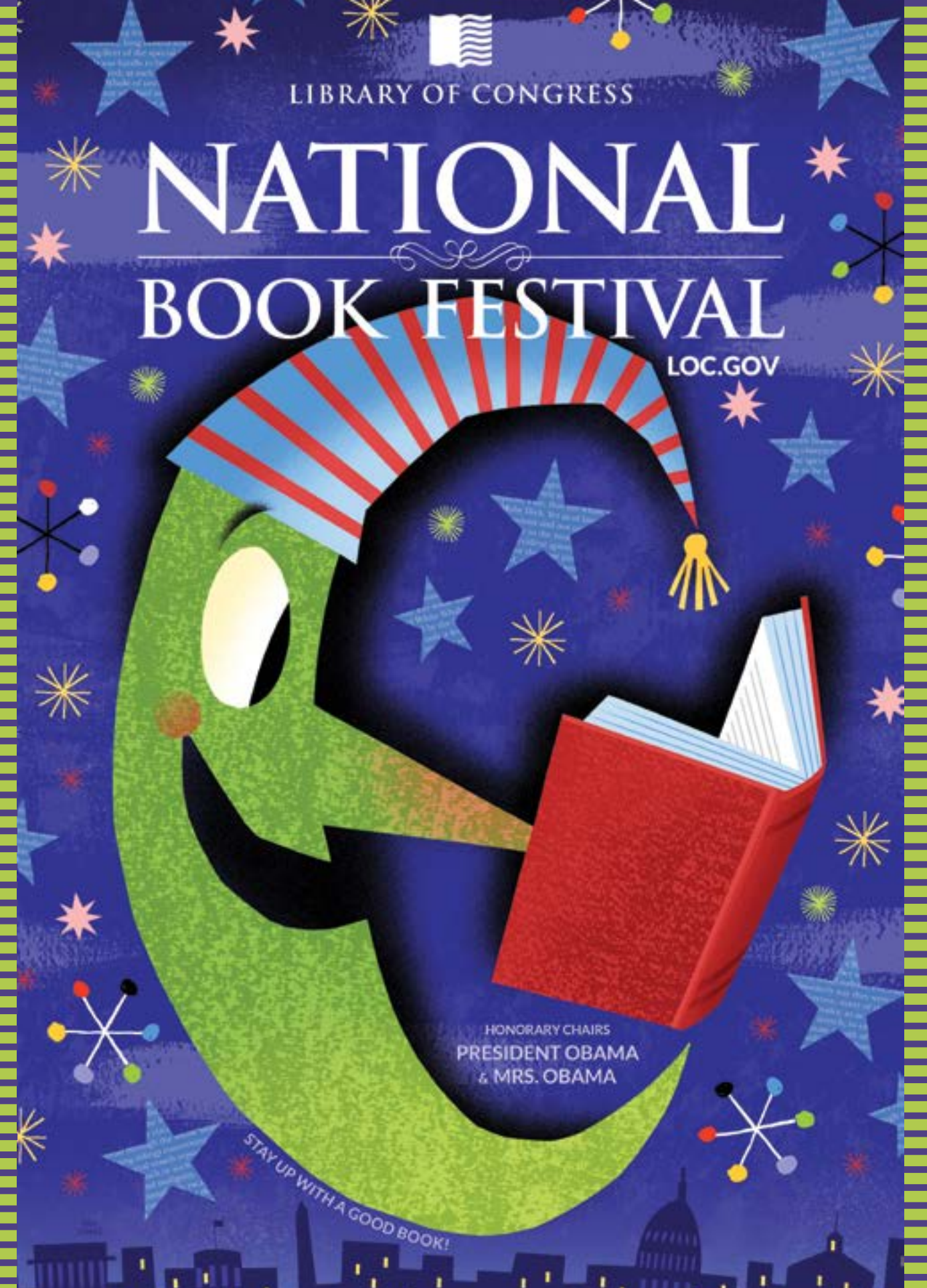
The publication of measured aesthetically worked fictions from the configured voices of writers is one way a nation composes its identity. Every story, every poem, if created honestly, with regard for a felt truth, contributes to a consensual reality, so that with each generation we may know who we are and what we're up to.

Writers appear unbidden out of nowhere. Society does not give them credentials as it does doctors or lawyers or engineers. A writer may choose to earn a Master of Fine Arts degree, but that is more of a salute and wish of good luck than a license to practice. The writer's only credential is self-conferred.

The writer of fiction stands outside the assemblage of experts that organizes the intellectual life of a society. Expert in nothing, the writer is not ruled by any one vocabulary and so is free to utilize any of them. He can write as a scientist, a theologian. He can be a philosopher or a pornographer. She can write as a journalist, a psychiatrist, an historian. She can, if she chooses, render the drugged hallucinations of poor mad souls in the streets. All of it counts, every vocabulary has equal value in the writer's eyes, nothing is excluded.

In biblical times the writer's inspiration was attributed to God. The modern writer understands that the writing of stories is itself empowering, that a sentence spun from the imagination confers a heightened awareness, or degree of perception or acuity; that a sentence composed with the strictest attention to fact, does not. And so the knowledge we glean from a story may be unlike any other. The modern fictive voice continues to sound the world and find its meanings.

E.L. Doctorow will receive the Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction at the Library's 2014 National Book Festival on Aug. 30.



The 2014 Library of Congress National Book Festival takes place 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sat., Aug. 30, 2014, at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. Poster by Bob Staake



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Thomas Jefferson's Library

Ongoing

Exploring the Early Americas

Ongoing

A Thousand Years of the Persian Book

March 27–
September 20, 2014

▶ MORE INFORMATION:
www.loc.gov/exhibits/