

LCM

**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MAGAZINE
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024**

A CENTURY OF FASHION

**Library Collections Reflect
Evolution of Style**

Inside

The Amazing Roots
Of One Family Tree

Cover-ed in Glory:
Great Book Designs

Plus

Extreme Sewing

Paging 'Doctor Atomic'

Are You Ready for Some
Football?





FEATURES

10

First Designers

Two African Americans created styles for the wives of U.S. presidents.

12

Life and Dress

Library holdings reflect the evolution of fashion over the 20th century.

20

Deep Roots

A massive family tree traces a Black family's history across centuries.

■ The cover of the first issue of Vogue magazine, published Dec. 17, 1892.
General Collections

Mission of the Library of Congress

The Library's mission is to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

Library of Congress Magazine is issued bimonthly by the Office of Communications of the Library of Congress and distributed free of charge to publicly supported libraries and research institutions, donors, academic libraries, learned societies and allied organizations in the United States. Research institutions and educational organizations in other countries may arrange to receive Library of Congress Magazine on an exchange basis by applying in writing to the Library's Director for Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access, 101 Independence Ave. S.E., Washington DC 20540-4100. LCM is also available on the web at loc.gov/lcm/. All other correspondence should be addressed to the Office of Communications, Library of Congress, 101 Independence Ave. S.E., Washington DC 20540-1610.

news@loc.gov

loc.gov/lcm

ISSN 2169-0855 (print)

ISSN 2169-0863 (online)

Carla Hayden
Librarian of Congress

April Slayton
Executive Editor

Mark Hartsell
Editor

Ashley Jones
Designer

Shawn Miller
Photo Editor

Contributors
Kelsey Corlett-Rivera
Tim Gunn
Sahar Kazmi
Leslie Long
Susan Reyburn
Kate Rivers
Ashley Tucker
Neely Tucker
Kathy Woodrell

■ **On the cover:** A model poses in an evening gown at the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C., in this 1952 photo by society and fashion photographer Toni Frissell. *Prints and Photographs Division*

DEPARTMENTS

2 Page from the Past

3 For You

4 Online Offerings

6 Curator's Picks

8 Trending

9 My Job

10 Extremes

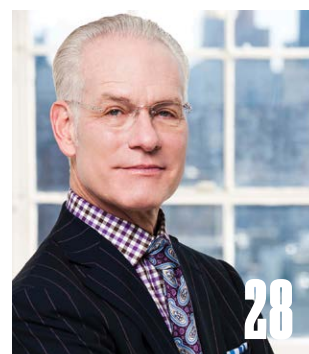
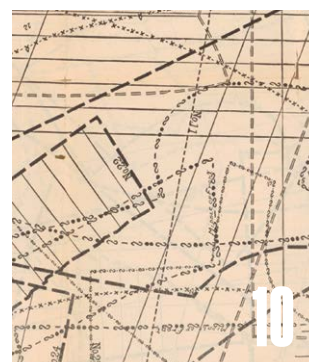
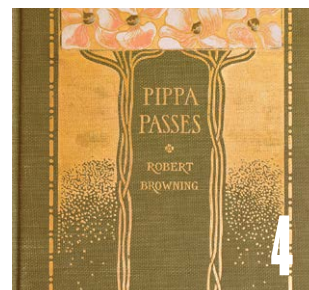
24 Around the Library

25 News Briefs

26 Shop

27 Support the Library

28 Last Word

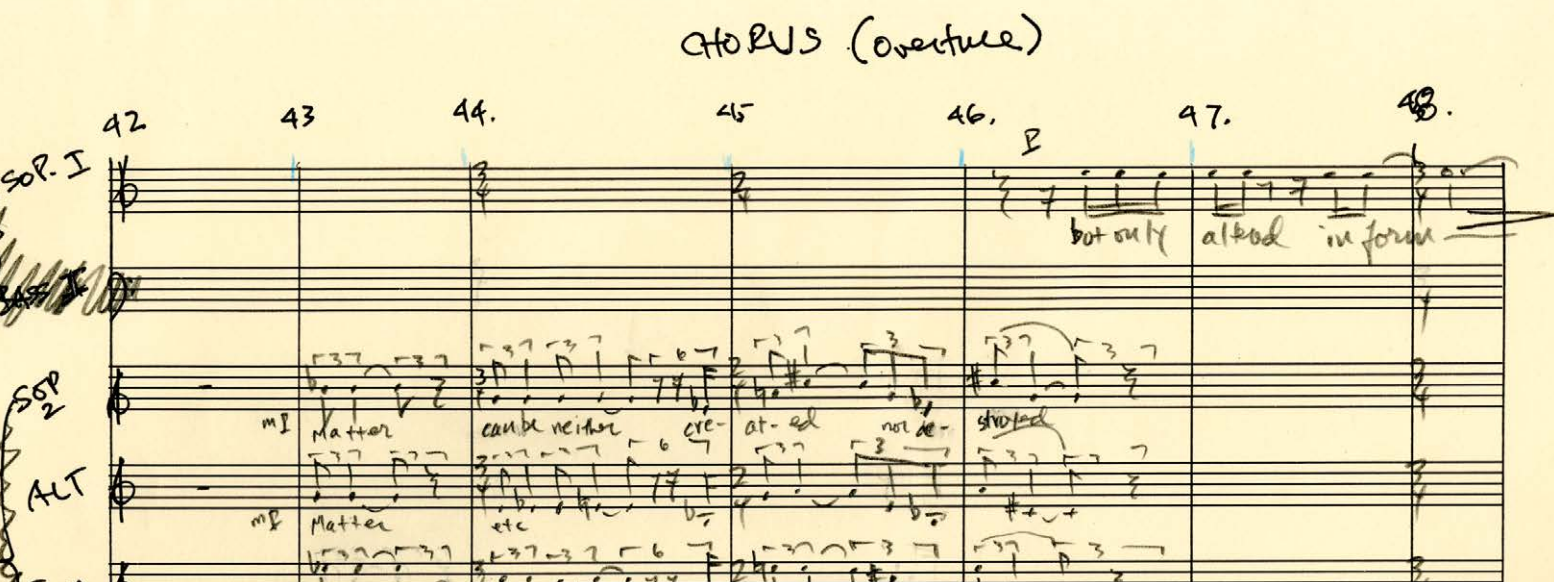


CONNECT ON

loc.gov/connect



PAGE FROM THE PAST



■ The original chorus from “Doctor Atomic,” which drew the critical eye of physicist Marvin L. Cohen. *Music Division/ Copyright by Hendon Music Inc., a Boosey & Hawkes Company. Used with permission.*

‘DOCTOR ATOMIC’

Adams papers chronicle the creation of an opera inspired by Oppenheimer.

The setting: the San Francisco Opera and the 2005 sneak preview of “Doctor Atomic,” a new opera by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer John Adams based on the compelling saga of physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer and the other scientists who engineered the world-altering test of the first atomic bomb.

In the audience sat Marvin L. Cohen, president of the American Physical Society, amateur musician and real-life physicist from the University of California, Berkeley – the very school that had been Oppenheimer’s academic home.

The opera’s first words drew Cohen’s professional attention:

Matter can be neither created nor destroyed, but only altered in form.

Energy can be neither created nor destroyed, but only altered in form.

Celebrated director and Adams collaborator Peter Sellars had devised the libretto, drawing directly from once-secret government documents, official government publications and firsthand accounts of scientists working to pull off the Trinity test.

Cohen, however, believed those first words presented a problem: The text did not reflect scientists’ knowledge in 1945. Oppenheimer would have known better.

The solution to that problem is documented in the archival collection of Adams’ music manuscripts and papers, acquired by the Library last year even as Christopher Nolan’s blockbuster film “Oppenheimer” brought renewed buzz to the subject. The material related to “Doctor Atomic” includes costume designs, concert programs and oversized music manuscript pages, rich with Adams’ pencil handwriting.

To correct the error noticed by Cohen, Adams and Sellars adjusted the music and text to convey a scientific perspective that would have been right in Oppenheimer’s view:

We believed that “matter can be neither created nor destroyed but only altered in form.”

We believed that “energy can be neither created nor destroyed but only altered in form.”

But now we know that energy may become matter, and now we know that matter may become energy, and thus be altered in form.

It goes to show that words, and words in music, matter.

—Kate Rivers is a specialist in the Music Division.

A WIDER WORLD OF BOOKS

Treaty helps make accessible books more readily available across borders.

Advocates gathered at the Library this past summer to celebrate a major milestone for reading: the 10th anniversary of the Marrakesh Treaty, an international agreement that makes books more accessible for the blind and print disabled.

The treaty, adopted in Marrakesh, Morocco, was prompted by widespread recognition of what was called a “book famine,” a dearth of books published in accessible formats.

The U.S. Copyright Office, a part of the Library of Congress, devoted many years to making the treaty a reality, working in collaboration with advocates and other government agencies. The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS), a division of the Library, is one of the organizations authorized to facilitate sharing of books internationally.

By allowing accessible copies to be shared across borders, the treaty greatly increased the number of works available. Organizations so far have shared more than 932,000 books, over 44% of which can be downloaded immediately.

Producing accessible books from scratch is time-consuming and costly.

NLS, for example, spent close to a year and nearly \$500,000 to produce George R.R. Martin’s “A Song of Ice and Fire” book series (“Game of Thrones”) in braille with tactile maps. It had not yet transcribed Diana Gabaldon’s enormously popular “Outlander” series into braille when the treaty took effect because of the required outlay of time and money.

Following the treaty’s implementation, the Royal National Institute for the Blind in the United Kingdom shared “Outlander” in braille and NLS shared “A Song of Ice and Fire” – an exchange that would have been prohibited just a few years ago.



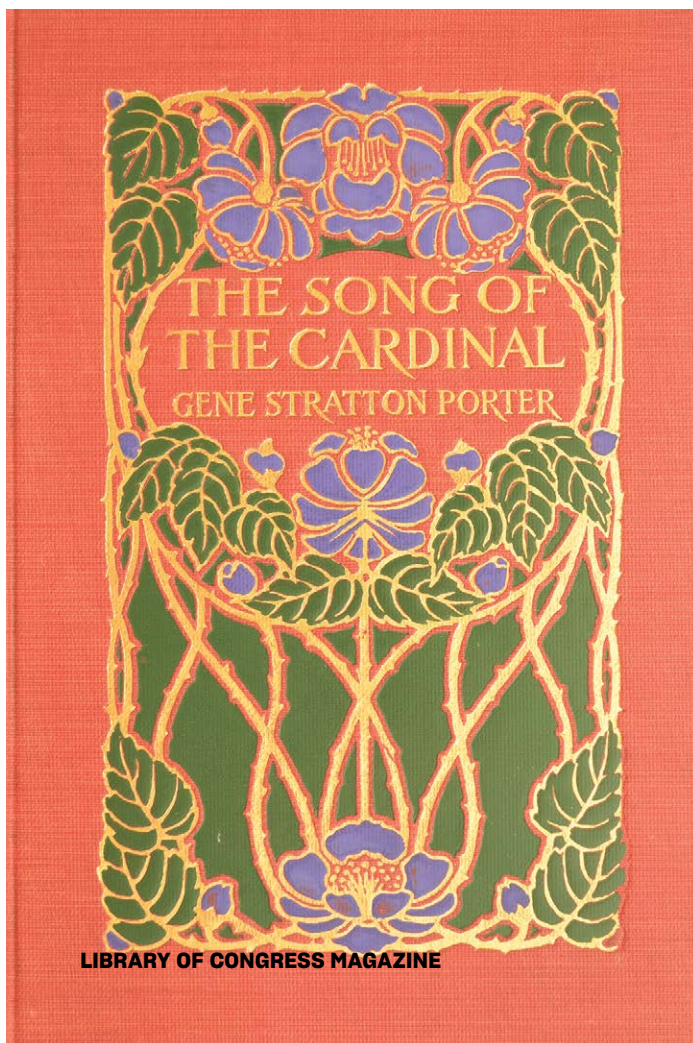
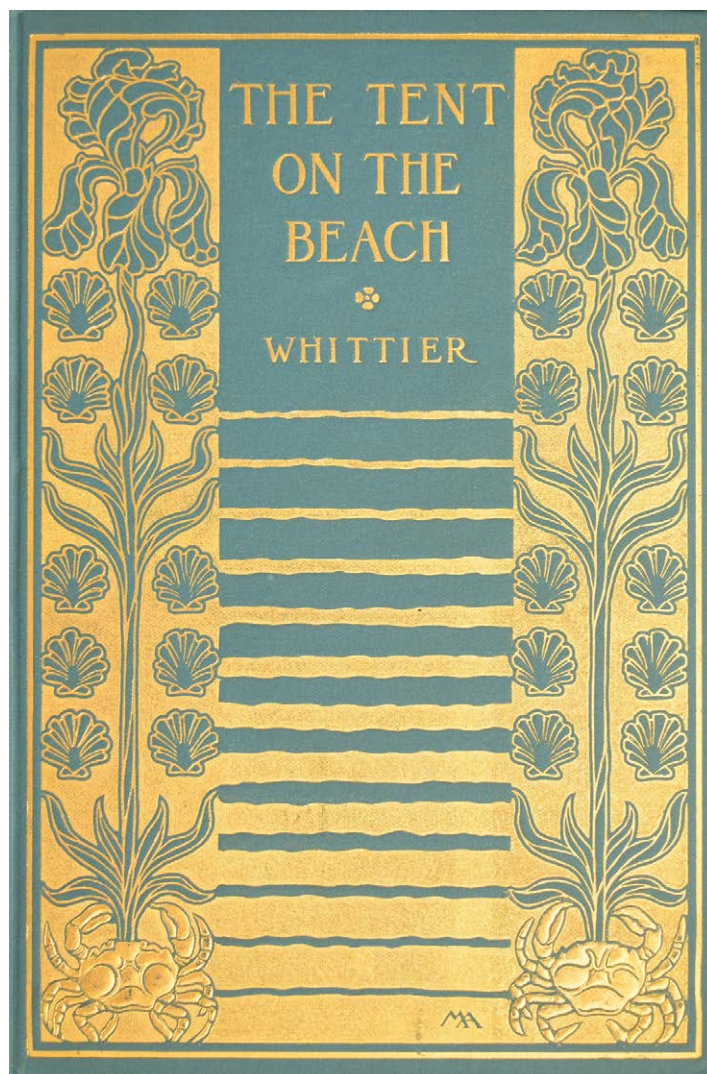
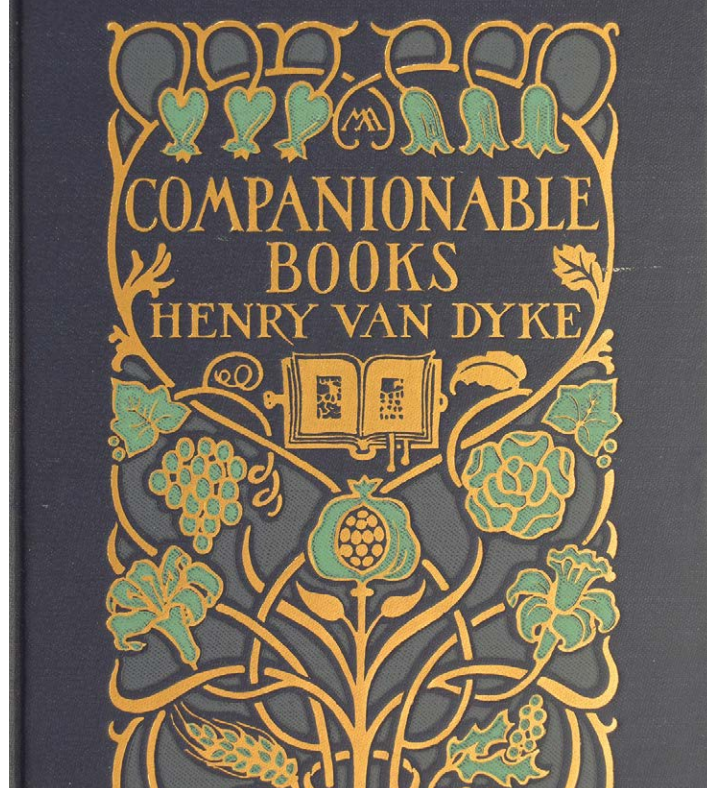
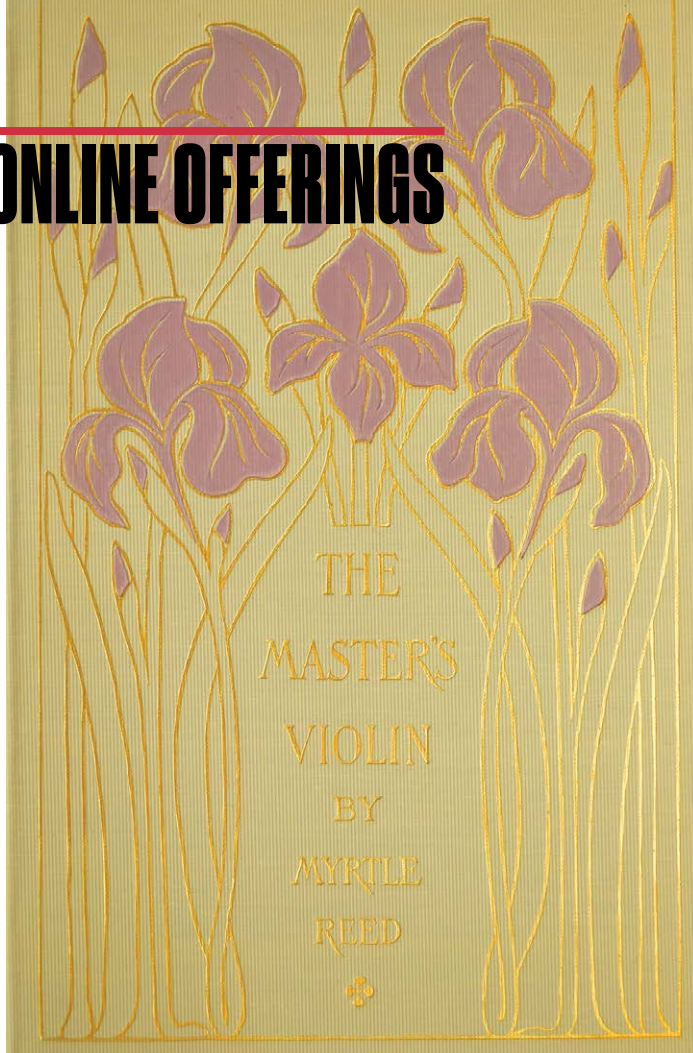
Another benefit of the treaty involves foreign language titles. NLS now is able to fulfill many more patron requests for items in languages such as Albanian, Croatian, Finnish, Hebrew, Somali and Urdu. Prior to the treaty, such requests would have been declined or taken years to fulfill.

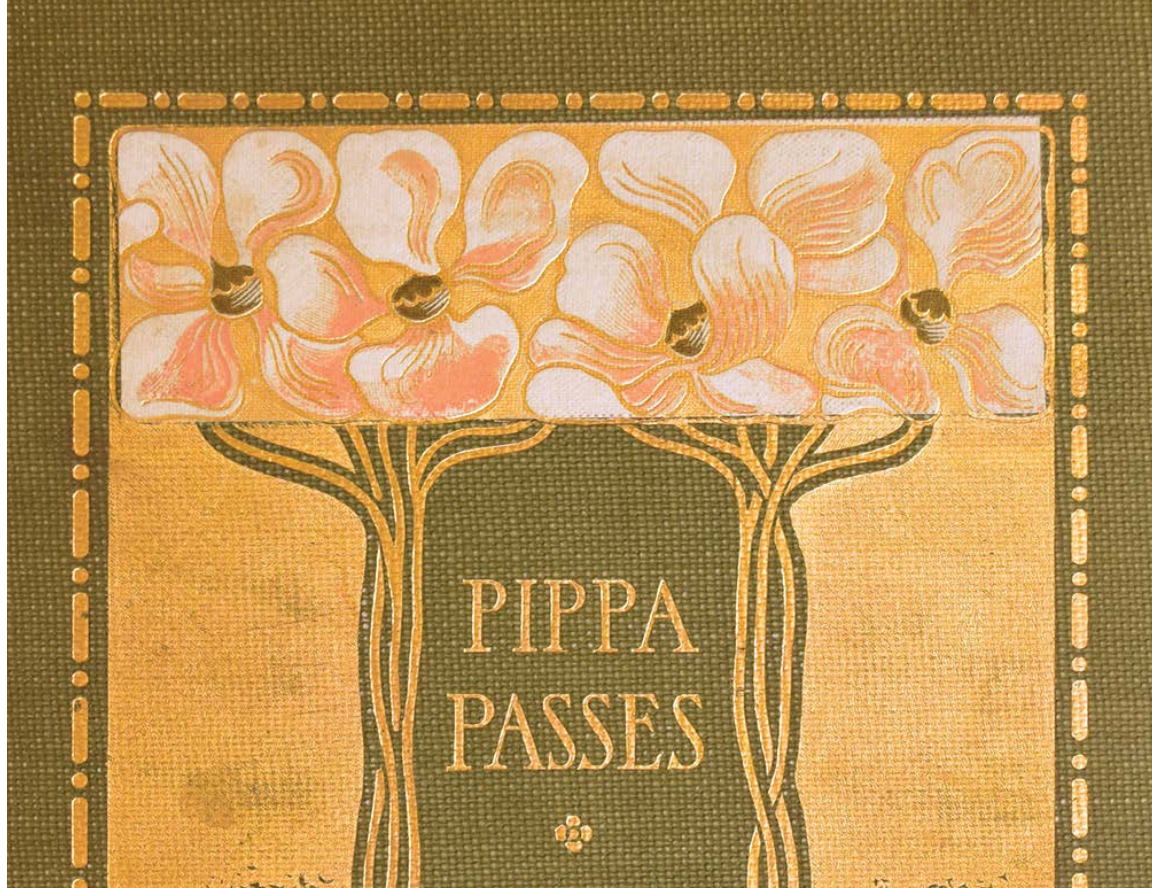
Today, though, the treaty is making more accessible books available to more people in more places than ever before.

–Kelsey Corlett-Rivera is a foreign language librarian at NLS.

■ NLS now is able to fulfill many more patron requests for items in languages such as Albanian, Croatian, Finnish, Hebrew, Somali and Urdu. National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled

ONLINE OFFERINGS





■ Margaret Armstrong's sumptuous cover designs often depicted flowers and interweaving vines, set off by gold leaf borders of dots and dashes. *Rare Book and Special Collections Division*

COVER-ED IN GLORY

Armstrong ushered in an era of brilliant book cover design.

One of the most successful book artists of the 19th and 20th centuries, Margaret Armstrong used gleaming gold leaf, wildly woven vines and brilliantly rendered flowers to help usher in a golden age of book cover design.

Armstrong grew up in a prosperous Hudson River Valley family, surrounded by artists. Her father and a sister designed stained glass, and prominent artists like Louis Comfort Tiffany, John La Farge, Elihu Vedder, William Merritt Chase and Winslow Homer all were family friends. She took watercolor lessons as a child and art classes in New York City in the 1880s.

Around that time, publishers realized that the reading public – inspired by the arts and crafts movement that celebrated beauty in everyday objects – preferred to buy books with pretty covers. Armstrong was among the artists they hired to design them.

Her glorious designs, stamped onto cloth covers, often depicted flowers and interweaving vines, framed by gold-leaf borders of dots and dashes. Some, perhaps not surprisingly, resembled stained glass.

She developed her own lettering styles – her distinctive R unfolds with a long, gracefully curved descender. From 1895 on, her monogram, MA, is found tucked away on covers, title pages and page decorations.

This golden age of cover design ended around 1910, with the newfound popularity of dust jackets that were easier and cheaper to decorate. Eventually, Armstrong moved on to a second career as a writer.

She would write a family history, two biographies, three mystery novels (including, fittingly, “Mystery in Stained Glass”) and an exquisite nature guide, “Field Book of Western Wild Flowers.” That last volume marked a creative tour de force by Armstrong: She traveled out West to conduct the research, wrote the text, designed the cover and drew 500 black and white and 48 color illustrations for the book.

In 2008, the Library’s Rare Book and Special Collections Division purchased a collection of books with Armstrong’s cover designs – a collection that instantly evokes an era of bookmaking beauty and craftsmanship.

–Leslie Long is a preservation specialist in the Conservation Division.

MORE INFORMATION

Margaret Armstrong’s book designs
go.loc.gov/2E6N50Qcola

CURATOR'S PICKS

ARE YOU READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL?

Just in time for the playoffs, 'Football Nation' author Susan Reyburn chooses her favorite collection items.



THE FIRST FOOTBALL CARD

Tobacco companies produced the first sets of sports cards, which were packaged with cigarettes and other tobacco products, to encourage repeat purchases from consumers wanting to collect complete sets of featured cards. Captain Edward Beecher, who played quarterback for Yale, then the nation's dominant college team, was the great nephew of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Henry Ward Beecher. He had the distinction of appearing on the first football trading card, produced by Old Judge and Gypsy Green Cigarettes in 1888.

Prints and Photographs Division



'ON, WISCONSIN!'

Written by William T. Purdy and Carl Beck in 1909 at the height of the Tin Pan Alley era in popular music, the University of Wisconsin fight song is among the most highly rated examples of the niche musical genre. The lyrics specifically address football prowess, such as "plunge right through that line," and hundreds of high school bands nationwide have borrowed the instantly recognizable tune – with revised words – for their own use on game night.

Music Division



THE 'POWDER PUFF' GAME

Aided by terrific blocking, team captain Alice Shanks cuts through the line, leading the upper-class women to a 13-6 intramural win over the sophomore-freshman team at the Western State College Powder Bowl in Gunnison, Colorado, in 1939. That season, Spalding & Bros. published "American Football for Women: Official Rules," and "powder puff" games associated with homecoming festivities grew in popularity. Women's informal tackle football first appeared on a few college campuses in the 1890s, and various professional and semipro leagues have operated since 1965 to the present day.

Prints and Photographs Division

1958 NEW YORK GIANTS

This New York Giants team lost in sudden-death overtime to the Baltimore Colts in the 1958 NFL championship game, known as "The Greatest Game Ever Played." The core of that team featured two future Hall of Fame coaches (assistants Vince Lombardi, third row, second from left, and Tom Landry, third row, far right) and notable players such as Pat Summerall (88), Rosey Grier (76), Sam Huff (70), Don Maynard (13), Charlie Conerly (42) and Frank Gifford (16). Future New York congressman and 1996 Republican vice presidential nominee Jack Kemp, who played on the Giants' taxi squad, signed the image but doesn't appear in the photograph. The photo comes from the Kemp papers in the Library's Manuscript Division.

Manuscript Division



ALBERT RICHARD ALL-AMERICA FOOTBALL MAP

Waving banners, smiling players and dancing mascots flash across the United States in this cartographic depiction of collegiate sports conferences by F.E. Cheseman in 1941. The map also lists the NFL's 10 professional clubs, offers a key to referee signals and provides recent team records and bowl game results. Viewed today, the map is a visual celebration and record of the major college conference system that is now undergoing dramatic change.

Geography and Map Division



■ The Herald of Fashion Co. published this illustration of the latest fall and winter styles for men in 1895. Prints and Photographs Division

COPYRIGHT AND FASHION

Only some aspects of fashion design are protected.

Fashion is an ever-evolving expression of creativity that ties together innovation, culture and commerce. The U.S. Copyright Office is often asked, “Are my fashion designs protected under the copyright law?” With a constitutional purpose to promote creativity and free expression, copyright is a fundamental aspect of fashion. For example, copyright protection can extend to the visual works of art common to the fashion industry, like sketches and fabric patterns, as well as certain garment embellishments – as long as they are original and sufficiently creative.

Functional pieces of clothing produced from original sketches, such as blazers, trousers and shoes, are generally not copyrightable because copyright law excludes what are called “useful articles.” But fashion sketches of seasonal designs, such as the ones seen above in “New York fashions. Fall & winter / Herald of Fashion Lith, N.Y.,” are protectable

under the law. The Library of Congress is home to countless fashion-related works, some of which were acquired by the Library after submission to the Copyright Office for registration.

Beyond clothing, jewelry may be protectable under copyright law as sculptural works. Jewelry designs may be created in a variety of ways, such as carving, cutting, molding, casting or shaping the work, arranging the elements into an original combination or decorating the work with pictorial matter, such as a drawing or an etching. Like other fashion designers, jewelry artists may submit copyright registrations for their designs to the U.S. Copyright Office. Registration establishes a public record of copyright ownership and offers several other practical and legal benefits.

The fashion landscape can be complex for designers who are often working to get in front of rapidly changing trends. They must consider how to be responsible copyright owners and users. Copyright law aims to foster creativity and innovation while protecting the intellectual property of all creators.

—Ashley Tucker is a diversity outreach specialist in the U.S. Copyright Office.

Kathy Woodrell helped bring decorative arts works to light.

Describe your work at the Library.

I served as the decorative arts and architecture reference specialist for the General and International Collections. I responded to thousands of questions in person and virtually, identified new resources to enhance the collections and presented many programs and events. I often gave art and architecture tours of the historic Main Reading Room; it was an honor to provide service in this magnificent space.

The decorative arts encompass the history and study of the design and decoration of utilitarian items, including furniture, glass, wood, metal, ceramics, costume, clothing, textiles and crafts. A yearlong special assignment in the Rare Book and Special Collections Division enhanced my knowledge of antiquarian books and encouraged me to recommend decorative arts works for that collection.

Identifying a cherished family object, reuniting childhood pen pals, collaborating with the incredibly knowledgeable staff and mining the expansive collections were incredibly satisfying. I retired from my dream job in 2023 with 34 years of public service at the Library.

How did you prepare for your job?

I was exposed early to architecture, antiques and textiles. My great-grandmother had me quilting at 6 and sewing clothes by 12. My grandmother, an antiques dealer, taught me to look at objects and ask: "What is it, who made it and what do you think it's worth?" My mother's distaste for antiques and love of modernism also informed my design aesthetic.

I was raised in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, home to Frank Lloyd Wright's only "skyscraper," the Price Tower. Its unorthodox angles, textiles and furnishings fueled my childhood imagination.

I hold a Bachelor of Science degree and a master's in library science. My career at the Library of Congress began in 1988.

What were some of your standout projects at the Library?

I participated in many collaborative displays, tours and presentations on topics including Civil War fashion, Georg Jensen jewelry



MARK DIMUNATION

and modernist furniture. Some coincided with exhibitions at local museums; others featured authors and collectors.

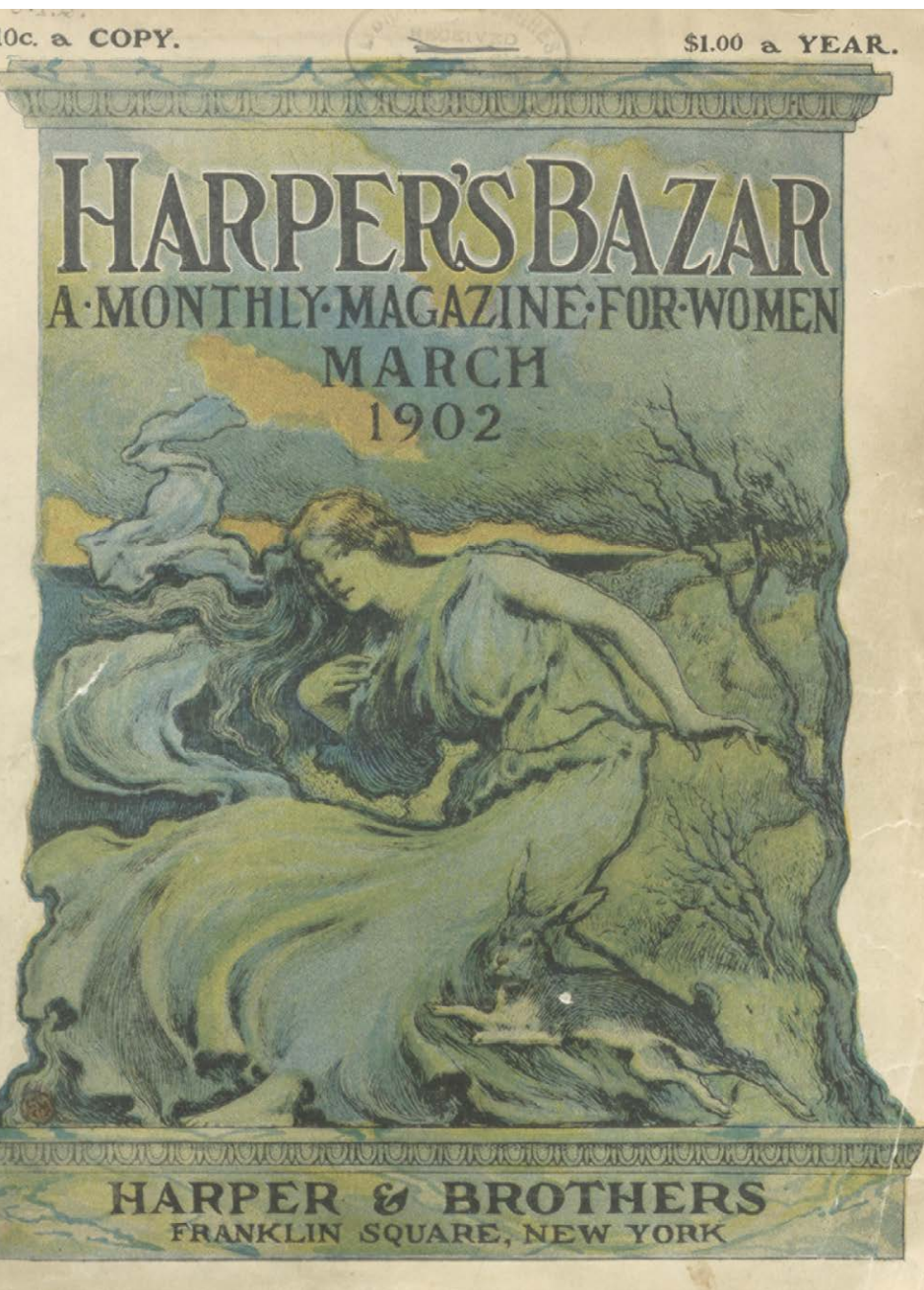
I worked closely with students and faculty in the Smithsonian's decorative arts and design history master's degree program for 24 years, assisting with thesis research and advising emerging scholars how to effectively mine the Library's rich resources.

During the AIDS crisis, I helped make a quilt panel for the NAMES Project to memorialize Library employees who had succumbed. I was honored to teach staff how to sew the name of a beloved person onto the panel.

What are some of your favorite collection items?

The Library's collections of early journals, magazines and pattern books from the 19th century forward are extensive and invaluable. I adore a small 17th-century Book of Psalms with exquisite silk embroidery and seed pearls in Rare Book's Rosenwald Collection.

Favorite items I added to the Rare Book collections include a resist-dye pattern book with pages dyed in indigo (1791-1822); a two-volume set of embroidery patterns, each with a silk-worked sampler (1795-1798); a unique work with diagrams and suggestions for improving the Jacquard loom, with foldout patterns and silk samples (1839); a four-volume set of 600-plus original textile designs from a Parisian design firm (1848-1852); and so many more!



■ The patterns on this Harper's Bazar supplement covered 1,134 square inches of paper and delineated the component parts of nine different outfits. *General Collections*

SEW COMPLICATED

For the home seamstress, these patterns weave a very tangled web.

For 10 cents a copy, Harper's Bazar magazine opened up a wide world for the modern woman of 1902.

In its March issue, there are essays on the growing women's movement and advice on husband management. There are European travelogues, bedtime stories, home improvement suggestions, fiction stories and spreads illustrating the latest styles (one indelicately headlined "Fashions for Old Ladies").

For DIYers looking to save a buck on clothing, Harper's also offered help, tucked between the regular "Recent Happenings in Paris" column and a how-to titled "Poultry Raising as a Vocation."

There, a large foldout sheet lays out sewing patterns for the thrifty homemaker to use in making clothes for the family – "at the lowest computation," Harper's assured readers, a value of \$3.50.

When unfolded, the sheet reveals a bewildering tangle of dots, dashes, lines, X's and ovals that crisscross a total of 1,134 square inches of paper in an unholy mess covering both front and back. The marks delineate patterns for a whopping 60 different component parts of articles of clothing.

From the chaos, nine outfits could emerge: a girl's bodice, a baby's petticoat, a boy's shirtwaist, a girl's corset cover, a little girl's dress, a dress for a girl of about 12, a woman's lawn waist, a tucked fancy lawn waist and a fancy stock and tie.

The trick, of course, was making them happen. The magazine provided instructions, clearly easier read than done: Simply place transparent paper over a pattern and trace the lines with a pencil or, alternately, place the pattern itself over a sheet of paper and use a tracing wheel to copy the design. The seamstress then would extrapolate the proper size of each piece, take out the sewing machine and, voilà, the kids have new clothes.

Today, with the benefit of hindsight and easy modern clothing options, we can admire the resourcefulness of any Harper's reader willing to tackle that job and, then, silently offer up a few words of gratitude: Thank goodness for off the rack.

—Mark Hartsell is the editor of LCM.

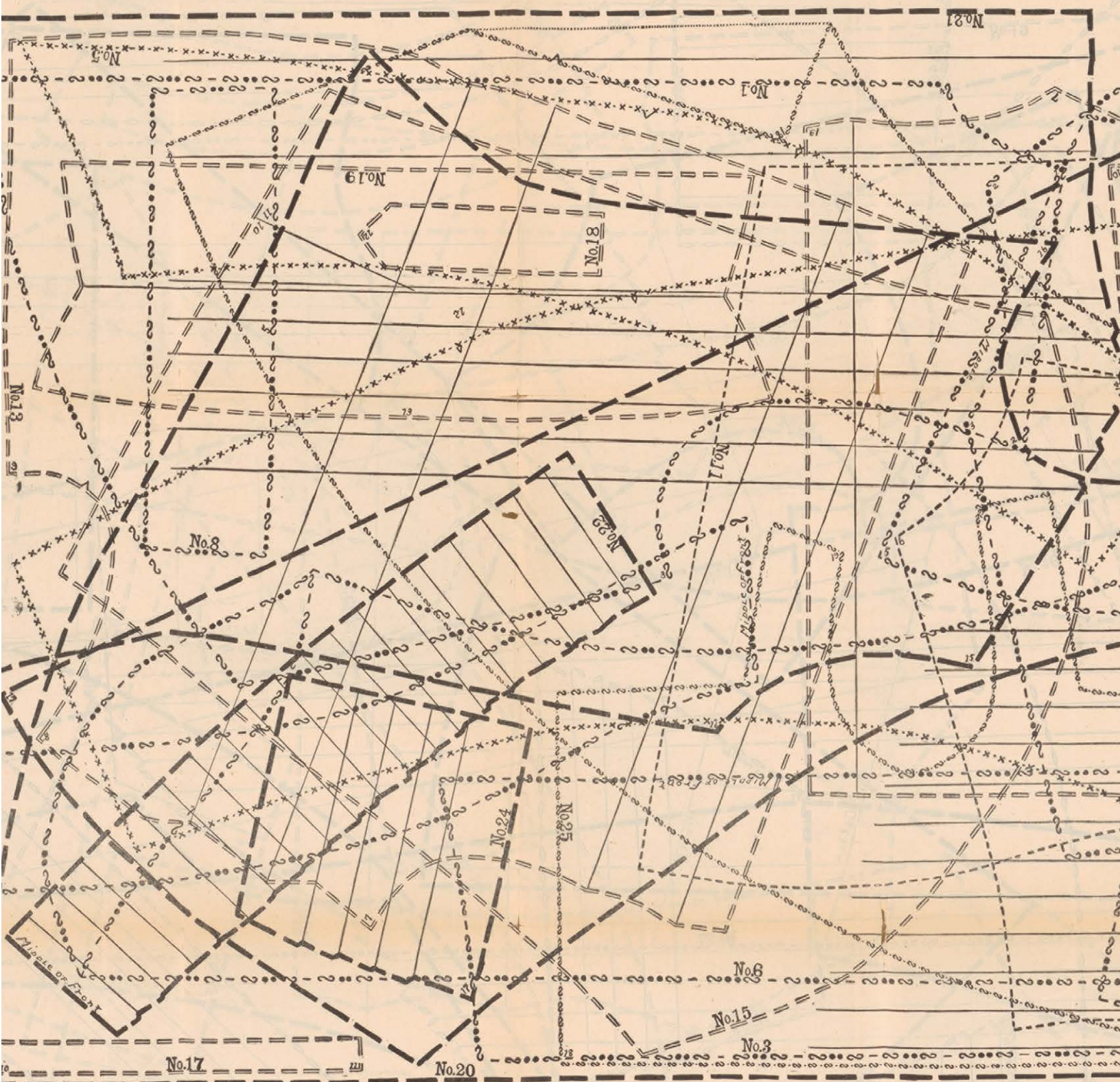


DIAGRAM GROUP V

DRESS FOR GIRL OF 12 YEARS.

See page 255, HARPER'S BAZAR, for March.

No. 29. Half of Front of Shirt-Waist.
No. 30. Half of Back of Shirt-Waist.
No. 31. Sleeve (Complete).
No. 32. Cuff (Complete).
No. 33. Collar (Complete).
No. 34. Half of Front of Bolero.
No. 35. Half of Back of Bolero.
No. 36. Sleeve for Bolero (Complete).
No. 37. Half of Front of Skirt.
No. 38. Half of Back of Skirt.

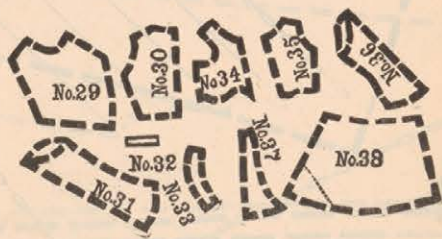


DIAGRAM GROUP VI

WOMAN'S TUCKED LACE WAIST.

SIZE, 26 INCHES.

See page 255, HARPER'S BAZAR, for March.

No. 39. Half of Front.
No. 40. Half of Back.
No. 41. Half of Yoke, First Section.
No. 42. Half of Yoke, Second Section.
No. 43. Half of Yoke, First Section.
No. 44. Half of Yoke, Second Section.
No. 45. Sleeve (Complete).
No. 46. Half of Cuff.
No. 47. Half of Collar.
No. 48. Half of Belt.

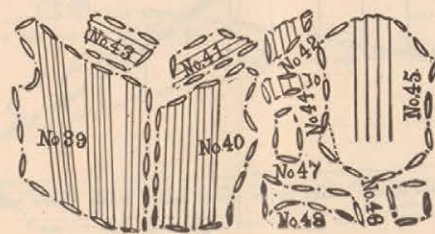


DIAGRAM GROUP VII

DRESS FOR GIRL OF 12 YEARS.

See page 255, HARPER'S BAZAR, for March.

No. 49. Half of Front.
No. 50. Half of Back.
No. 51. Half of Collar.
No. 52. Half of Yoke.
No. 53. Collar (Complete).
No. 54. Sleeve (Complete).
No. 55. Band for Sleeve.
No. 56. Cuff (Complete).
No. 57. Trimming Piece.
No. 58. Belt (Complete).
No. 59. Half of Front of Skirt.
No. 60. Half of Back of Skirt.

■ Elizabeth Keckley (right) designed this purple velvet skirt and bodice for Mary Todd Lincoln. The first lady wore them during the 1861–62 winter social season. *Smithsonian Institution*



Two seamstresses helped pave the way for African Americans in fashion.

BY NEELY TUCKER

DESIGNERS TO FIRST LADIES

Two Black seamstresses have left their mark on White House fashion history: Elizabeth Keckley and Ann Lowe designed dresses for two of the nation's most famous first ladies, Mary Todd Lincoln and Jacqueline Kennedy, respectively.

Each designer developed her craft despite the brutal influences of slavery and Jim Crow segregation. Keckley (also spelled Keckly) was born into slavery in 1818 in rural Virginia but bought freedom for herself and her son in her mid-30s. Lowe, born in 1898 in Alabama, learned from her grandmother, who was born into slavery, and her mother, who ran the family's dress shop.

Both women designed for famous women other than first ladies. Keckley, just a few years out of slavery, made custom dresses for, ironically, Varina Davis, wife of U.S. Sen. Jefferson Davis from Mississippi, the future president of the Confederacy. Lowe, nearly a century later, designed couture for the Rockefellers, the Roosevelts and other high-society names.

Both also left an indelible mark on how their most famous clients are remembered.

Keckley is seen by historians today not so much as a groundbreaking fashion designer but as an activist (she was a co-founder of the Contraband Relief



Association) and the author of “Behind the Scenes, Or, Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House,” her memoir of her close friendship with the emotionally volatile first lady. She was a regular part of the Lincoln family’s domestic life to the extent that she combed Abraham Lincoln’s hair before public appearances. He addressed her as “Madam Elizabeth.”

An excerpt from after Lincoln’s assassination:

“Returning to Mrs. Lincoln’s room, I found her in a new paroxysm of grief. Robert was bending over his mother with tender affection, and little Tad was crouched at the foot of the bed with a world of agony in his young face. I shall never forget the scene – the wails of a broken heart, the unearthly shrieks, the terrible convulsions, the wild, tempestuous outbursts of grief from the soul.”

The memoir was such an outrage at the time – viewed as a shocking breach of privacy, though it had been a well-intentioned effort to gain sympathy for Lincoln – that it was withdrawn from circulation almost immediately. (The Library has a copy.) Lincoln never spoke to her again. Her career and health slowly declined and she spent her last years in the National Home for Destitute Colored Women and Children, which had been founded by her relief association. She died in 1907.

But the book had a second life for historians and writers, including George Saunders, winner of the Library’s 2023 Prize for American Fiction. Saunders drew on Keckley’s details of the Lincoln’s grief after the death of their 11-year-old son, Willie, in “Lincoln in the Bardo,” which won the Man Booker Prize.

“I don’t think (the book) would exist, if I hadn’t read her memoir,” Saunders told the New York Times in 2018.

By contrast, Lowe only made one dress for Jacqueline Kennedy, but it was a stunner: her wedding dress for her 1953 marriage to John F. Kennedy, then a U.S. senator. That storybook wedding was perhaps the cornerstone of the Camelot myth of the Kennedy administration, and Lowe’s dress was a central character in that foundational event.

Vanity Fair, describing the dress earlier this year:



“The pristine pleating on the gown’s bodice, intricate scallop pin tucks, and complex rosette embellishments with dainty wax orange blossoms nestled in the center – all meticulously done by hand – are trademarks of Lowe.”

The future first lady wasn’t a fan of the dress – she had wanted a French designer – and only told reporters that it was made by a “colored dressmaker.”

Lowe was not deterred. Her career in New York high fashion flourished. In 1965, she told television talk-show host Mike Douglas that the sole point of her career, from her roots in the violent racism of 19th-century Alabama to the civil rights movement, had been “to prove that a Negro can become a major dress designer.”

—Neely Tucker is a writer-editor in the Office of Communications.

■ **Left:** Jacqueline Kennedy wore this dress, designed by Ann Lowe and photographed by Toni Frissell, at her wedding in 1953. *Prints and Photographs Division*

Right: Lowe adjusts one of her gowns before a show in 1962. *Getty Images*

■ A white afternoon dress, made in 1901. *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

A CENTURY OF FASHION

BY SAHAR KAZMI



Library collections reflect the evolution of 20th-century American style.

In between drawings of corseted debutantes and ads for breeches and hair tonic, the 1892 first issue of the iconic *Vogue* fashion magazine includes a brief feature on the origins of its namesake. *Vogue*, the excerpt explains, comes from the Italian “voga,” the French “voguer” and the German “wogen” – all of which refer to rowing, sailing or floating.

The words are fitting roots for a publication about fashion, an art form famous for bouncing along the waves of change. Throughout the ages, fashion has responded to social events and reflected the shifting culture of its time. It’s been an avenue for reference and reinvention, expressing societal viewpoints and political movements through fabric and adornment.

As the Library’s collections demonstrate, this was especially true for 20th-century fashion in the U.S. The story of American style is depicted in the Library’s century-old newspapers and magazines; in department store catalogs and home-sewing pattern books; in vintage lithographs and high-gloss photography.

Fashion is a tale of changing conventions: the loosening of a silhouette, the rise of a hemline. It’s a history of attitudes embraced and rejected: the anxieties of war or the delights of social liberation. Often showcased as the terrain of women, it routinely embodies their fantasies and evolving place in society.

Publications in the first decade of the 1900s depicted mainly women of wealth and status, richly ornamented with embroidery and tailored lace. Their ideal shape, achieved with what was dubbed a “health corset” in advertisements, was the contorted S-curve.

“It is the result of much study of all the points most essential to a perfect figure



■ Flat-fronted corsets from the turn of the century created an S-shaped curve in the body, arching women’s busts forward and hips back for a more exaggerated profile than in previous decades.
General Collections



and conformity to the present fashion," proclaimed an ad for the Paris Model corset in a 1903 issue of *Vogue*.

The S-shaped corset pushed the bustline forward while tilting the hips back, creating a narrow waist and curvy profile. The look wasn't a dramatic departure from the rigid styles of the 1890s, but bulky skirts and bendy waistlines began to loosen as the 1910s approached.

The empire waist dress, popularized during the late 18th-century Greco-Roman revival, made a comeback in fashion literature. Its shape featured a fitted bodice with fabric flowing down from the bustline, creating a relaxed silhouette around the waist.

Clothing with room to move and breathe was key as World War I erupted in 1914. European women put on trousers and

overalls to serve in wartime factories. American women, already familiar with the simplified tunics and uniform-style jackets of the suffrage movement, followed suit when the U.S. joined the fray in 1917.

Even the wealthiest women who never stepped foot in a munitions plant or military unit took part in the shifting aesthetics of the day. A 1917 newspaper spread touting the latest designs from British clothier Lady Duff-Gordon showcased "A new walking dress with a military touch."

As the war ended and women gained the right to vote in 1920, fashion publications highlighted the vibrancy of the Roaring Twenties. Alcohol was prohibited nationwide, but the postwar economy was booming and the middle class was richer than ever. Speak-easies popped up like weeds to sell homemade liquor to the war-weary masses



■ 1910s – 1940s: The first half of the 20th century saw rising hemlines, loosening silhouettes and increasingly functional dressing. General Collections

as jazz music rang out through the night.

Women's fashion championed straight lines and much shorter skirts – all the better to Lindy Hop and Charleston in. A once-voluptuous bodily ideal gave way to a more androgynous form, with the loose and swingy flapper dress quickly becoming a favorite of the period.

When the party came crashing to an end with the Great Depression, hemlines once again fell to the ankles. Simplicity still reigned supreme, in large part because it was more affordable. For working and middle-class women struggling to make ends meet in the 1930s, the sensuous fashions of Hollywood stars provided the romantic standard of the day.

Their garments, made of slinky silk and satin, were cut “on the bias,” hanging diagonally across the body. In an age of uncertainty

and financial fear, figure-hugging femininity was back in vogue. At the same time, women's fashion embraced structured suiting, incorporating wide shoulders and crisp jackets.

But drapery wasn't only for women. Black, Latino and other men of color favored the flamboyantly wide-legged and long-jacketed “zoot suit” as a symbol of political subversion in the 1930s. Labor activist César Chávez was said to have sported zoot suits in his teens, and Malcolm X even describes purchasing his first zoot suit (“Sky-blue pants thirty inches in the knee”) in his famed autobiography.

Eventually, just as World War I had dominated the styles of the 1910s, the Second World War came to have an outsized effect on the clothing of the 1940s. Skirt suits retained their popularity, now simplified even further by material rationing into



regulated “utility dresses.” Overalls and trousers for women came back strong, with functional fabrics like tweed and cotton finding prime place in women’s wardrobes.

The end of World War II gave way to what became known as “The New Look.” In 1947, the French couturier Christian Dior debuted his Corolle collection, a line of tiny-waisted, voluminous skirts and exaggerated padded hips. Fashion publications hailed it as a return to formalized femininity and luxurious use of fabrics after the deprivation of war.

But as with the continuous reimagining of the female form, each era of fashion was in some way a reaction to the styles that came before it. By the time the 1960s rolled around, the U.S. was in the throes of a cultural rebirth – the civil rights movement was growing in urgency, students were protesting the Vietnam War and second-

wave feminists were widening the gains of their suffragist forebears.

Popular fashion in magazines was no longer prim and dainty. This was the age of the miniskirt and knee-high go-go boot. The Black is Beautiful movement spotlighted traditional African prints and fabrics, and the burgeoning hippie look turned to flowing peasant shirts and bell-bottom jeans for men and women alike.

While the short, straight-line dresses of the 1960s had harkened back to the linear fashions of the '20s, the aesthetics of the following decade drew inspiration from the 1930s. Disco outfits and prairie dresses held prime place in the 1970s, but the everyday woman might just as easily be found in a smart suit or below-the-knee skirt. Designer Diane von Furstenberg’s iconic wrap dress touted a flattering, body-skimming silhouette



■ 1950s - 1980s/90s:
Women's fashion pivoted
from hyper-femininity to
colorful modernity and
casual streetwear in the
latter half of the century.
*General Collections;
Prints and Photographs
Division; Shutterstock*

reminiscent of bias-cut favorites from the '30s.

Fashion was more democratized than ever, available everywhere and increasingly casual. Sportswear as day-dressing had been popular since the pleated tennis dresses of the '20s, but everything was bigger and louder in the 1980s. This was the era of dancewear and sweatshirts, leggings and high-cut leotards. Shoulders were wider even than those of the '30s, accessories bolder than the embellishments of the early 1900s and sleeves as puffy and ballooning as the ones in the original European Renaissance.

It's no surprise then that 1990s fashion publications featured a more minimalist direction. Plain white T-shirts and denim were all the rage, and sportswear reached new heights with hip-hop artists

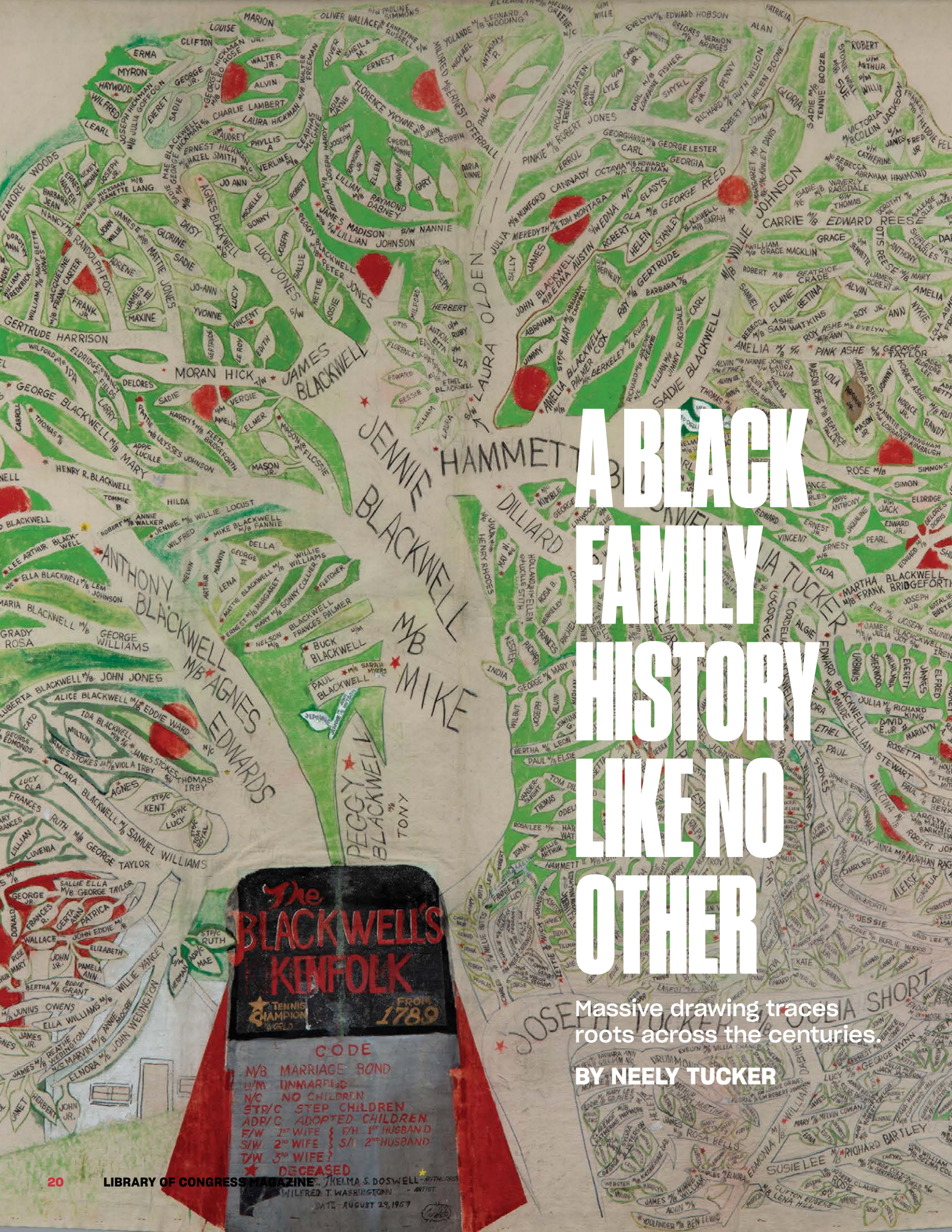
popularizing tracksuits and luxury sneakers.

Casually oversized looks, from baggy grunge and plaid to practical puffer coats, found their way into catalogs and magazine spreads. Even on red carpets, women wore simple column and slip dresses.

"Fashion is and has been and will be, through all ages, the outward form through which the mind speaks to the material universe," the scholar George Patrick Fox once said in his 1872 treatise on the philosophy of style.

As the 20th century reached its end, fashion had left the exclusive domain of the elite. It had become the playground of an ever-changing culture.

—Sahar Kazmi is a writer-editor in the Office of the Chief Information Officer.



A BLACK FAMILY HISTORY LIKE NO OTHER

Massive drawing traces roots across the centuries.

BY NEELY TUCKER

The BLACKWELL'S KINFOLK
FROM 1789

★ TENNIS CHAMPION WORLD

CODE

- M/B MARRIAGE BOND
- U/M UNMARRIED
- N/C NO CHILDREN
- STP/C STEP CHILDREN
- ADP/C ADOPTED CHILDREN
- F/W 1ST WIFE / E/H 1ST HUSBAND
- S/W 2ND WIFE / S/H 2ND HUSBAND
- T/W 3RD WIFE
- ★ DECEASED

THEMA S. DOSWELL - ARTIST
WILFRED T. WASHINGTON
DATE: AUGUST 29, 1967



When the Library opens its new Treasures Gallery in June, displaying some of its most striking papers and artifacts spanning some 4,000 years, one of them will certainly stand out: The Blackwell's kinfolk family tree.

It's a dizzying, almost overwhelming piece of folk art that depicts the genealogical history of an African American family from Virginia. It's 8 feet tall and 6 feet wide, contains more than 1,500 names spread out on curving trunks, branches and leaves and details family connections from 1789 to the 1970s. Its most famous member? Arthur Ashe Jr., the tennis great.

"The first time I saw it, my chin nearly dropped to the floor," says Ahmed Johnson, the research librarian in the History and Genealogy Section who worked with the family to donate the canvas. "And the fact that it's an African American family that can



■ **Top:** Ahmed Johnson of the History and Genealogy Section examines the Blackwell family tree, which measures 8 feet tall by 6 feet wide. *Shawn Miller*

Inset: The name of tennis great Arthur Ashe, the most famous family member, is highlighted in gold. *History and Genealogy Section*



trace its way back to the first ancestor? Slavery usually made that impossible.”

The research, and the strikingly original canvas, comes from decades of work by the late Thelma S. Doswell, a D.C. school teacher and genealogist who wrote several books on the field. She got started early, being entranced by all the people she did not know at a family reunion.

“I told my mother then that I had to know who these people were,” she once said. “I began by interviewing my grandmother and great aunt. From them I got names of parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, the place and times of birth, marriage dates.”

She then expanded her search, digging into files at the National Archives and state and local courthouses and antebellum census documents that listed names of the enslaved and sending detailed questionnaires to relatives. The genealogical work, as Johnson pointed out, succeeded in undoing what slavery was designed to do: dehumanize the people trapped in its clutches. Her work was admirable by any standard, Johnson said, but considering the hurdles historically faced by African American families, it was exceptional.

“It’s always a hit every time we display it,” Johnson said. “People just can’t get over it.”

Doswell created the tree’s folk-art design, and artist Wilfred T. Washington put paint to canvas, writing in names by freehand. It was unveiled at the 1959 family reunion.

“I was just a kid then,” said JoAnne Blackwell, president of the Blackwell Family Association, in a phone call from her home in New Jersey. “But it made such an impression on me and everyone else. It made me want to go back to the reunion every year.”

At the foot of the tree is a heavy black rectangle with “The Blackwell’s Kinfolk” written out by hand, in red ink and capital letters. “From 1789” is in gold lettering at the bottom right corner.

A gray rectangle lies directly below that, with an explanatory code in red and black lettering. It spells out the abbreviations used in the tree: “M/B” means marriage bond, “U/M” means unmarried, “N/C” means no children and so on.

The spreading tree above is massive and irregular – it sometimes resembles a meandering river breaking off into multiple streams and creeks rather than orderly tree branches marking the procession of time and generations.

Another striking feature: The tree follows the Blackwells’ matrilineal heritage, with women’s names as or more prominent than the men’s. JENNIE BLACKWELL is the huge name at the base of the trunk, from which everyone else descends, with a smaller notation of “M/B” MIKE below it.

Most names are in small, neat black lettering tucked within the boundaries of a green-bordered leaf. Jeanette. Alvin. Cleotis. Josephine. Cordelia. The name of Ashe, the tennis star, is marked out in gold. Matching gold lettering at the bottom explains: “Tennis Champion – World.” (Ashe won five Grand Slam titles, playing singles or doubles.)

“I chose the oak tree for its characteristic strength,” Doswell told a Washington Post reporter in a 1987 feature story about the family tree.

Doswell hardly stopped in 1959. She kept at her research and, aided by enthusiastic family members filling out their own histories, completed two more family trees. Both are larger, more detailed and more straightforward in design. The second version, completed in 1971, has 3,333 names and is at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture in Baltimore.

The third tree, completed in 1991, documents some 5,000 names and is at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture in Richmond.

Ultimately, Doswell was able to trace the family back to West Africa. The names of the first members put on a slave ship bound for the United States: Ama and her daughter, Tab. They were forced upon the Doddington and landed in Yorktown, Virginia, in 1735. There, her research shows, they were bought at an auction by slave owner James Blackwell.

The family is planning their reunion this summer in Yorktown, so that they can visit the places where the family’s story began in North America nearly 300 years ago.

■ **Opposite:** In 2019, members of the Blackwell family gathered for their 67th reunion. *Jay Paul Photography*

AROUND THE LIBRARY



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.

1. Songwriters and producers Jimmy Jam (left) and Terry Lewis close the show at the We Write the Songs concert at the Library on Sept. 20. *Kevin Silverman*

2. Brazilian jazz pianist, composer and singer Eliane Elias performs in the Coolidge Auditorium on Oct. 13. *Edmond Joe*

3. Rep. Robert Garcia, a longtime lover of comic books, examines notable examples from the Library's collections, accompanied by Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden (left) and librarian Megan Halsband on Oct. 12. *Elaina Finkelstein*

4. Tony and Grammy award winners Ben Platt and Cynthia Erivo examine items from the Library's musical theater collections in Whittall Pavilion on Dec. 4. *Elaina Finkelstein*

5. Cast members Solea Pfeiffer and Reeve Carney from the musical "Hedwig and the Angry Inch" perform onstage in the Coolidge Auditorium on Oct. 20. *Elaina Finkelstein*

6. Bestselling authors Ann Patchett (left) and Kate DiCamillo share a laugh during a conversation onstage at the Library on Oct. 19. *Edmond Joe*

'Apollo 13,' '12 Years a Slave' Chosen for Film Registry

Twenty-five influential films have been selected for the 2023 Library of Congress National Film Registry, the Library recently announced. The films are selected each year for their cultural, historical or aesthetic importance to preserve the nation's film heritage.

The newest selections include a diverse group of films, filmmakers and Hollywood landmarks. They date back more than 100 years to a 1921 Kodak educational film titled "A Movie Trip Through Filmland" about how film stock is produced and the impact of movies globally. The most recent films added to the registry are 2013's Oscar-winning "12 Years a Slave" and the Oscar-winning documentary "20 Feet from Stardom."

Other films chosen include "Apollo 13," "Home Alone," "Lady and the Tramp," "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" and "The Nightmare Before Christmas."

The selections bring the number of films in the registry to 875.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-23-101

Chauncey Releases Videos About LGBTQ+ Experiences

George Chauncey, recipient of the 2022 John W. Kluge Prize for Achievement in the Study of Humanity, recently released three videos with the Library examining the experiences of LGBTQ+ Americans. The videos are available on loc.gov and the Library's YouTube channel.

In "From Sexual Regulation to Antigay Discrimination," Chauncey examines how LGBTQ+ people in the U.S. were treated during the 20th century; in "Why Marriage Equality Became a Goal," he interviews civil rights attorney Mary Bonauto, who worked on significant legal cases dealing with marriage equality; and in "AIDS: A Tragedy and a Turning Point," Chauncey and a panel of experts discuss the AIDS crisis that took the lives of a generation of gay people.

Every two years, the Library awards the Kluge Prize to a scholar who makes a major impact on social and political issues.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-23-090

Civics Grants of \$100,000 Awarded to Six Groups

The Library recently awarded Lewis-Houghton Civics and Democracy Initiative grants to six organizations working to develop digital educational projects that teach history, civics and democracy to secondary students using creative arts materials from the Library's collections.

The Legislative Branch Appropriations Act of 2023 appropriated money for the new initiative, which honors the service and democratic ideals of Reps. John R. Lewis and Amo Houghton. The Library awarded each organization \$100,000. Grantees who make sufficient progress toward agreed-upon goals may apply for an additional two years of funding.

The grantee organizations are City Lore, New York City; Culture Works Ltd., Seattle; FableVision, Boston; Rock and Soul Forever Foundation, New York City; Snow & Co. Ltd., Newburyport, Massachusetts; and Songmasters, New York City. Information about the groups' projects is available at the link below.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-23-087

Public Broadcast Archive Adds Programs by Moyers

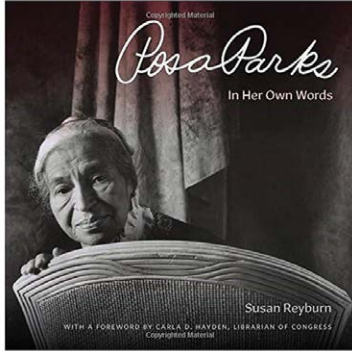
The American Archive of Public Broadcasting announced that it has collected more than 1,000 public television programs produced by veteran broadcast journalist Bill Moyers, and more than 800 of them are available to stream online.

The new Bill Moyers Collection in the archive offers a look at more than 50 years of Moyers' work reporting on our times, during which he became a unique voice in American life. Moyers and his colleagues have been honored with numerous awards, including more than 35 Emmy Awards, nine Alfred I. Dupont-Columbia University Awards, four Peabody Awards and three George Polk Awards.

The American Archive of Public Broadcasting is a collaboration between Boston public media producer GBH and the Library to preserve and make accessible culturally significant public radio and television programs from across the country.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-23-084

SHOP



'Rosa Parks: In Her Own Words'
Product #21107173
Price: \$16.95

The civil rights icon is revealed through her private manuscripts and handwritten notes, part of the Library of Congress collections.



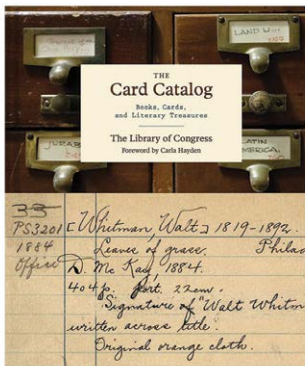
Minerva silk scarf
Product #21304064
Price: \$89

Wear your love of the Library: This beautiful silk scarf shows off the famous Minerva mosaic of the Jefferson Building.



Library of Congress mug
Product #21505403
Price: \$15

Start your mornings with this hefty ceramic mug adorned with a collegiate Library of Congress emblem.



'The Card Catalog'
Product #21107171
Price: \$29.99

Celebrate rarely seen treasures in the world's biggest library – and the brilliant catalog system that kept them all organized.



Jeweled butterfly pin
Product #21509895
Price: \$29.99

Take a flight of fancy with this colorful butterfly pin, a pewter reproduction based on imperial jewelry.



Book fan
Product #21508135
Price: \$7.95

Cool off with this fan made of reproductions of vintage book leaves, protected by covered boards decorated with gold filigree.

■ Order online: loc.gov/shop ■ Order by phone: 888.682.3557



THE JOY OF GIVING

Donors see the meaningful impact their gifts make.

Xander Harcourt experienced the impact of philanthropy for the first time when he participated in the Library's Leadership Development Program.

Those 12 weeks in the program, Harcourt noted, made him a better person, a better leader and better able to apply the lessons he's learned inside and outside of the Library. The experience transformed how he viewed his own leadership style and changed his leadership trajectory.

"I am in awe of working here," Harcourt said. "Every day, I get to walk out of this place and think, I work here. I am grateful."

As part of the Leadership Development Program, Harcourt shared its impact with members of the James Madison Council, the Library's private-sector donor group. Its former (or founding) chair, the late John Kluge, provided support to make the program possible. Harcourt realized he could do more himself.

Harcourt decided to show his appreciation for all that the Library has done for

him (he used Library resources to finish his degree, too). So, he made a gift to the Friends of the Library and continues to make an annual gift.

"It is not just that the Library has given me so much," Harcourt said. "I believe in Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden's mission to have more people engaged with the kinds of experiences that make them better."

Asked what he would say to someone considering making a gift to the Library, he pointed out that such gifts allow donors to see immediate impact.

"The value of the funds you give – no matter the size – is so impactful," Harcourt said. "Your gift is a voice among many who've also made the same choice. You can't spend a better dollar."

Gifts from Friends of the Library help spread the joy of reading, help a college student receive a paid internship and allow anyone to learn his or her own history in new ways and from new perspectives.

Harcourt would tell you to make your gift today!

■ Xander Harcourt gives back by making donations through the Friends of the Library program. *Edmond Joe*

MORE INFORMATION

Ways to Give
go.loc.gov/Wqtq50QcoK4

LAST WORD

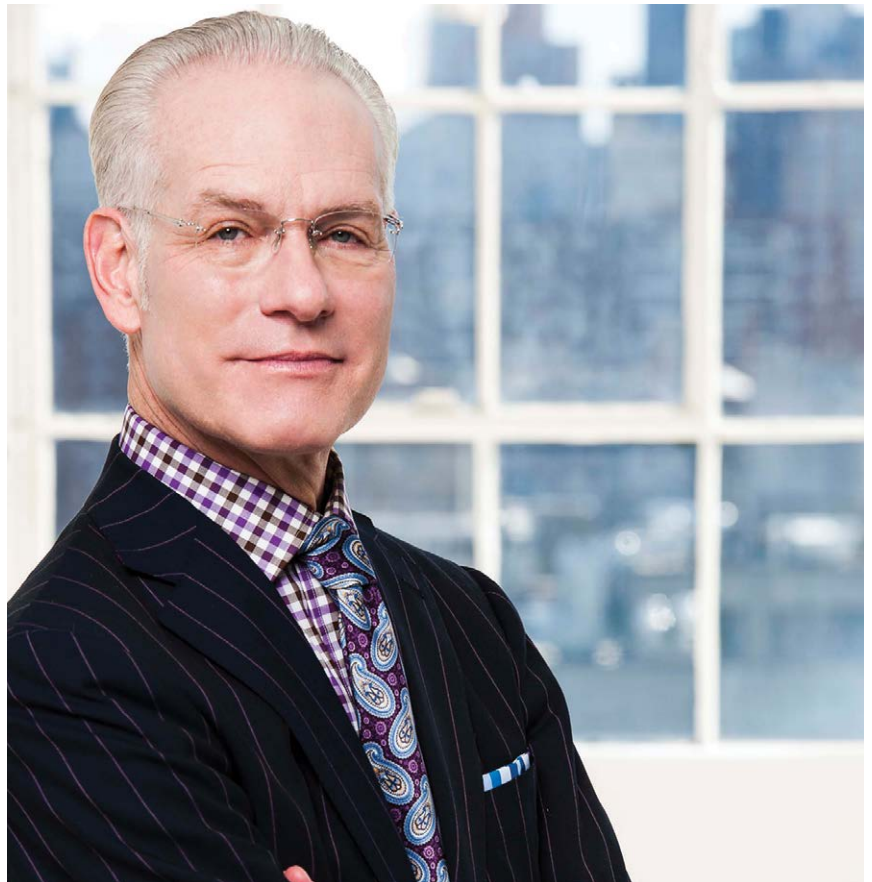
TIM GUNN

I make a pronounced distinction between fashion and clothes. Fashion bubbles up from a context, one that is societal, historical, cultural, economic and even political. Fashion designers are a barometric gauge of our society and culture. They need to know the news headlines, what books and films are commanding attention, the frequented blogs and podcasts and the daunting content and volume of streaming platforms, not to mention social media. These elements are responsible for fashion's constant change.

Clothes, on the other hand, don't have to change. They can remain static for decades. Consider the L.L. Bean catalog (for which I have tremendous respect and from which I own quite a few items): Bean's clothing staples have remained largely unchanged for years, and that's a good thing. Let's say you want to replace a worn out pair of blucher mocs you bought 12 years ago. That same pair is still there, waiting for your purchase.

For the sake of comfort, propriety and protection, we need clothes. But we don't need fashion. We want fashion, but we don't need it. The cultural forces that exist will have us believe that it's our responsibility as citizens of the world to know, and ideally embrace, the latest fashion trends and movements. Furthermore, fashion is a pendulum; it swings one way, then another. A current trend is loose, even voluminous, pants. It's a reaction to the prevalence of form-fitting ones. Fashion wants us to buy things. Otherwise, fashion becomes static and morphs into clothes. Ergo, trends. And a trend is only relevant if it works for you. Otherwise, don't even consider it, because you'll look like a fashion victim.

Personal style is a form of semiotics. The clothes we wear send a message about how the world perceives us. That's a very tall order and one for which we must accept responsibility. I tell people that I don't care how they dress as long as they accept responsibility for their decision making. Some people tell me that this stance is shallow and inappropriately judgmental. Is it? When we meet someone for the first time, we immediately assemble a collection of thoughts and assumptions based on how they're dressed. Actually, we do this with everyone we see on the



SCOTT MCDERMOTT

street! Is that person neat and tidy or an unmade bed? Are they a traditionalist or a hipster? Are they saying, "Look at me!" or "Go away"? People tell me this stance is overly judgmental. Yes, it is. But how do we distinguish between the staff in a restaurant versus the diners? Hospital personnel versus patients? The guides in Central Park? Answer: their clothes.

While I appreciate, and even admire, people who regularly change their fashion according to whims and impulses (my beloved Heidi Klum is one), I sincerely believe in the efficacy of a uniform; that is, clothing that you can effortlessly reach for in your closet, that looks good on you, makes you feel confident and won't look dated in six months or a year. I personally subscribe to this belief, because, quite frankly, it's easy.

The wonderful thing about fashion today is that you can be whoever you want to be. Gone are the decades of highly prescriptive dressing. So, consider the power of semiotics and think about how you want the world to perceive you.

—Tim Gunn is an academic, a bestselling author and a pop culture icon. He won an Emmy Award for his role as host of "Project Runway."



■ Model Barbara Mullen, wearing a straw hat, poses with a picnic basket in this photo by Toni Frissell from 1951. *Prints and Photographs Division*

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS



**JOIN IN: VOLUNTARY
ASSOCIATIONS IN
AMERICA**

**NOT AN OSTRICH: &
OTHER IMAGES FROM
AMERICA'S LIBRARY**

**HERE TO STAY: THE
LEGACY OF GEORGE
AND IRA GERSHWIN**

More information

loc.gov/exhibits