Black Mountain College Collection

Books and other materials purchased from Black Mountain College (1933-56) form the nucleus of the collection. The collection is composed of rare and special editions of books and prints as well as memorabilia that were originally at Black Mountain College. The collection also includes materials by or about Black Mountain College's faculty and graduates. These materials do not circulate. If you have any questions about this collection please contact Dr. Leverett T. Smith by e-mail at lsmith@ncwc.edu or by telephone at (252) 985-5350.

The collection is enumerated in 11 sections.

1. A list of some 5,300 books that have been identified at North Carolina Wesleyan College as being originally part of the Black Mountain College Library. These have been entered into an Excel file containing six fields. The first three hold the author, title, and publication information for each book. The last three contain information about the book’s connection to Black Mountain College. The fourth reports the name of the donor of the book if it has been displayed on a Donor Plate in the front of the book. The fifth reports the librarian’s note on the spine of the book of the title page (this will often include both the donor’s name and the date of acquisition). The sixth, titled “Other,” indicated the presence of markings in the book -- owner's signatures, bookplate, marginal notes, and so forth. The file itself is available on request, and may be downloaded from the collection page at [http://www.ncwc.edu/library/info/collections/special.php](http://www.ncwc.edu/library/info/collections/special.php). The original sheets on which this information was compiled are on the top shelf of the bottom cabinet. Five boxes of file cards made from these sheets are in the college archives.

2. Some 273 individual books, either from the Black Mountain College Library, or acquired since Wesleyan's acquisition of the library, of particular value, housed in a wooden cabinet in the Carleton Noell Reading Room and in the wooden and glass cabinets in the Hardee-Rives Room of the library. These books are shelved by Dewey Decimal number; oversized books are shelved in the lower cabinet in the Reading Room. A description of each book and a note on its location can be found in the list below.

3. Catharine Wharton Morris, Oil portrait of Thomas Whitney Surette, 1922. 40x35 inches.

4. Various artists, New European Graphics. Six lithographs, the title page, and table of contents from this Bauhaus portfolio. Artists represented are Alexander Archipenko, Umberto Boccioni, Nathalie Gontcharova, Alexie Von Jawlensky, Michel Larionov, and Enrico Prampolini. Lyonel Feininger did the title page and table of contents. These have been restored and framed and are currently hanging in the library’s north hallway. The container is on the middle shelf of the lower cabinet.

5. Eighteen tape cassettes, all labeled "Paul Leser" and numbered, plus a box containing a 303 page transcription, parts edited for radio broadcast. Conversations on matters autobiographical and anthropological. Pp. 282-293 concern Black Mountain College, where Leser taught 1949-1951. The box also contains a 49 page transcription of an interview of Dorothy Carr Morris by Merrill Gillespie concerning her experience at BMC, mostly during the second world war.
Unless the interview is on one of the Leser tapes, we do not have the interview itself. These were done in the early 70s by Merrill Gillespie, himself a former Black Mountain student, and passed on to Edward Dorn. A letter dated 24 July 1975 from Gillespie to Dorn accompanies the transcriptions. Dorn donated the material to our BMC collection. Bottom cabinet, top shelf.

6. Three file folders, contents as follows: Folder A: Typescript of a poem "An American in Augustland" by "Elliot Coleman, Asheville School, Asheville, N.C." 68 pp. Folder B: titled "Black Mtn. Collection -- documents & correspondence." Contains two letters from Charles Olson regarding the sale of the BMC library to Wesleyan, plus envelopes (one stapled to the letter). 4 pieces. Correspondence between Josef Albers and Walter Gray [Wesleyan's first librarian], as follows: 6/10/60 letter Albers to Jasper Smith [Wesleyan's first business manager] offering to purchase Bauhaus portfolios. Reply from Walter Gray. Albers' letter of 6/17/60 offers some of his own prints in exchange and contains two attachments showing the prints. The envelope has the following note, presumably from Gray: "Dr. Moore [Wesleyan's first academic dean]: Re "Albers prints. This is too far out for me! Any comments?" "Me too -- ? JWM." There are two more letters from Albers later that same month, one announcing that he's sending a portfolio of Posada prints to us. There is another inquiry from Albers to Gray about the prints 2/2/63 accompanied, apparently, by two carbons, "Works by Josef Albers in public collections" and "Josef Albers." 18 pieces. Correspondence, November, 1970, among Mary Harris, Albers, and then librarian Alva Stewart. Harris recommends selling the prints to Albers, Stewart inquires, Albers responds, and Stewart responds saying he has sent the prints. 4 Pieces. Inquiry from Howard S. Hilley about the library and response of Jasper Smith. 2 pieces. Three pages of a manuscript beginning "The new students had come to Black Mountain ..." numbered 26, 34, and 35. 3 pieces. Newspaper photo of Joel Oppenheimer at NCWC (vintage 1976). 1 piece. 32 pieces in all. Folder C: "Wesleyan documents Black Mountain Library." 1. Xeroxed copies of material from the NCWC business office regarding the purchase and shipping of the Black Mountain College Library. This includes correspondence, legal documents, and office memoranda. 43 pieces. Copies of Howard Hilley's 1957 letter to the college and response [originais in folder B]. 2 pieces. Xerox copies of the Albers/Library correspondence [originais in folderB] with a transcription of one of Albers' letters. Some of this material is a correspondence between Albers and Alva Stewart for which we do not have the originals. 18 pieces. Xerox of letter to Stewart thanking him for BMC material donated to NC Archives and History. 1 piece. Xerox of letter from John Washeba to Michael Danoff discussing the restoration of prints, with reproductions of the prints in question. 5 pieces. Xerox of 1969 correspondence between Stewart and Newton Smith about the BMC library. Smith was then writing a dissertation on the Black Mountain poets. 4 pieces. Xerox of Mary Harris's 1970 letter [original in folder B], with a copy of her research project's stationary [The Arts at Black Mountain College 1933-1956] and two copies of the project's brochure. 4 pieces. Various materials connected with the formation of the BMC collection here: "May Term Projects - 1975" describing the May term "Black Mountain College: An Exploration in Community" with a second copy of the description of that project. 5 pieces. Carbon of 1975 letter of Leverett Smith to the Curator of the Print Collection at the Museum of Modern Art regarding the Bauhaus prints, with xeroxes from a book describing each print in the NCWC collection. 11 pieces. "Memorandum, November 4, 1976" advertising a talk by Mary Harris on Black Mountain at NCWC. 1 piece. 1976 brochure for an exhibition of Ray Johnson at the North Carolina Museum of Art. 1 piece. "References to BMC library in Duberman" typescript. 2 pieces. 97 pieces in all. Bottom cabinet, top shelf.

8. Portfolios by Henry Smith Williams, **The History of the Art of Writing.** London and New York: Merrill & Baker, no date. The four volumes of this apparently came in two portfolios, one quite a bit thicker than the other. "With more than two hundred facsimile reproductions in tone and color from the important languages of every age." Each contains an uncovered BMC library bookplate and donor card that reads "Gift of Hilda Loines." Bottom cabinet, middle shelf.

9. Miscellaneous art materials: 1. Original etching, in very poor condition, title in (I think) Italian, beginning "ARCHITA Tarentine Filosofo illustre, ..." 2 Portfolio, Carlos Merida, **Carnavales de Mexico.** Mexico, 1940. Inscribed "To the Art Students of Black Mountain College, Carlos Merida March, 1940." Number 234 of 500. Only four of the ten lithographs remain, together with the title page and text. Each of the lithographs is signed by Merida. 3. Portfolio, Hester Harrington Stow, **Greek Athletics and Festivals.** Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1939. Only a sticker with the LC number identifies this as being from BMC. 4. Six portfolios in poor condition, titled **Turner's Watercolors at Farnley Hall.** London: "The Studio," no date. 5. Portfolio, Carlos Merida, **Mexican Costume.** No city: Pocahontas Press, 1941. Plates 4, 5, 20, and 23 of the 25 are missing. Embossed "Black Mountain College Library." 6. Various visual materials, covered by cardboard container: 2 pictures mounted on dark gray-green cardboard, one showing a medieval scene, the other and interior, labeled "New York, Metropolitan Mus. of Art Interior Room of the Regency Louis XV." 7 pictures mounted on white poster board, two different sizes, occasional labeling. Article torn from a [college?] magazine called "... Monticello in Retrospect ..." 1 postcard, apparently mailed in 1939. 1 reproduction, "View of the Tower of Notre Dame." 3 reproductions from "L'Art d' Aujourd'hui." 16 color reproductions from various sources. 7 plates and 3 pages of text from a book on ancient sculpture. 2 photographs: one of a snake charmer and two boys, the other of statuary at Reims Cathedral. 3 original prints in poor condition: One from the Federal Art Project is "Chapel Window" by June Dale. It's signed by the artist. The other two are clearly clearly original. One is by Corot, the other Manet. These are likely from books as they have been tacked to the wall at some point. Portraits of Daniel Webster, Ben Franklin, and U.S. Grant from the Hall of Fame Series, supplement to TRUTH, May, 1901. Manila envelope with "Em Wood" and "Nell Rice, B. M. C."


11. Portfolio: Carlos Merida. **Where the Two Came to Their Father.** Bottom cabinet, middle shelf. Xeroxed typescript: Bottom cabinet, top shelf.

**Book List (collection item #2)**


081 D95a Durant, Will. **Adventures in Genius.** New York: Simon and Schuster, 1931. Given to BMC by John Dewey in 1937, its inscription reads "For Professor John Dewey from a student who will always be indebted to him, Will Durant 5-22-31. Top cabinet.

111.85 P238p Parker, DeWitt H. **The Principles of Aesthetics.** Boston: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1920. Annotated in the hand of Frank Rice, son of the founder of BMC John Andrew Rice. Frank Rice was first a student, then a teacher of languages, at BMC. Top cabinet.

133.7 E92n Evans, Bergen. **The Natural History of Nonsense.** New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946. The BMC bookplate is visible in this book and covers an inscription. Notes on the inside front and back are partially erased. On end pages are notes for plots of short stories. Given to the BMC library by Hazel-Frieda Larsen. Top Cabinet.


153.1 K78g Koffka, K. **The Growth of the Mind: An Introduction to Child Psychology.** New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1928. Marked throughout in pen and pencil. Pencil markings early in the book are erased, suggesting these, at least, were originally made at BMC. Top cabinet.


190 L785 Einstein, Albert, et. al. **Living Philosophies.** New York: Simon and Schuster, 1931. Given to the BMC library in 1935 by student William Hinckley. Only the section by Bertrand Russell is marked, perhaps by a student or faculty member during the brief debate over the possibility of the college's hiring Russell in 1944. See Duberman, **Black Mountain,** p. 202. Top cabinet.


194 B499d Bergson, Henri. **Les Deux Sources de la Morale et de la Religion.** Paris: Librairie Felix Alcan, 1932. This book was rebound at BMC. It was part of John Dewey's gift to BMC in
1937 and is inscribed "Professor John Dewey with the compliments of H. Bergson." Top cabinet.

201 M681t Mitchell, Henry Bedinger. Talks on Religion: A Collective Inquiry. New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1908. Given by Dewey to BMC in 1937, this book is signed on the endpapers by each of the fifteen participants, who are identified in the table of contents only by their professions, e. g., Dewey is "The Philosopher." Top cabinet.


220.5 B584m Moulton, Richard G. ed. The Modern Reader's Bible. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1935. Given to the BMC library by composer Lou Silver Harrison, it has his signature on the inside front. Top cabinet.


343.33 D399w Dennett, Mary Ware. Who's Obscene? New York: The Vanguard Press, 1930. Given by Dewey. Inscription reads "To Dr. John Dewey with grateful appreciation from Mary Ware Dennett March 1930." Top cabinet.


728 B455e v. 1. Bemis, Albert Farwell, and John Burchard. **The Evolving House, Volume I, A History of the Home.** Cambridge: The Technology Press, 1933. Inscribed "I am confident that Mr. Bemis were he living would be very interested in Black Mountain College as I am now. So it is a pleasure to present these books with the compliments of the authors . . . . . John E. Burchard Cambridge May 12, 1941." Top cabinet.


759.5 A453v 1951 Aloi, Roberto. **Contemplazioni.** Milan, 1951. #269. BMC library bookplate.


780.15 D553e Dickinson, Edward. **The Education of a Music Lover.** New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915. Given by Surette. Inscription on Oberlin College stationary laid in: "Dear Mr. Surette: -- I am sending you a copy of my new book 'Music and the higher Education', as a token of my appreciation of the valuable work you are doing for musical culture. Yours sincerely, Edward Dickinson." Top cabinet.


780.4 R956r Wakefield, A. M. **Ruskin on Music.** London: George Allen, 1894. Rebound at BMC.


782.1 V484s 1942 Stix, John. **Macbeth and Otello: A Critical Survey of Two Verdi Operas.** John M. Stix, Black Mountain College, April, 1942. 81 pp. Xeroxed typescript.


808.81 G434 *Giants Play Well in the Drizzle*, issues 1 to 31. A full run of the little magazine edited by Martha King, a former BMC student. Bottom cabinet, top shelf.


811 C337 a Case, Josephine Young. **At Midnight on the Thirty-First of March.** Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1938. Inscribed "For the Black Mountain College Library, Josephine Young Case." Top cabinet.


811 O52t Olson, Charles. "That there was a woman in Gloucester, Massachusetts whose". Buffalo: The Institute of Further Studies, 1968. Bottom cabinet, top shelf.


811 W724i Williams, Jonathan. **In the Azure Over the Squalor.** New York: Jordan Davies, 1983. One of 75 copies signed by Williams. Bottom cabinet, top shelf.


811.54 E24t Edson, Russell. **The Traffic.** "This nineteen hundred & seventy eight New Year Edition of one hundred & fifty copies, with a drawing by Steven Applequist, was printed for friends of The Red Ozier Press at the old Hotel Washington, Madison." Bottom cabinet, top shelf.


811.54 N666f Niedecker, Lorine. **From This Condensery: The Complete Writing of Lorene Niedecker.** No city: The Jargon Society, 1985. One of 100 copies specially bound and signed by


901.9 D951s Durant, Will. *Caesar and Christ*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944. Inscribed "April 8th, 1945. Temple University Phila., Pa. To the students of Black Mountain College, to the faculty, to the many friends we made: This is but a small expression of the gratefulness we felt for your wonderful hospitality and friendship. Florence Williams, Rhoda Harris, Isabel Scult, Harold Jasper, Joanne Tyson, Isabel Soll." Glass cabinet, Hardee-Rives Room.


92 J43m Michelet, J. *Jeanne d'Arc*. Paris: Libraire Grund, no date. "Bound '49." (Librarian's


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