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# FROM THE STEPS OF ADAMS LIBRARY

James P. Adams Library

Spring 2016

## A Visit to The Martha Bacon – Ronald Ballinger Reading Room

Tayla Cardillo • Class of 2016 • Library Writing Intern

On December 18, 2015, Adams Library's Special Collections Department got a special visit. Mrs. Frances Ann van Stelter, along with her two sons and her grandson, came to see the room named after her father, The Martha Bacon – Ronald Ballinger Reading Room. Mrs. van Stelter is the daughter of Ronald Ballinger and she came to Adams Library to see the personal artifacts, papers and other documents that were donated to the college library's special collections department upon his death. She traveled all the way from South Africa, and it had been 50 years since she had visited Rhode Island. The note she wrote in the reading room's guest book before leaving reads "Pilgrimage! Thank you!"

A part of Rhode Island College's history, Robert Ballinger also played his own role in some major world events of the past. He was born in England and served in the English military from 1939-1944, almost the entirety of World War II. With a degree from Cambridge in history and politics, he moved to South Africa in 1955, where he taught at the University of Witwatersrand. He also wrote many papers on South Africa and worked on the board of the South African Institute of Race Relations to try to overturn apartheid policies. He was a visiting professor at the University of Rhode Island from 1961-62.

In 1965, Professor Ballinger moved to Rhode Island, where he and his wife Martha taught at Rhode Island College – he in history and she in English. He would later become the chair of the History Department and chair of the Council of Rhode Island College. The Ballingers requested that their living room furniture be gifted to RIC upon their death to create a proper reading room for the college. In 1981 their families gifted the furniture along with a collection of the Ballinger's writings, books and manuscripts and the personal collection of Martha's grandfather, Nathaniel Terry Bacon.

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Frances Ann van Stelter and Marlene Lopes on the day of the visit.

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## Amy Barlow, Reference Librarian: A Woman with Many Hats

Tayla Cardillo • Class of 2016 • Library Writing Intern

The Adams Library's newest staff member is Assistant Professor Amy Barlow, a reference librarian who joined the library this past summer. Despite her "still trying to figure out" her role at the library, Barlow has and continues to be involved in several important aspects of the work of the Reference Department. In addition to directly supporting research, Amy is the liaison between the library and the English, art and philosophy departments. In this role, she works with the faculty in these departments to discover the types of resources and research instruction that students need. Barlow also contributes to collection development, adding new resources to the library's collection to help better serve her departments, which she describes as "fun, because it's a lot like shopping." She is part of the Adams Library Management Team as well, which makes decisions about the library and its future. And she is ready for more, saying that she hopes that there is room for her role at the library to mature.

Barlow graduated from University of Rhode Island in 2002 with her bachelor's degree in anthropology, and went on to do a dual master's degree in history and library science, which she completed in 2006. She then took a position at the Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) where she worked in reference and taught classes in history and anthropology part time. During her time at QVCC she also established a student poetry award in honor of a beloved professor who had recently left the school. She says that she loved her time at the community college because, being the only librarian in the Reference Department, she had a lot of autonomy and professional freedom. But as a native Rhode Islander, she really wanted to work in the same place she lived, so she kept her eyes open for positions closer to Rhode Island. This search led her to Wheaton College, where she worked in the library's Research and Instruction Department. She says working there was a huge learning experience for her, and that her time there taught her a lot of the skills that she has today. She was closer to home at Wheaton, but she was still not in Rhode Island, so she continued searching for a job in her home state when she came upon an opening here at Rhode Island College.

Barlow says that her favorite part of her job at RIC thus far has been getting to know and understand the students and faculty at the college. RIC has a variety of different types of students on campus, and discovering their individual needs as patrons of the library is something that she has found rewarding. She says that she loves the creativity and the discipline that goes into research, and being an academic librarian allows her to pass on her passion for research to students, as well as to



continue to pursue her own research interests. She also has an exciting upcoming project for 2016. She has written a chapter in a book that is to be published this year in which she discusses research focused on object based learning.

When she is not at the library, Barlow enjoys "pet therapy" with her dog at her home in Providence. She likes to travel, and when traveling she visits libraries so she can see the variety of libraries that the world has to offer. She is known to take long contemplative walks around the city, as well as visit vintage and consignment shops. When asked what her deserted island read would be, she wanted to pick *Jane Eyre* because she knows that she will always enjoy the story and continue to take away new things from each read-through, but she also said that she could not abandon her current novel, *Little Dorrit* by Charles Dickens, without knowing the ending.

### Exhibits & Events!

Exhibits and events are listed on our library calendar:

[www.ric.edu/adamslibrary/hours.html](http://www.ric.edu/adamslibrary/hours.html)



## New York Times Digital Access

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Create an account using your RIC email address and password of your choice.

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### Questions for librarians?

Contact: Kieran Ayton  
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or

Amy Barlow  
([abarlow@ric.edu](mailto:abarlow@ric.edu))

### Visit, continued

On the day of the visit Adams Library's special collections librarian Marlene Lopes greeted these special guests with an assorted display of Ronald Ballinger's papers, both professional and personal; photographs of him throughout his life; and some of his personal items, including a heavy wool kilt. Many of the items she had never seen before, giving her new insight on her father and his past. Although this was a very special visit for the library, it was even more important and emotional for Mrs. van Stelter. For her, this was a chance to reconnect with her late father and discover new parts of her family history.

## Morgan Chaves: Student Spotlight

Tayla Cardillo • Class of 2016 • Library Writing Intern

Morgan Chaves, a student worker in the Reference Department, started working at the library a year ago as a work study position. When she first started attending classes at Rhode Island College, she and a friend would study in the library and she really grew to enjoy the atmosphere. When it came time to search for a work study position, she felt that the library would be the ideal place to work.

When working at the reference desk, she helps students find the research materials they need and she helps patrons with the printing and copying services that the library offers. Morgan is a biology major with her sights set on medical school and a member of the Rhode Island Army National Guard.

Right out of high school Morgan was accepted into The United States Military Academy at West Point, and she attended that school briefly. She then transferred to the Community College of Rhode Island. During her time at CCRI she was a math tutor at her old high school, Blackstone Academy Charter School. When she transferred to Rhode Island College she could no longer tutor because of her busy schedule, so she applied for a position at the library. Dragan Gill, a reference librarian here at Adams Library, said that when she saw Morgan's previous experience in the National Guard, she knew that she could handle anything that the patrons at the reference desk could throw at her, and this seems to be the case. Morgan says that she's a quick learner, a skill she learned from the army, and the ability to pick things up quickly has really helped her here at the library. Although she has had a number of different jobs through high school and college, including being a senate page and working in a family-owned funeral parlor, this is her first "customer service" job. She emphasized that patience is a skill that she has developed since working with the patrons here at the library.

Morgan says that she enjoys her work here at the library because she likes to help people. She also says that while she is not always the most organized person in her personal life, she will happily organize things in the stacks for hours without complaint. She commented that one particular highlight from her time at the library was helping pass out snacks during finals week last semester. She recalled rolling the cart up to a group of students studying and their eyes lighting up when they learned that the library was giving away free snacks. Morgan said that she "felt like Santa" passing out goodies to the excited crowd. When she is not working at the library or doing her course work, Morgan enjoys playing video games and practicing the violin.

## Comments at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Depository Library Status

Rachel Carpenter, MLS • Associate Professor, Library • Government Documents  
Coordinator

### From the lecture notes of the September 17, 2015 presentation

April 6, 2015, marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Adams Library's designation as a Federal Depository Library. Exactly why the Adams Library was so designated is unknown, but by recounting a bit of the history of the 1960s and some of the changes in the federal government during this time, it may become clear why Adams, along with hundreds of other libraries, was invited to join the U.S. Government Printing Office's Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP).

The 1960s saw historic legislation in education, civil rights, poverty, the arts, space exploration and the environment, which created new federal agencies, offices and programs. These agencies would be responsible for gathering and creating data and disseminating it to Congress, to other agencies and to the nation's citizens.<sup>1</sup> These new departments and programs included Transportation (1966), the Environmental Protection Agency (1970), and the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities (1965). The National Library of Medicine launched the MEDLARS system (now MEDLINE/PUBMED), an index to the world's medical research literature, in 1964.<sup>2</sup> The Office of Education created ERIC, the Education Research Information Centers database, and by 1966 was distributing thousands of educational research reports in microfiche format.<sup>3</sup> Though both of these databases were computer-based or "automated systems," their primary "output" was printed indexes, which were distributed to libraries, education offices or hospitals around the world.

The Government Printing Office's workload doubled in the 1960s due to this government expansion and to the tremendous amount of new legislation and new information which was being made available. The introduction of computerization of the printing process of government documents made it possible to reproduce and print more documents than ever before. There was an explosion of direct document sales with publications such as the Warren Commission Report on the assassination of President Kennedy and the Surgeon General's 1964 report on the dangers of smoking and tobacco.<sup>4</sup> As the amount of information grew, and the methods of printing and disseminating became faster and more efficient, the number of depository libraries needed to increase access and availability grew as well. It had long ago been legislated that designated libraries in each state and territory would receive public documents, but the number of depository collections grew slowly. However, between 1962 and 1970, the number of libraries with depository collections increased by 400, over 65 percent.<sup>5</sup>

It was Rhode Island Senator Claiborne Pell who, in 1965, pursued depository status for Adams Library. Pell was a strong advocate for higher education for all. One of his early efforts was to develop the foundation for the financial grants which would one day bear his name. Pell Grants assisted and still do assist those who might not have the ability and resources to pay the full expenses of a college education. This funding program, in essence, also helped to expand and grow colleges and universities during the '60s as the number of people attending college grew tremendously. Senator Pell also became a very strong advocate for libraries, throughout his years as a legislator; therefore, it was fitting that Senator Pell became our champion as well.

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Don't forget the **Browsing** page if you're looking for a fun novel or timely nonfiction.



## Review of: *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nahisi Coates

Judith Stokes, MLS • Associate Professor, Library • Electronic Resources Librarian

Winner of the National Book Award in 2015, *Between the World and Me* is an intimate memoir by Ta-Nehisi Coates, an *Atlantic* national correspondent, winner of the distinguished MacArthur Fellowship and the Kirkus Prize, among others. Structured as a letter to his teenage son, the book actually is an open letter to the world frankly revealing how Coates' own life as a young black man in America was threatened by the world in which he lived and that this is a reality every black father must prepare his son to survive.

From a Baltimore ghetto to “the Mecca” that was Howard University, Coates was a bookish child with an early understanding of the role of white supremacy in the American Dream. He writes:

*“I feared not just the violence of this world but the rules designed to protect you from it, the rules that would have you contort your body to address the block, and contort again to be taken seriously by colleagues, and contort again so as not to give the police a reason. All my life I’d heard people tell their black boys and black girls to “be twice as good,” which is to say “accept half as much.” These words would be spoken with a veneer of religious nobility, as though they evidenced some unspoken quality, some undetected courage, when in fact all they evidenced was the gun to our head and the hand in our pocket. This is how we lose our softness. This is how they steal our right to smile.”*

When Coates' college friend, Prince Jones, was shot to death merely for “driving while black” by a black plain clothes police officer in Maryland's Prince George's County, Coates raged against the inescapable majoritarian American Dream. “The officer who killed Prince Jones was black. The politicians who empowered this officer to kill were black. Many of the black politicians, many of them twice as good, seemed unconcerned. How could this be?”

From studying Malcolm X to experiencing the joys and fears of fatherhood, to living in Paris, Coates' story is an intellectual journey as well as an emotional one, raising more questions than it answers. He urges his son to struggle even while he professes no hope that American society will change. Coates goes deeper than Black Lives Matter, inviting his readers to experience what comes between black lives and the rhetoric of “all lives” that cannot be captured on iPhone videos.

### Depository Library, continued

In 1965 Adams library was brand new. In the early years, government documents helped build the library's physical collection. In exchange for these free materials, the library processed the materials, housed them and made them accessible to all users. Adams Library still has a sizable print documents collection, but as the years have passed, and as the technology has changed, the library receives fewer physical documents and more and more “born digital” materials. Regardless of format, it continues to be the responsibility of Federal Depository Libraries, like Adams Library, to process and make accessible the information resources of the United States government.

1. United States. Government Printing Office. *Keeping America Informed. The U.S. Government Printing Office: 150 Years of Service to the Nation.* Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2011, p 93. <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/GPO-KEEPINGAMERICAINFORMED/pdf/GPO-KEEPINGAMERICAINFORMED.pdf>
2. United States National Institutes of Health. National Library of Medicine. “175 Years. Our Milestones.” [Timeline - Year 1964] <https://apps.nlm.nih.gov/175/milestones.cfm#>
3. United States. Department of Education. *50 Years of ERIC 1964-2014.* [https://eric.ed.gov/pdf/ERIC\\_Retrospective.pdf](https://eric.ed.gov/pdf/ERIC_Retrospective.pdf)
4. United States. Government Printing Office. *Keeping America Informed. The U.S. Government Printing Office: 150 Years of Service to the Nation.* Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2011, p 99.
5. Ibid.

