James Branch Cabell’s Personal Library: Enriching publishing with local library data

- Jimmy Ghaphery, Associate University Librarian for Scholarly Communications and Publishing
- Sam Byrd, Scholarly Publishing Librarian
- VCU Libraries
Anybody here ever read anything by James Branch Cabell?
Anybody here ever heard of James Branch Cabell?
VCU Monroe Park Campus library named after Cabell
“[Jurgen] is so obscene, lewd, lascivious and indecent that a minute description of the same would be offensive to the Court and improper to be placed upon the records thereof." (John S. Sumner, agent for the New York Society of the Suppression of Vice)
The Cabell Room
Cabell Library, VCU
JAMES BRANCH CABELL'S LIBRARY: A CATALOGUE

by

Jean Maurice Duke

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of English in the Graduate College of The University of Iowa

August, 1968

Thesis supervisor: Assistant Professor O. M. Brack

James Branch Cabell's Library: A Catalogue, by Maurice Duke


A = East Wall, Main Library
B = North Wall, Main Library
D = South Wall, Main Library
G = South Wall, Main Parlor
K = Poynton Lodge
Laid in: 1 piece of minutiae.

Another copy: 1
Autograph: First binding, first state and first printing of this book, James Branch Cabell.

Another copy: (Corrected in Cabell's autograph.)

Autograph: Property of James Branch Cabell
Autograph: To James Branch Cabell/Leon Underwood/26.
Autograph: This book has given me great pleasure.

TLN: From Underwood, New York, 10 Nov. 1926, 1p.

Laid in: Brochure titled A First List of Books to be Published in the Fall of 1926 from The John Day Co.
Laid in: Advertisement from The John Day Co. regarding The Music from Behind the Moon.

Laid in: 5 page pamphlet titled A First List of Books to be Published in the Fall of 1926, by The John Day Co.
Laid in: Advertisement titled John Day Late Famous Printer of Many Good Books. 1 May 1926.

The Nightmare Has Tripled: An Author's Note on Error, N.Y., 1926.
Autograph: James Branch Cabell
This is a 14 page pamphlet.
Laid in: 2 types, corrected in autograph, pages of corrections and emendations for The Nightmare Has Tripled.
Seeking Utility

- Large PDF
- OCR Challenges
- Beyond inventory and artifact
- Continue functional legacy of the work

Burton Rascoe, James Branch Cabell, Elliott White Springs 1928
Another source for the data

- Surprise: Books cataloged
- Searchable in catalogs
- Inside knowledge needed (Duke no.)
- MARC not patron friendly to read or manipulate

Some 200 books written by or about Cabell were held in this rosewood cabinet in the main parlor of his house.
The optimist proclaims that we live in the best of all possible worlds; and the pessimist fears this is true.” James Branch Cabell. *The Silver Stallion.*
Dataset

- MARC records
- MarcEdit -> CSV -> Excel

(Duke Number | Author Name | Title | Publisher and Date | Date | Physical Description | Series | Local Note | Contents | Original Location (from manuscript) | OCLC #)

- Added location information and QA

Burton Rascoe, a literary critic from Chicago, Ellen Glasgow, James Branch Cabell, Priscilla Bradley Shepherd Cabell (Cabell’s first wife), and Elliott White Springs. 1928
Vulgar witchcraft errors

- QA for identified gaps; a new set of cataloger eyes
- Treatise of Spirits mystery solved
PDF Dataset Version

• Derived from Excel
• Familiar for Humanists
• 337 page ms → 71 page PDF
• 197MB (color) → 40MB → 1MB PDF
• Born digital searching
Text Dataset Version

- Derived from Excel
- TSV text version
- Stable non-proprietary format
- Portable import into Excel or other statistical packages
Basic Analysis Examples

Top 10 Authors in James Branch Cabell's Library

- Cabell, James Branch: 159
- Shakespeare, William: 41
- Glasgow, Elen: 36
- Hewlett, Maurice: 34
- Merchant, H. L.: 34
- Hergesheimer, Joseph: 24
- Walpole, Hugh: 24
- Balzac: 22
- Lang, Andrew: 22
Basic Analysis Examples

Tarkington: 16 of 17 total
Bailey: 13 of 13
Twain: 7 of 13

Top 10 Authors Summer Home

- Tarkington, Booth
- H. C. Bailey
- Daly, Elizabeth
- Gruber, Frank
- Twain, Mark
- Rinehart, Mary Roberts
- Gilbert Keith
- Dorothy Leigh
- Byrne, Donn
- Hugo, Victor
Other Possibilities

• Detailed Analytics
• With OCLC numbers possibilities for text mining
• Network Analysis

Louisa Nelson, nurse to the three young Cabell sons, James, Robert and John.
Presentation

- Versions housed in one CONTENTdm collection with introduction
- Version overload?
- DOI’s and other dressing
Bringing it on Home

- Value of your and others metadata
- Licensing of metadata thinking both Artisanal Data and Big Data
- Old projects in new bottles

"I too was once a dreamer: and in dreams there are lessons." James Branch Cabell. The High Place.
Credits and References

- Cabell images from the online exhibit by Alice Campbell: *James Branch Cabell: Man of Letters and Libraries*. https://gallery.library.vcu.edu/exhibits/show/jamesbranchcabell
- Primary materials held in Cabell Library Special Collections. https://www.library.vcu.edu/research/special-collections/
- Imaging and data wrangling, Joe Woods, Digital Specialist