



OH, THE  
**DELIGHTS**  
YOU'LL  
FIND AT

# THE LILLY LIBRARY

By **Jeremy Shere** Photography by **Jim Krause**

John James Audubon's obsession with painting every species of bird in North America led to the life-size, hand-colored set of engravings called *The Birds of America*, which can be found at the Indiana University Lilly Library.

**IN** a town with so much to do, it's easy to overlook the Indiana

University Lilly Library. But it shouldn't be. With about 400,000 rare books, more than 100,000 pages of sheet music, and 7.5 million manuscripts, the Lilly Library is one of the best libraries of its kind on the planet.

"For a town this size to have such a world-class collection is a remarkable resource," says Erika Dowell, associate director and head of public services at the Lilly Library.

The library was founded in 1960, inspired largely by the donated book collection of Eli Lilly and Company President Josiah K. Lilly Jr. Indiana University had been systematically accumulating rare books and other documents since the 1940s, storing them in the archives at Bryan Hall and in multiple locations in the main library (then housed in what today is Franklin Hall). Lilly's gift of more than 20,000 books, 17,000 manuscripts, 50 oil paintings, and 300 prints, donated to IU between 1954 and 1957, expanded the university's holdings to the point that a better storage solution was necessary. Renovating the main library was deemed unworkable, so then-President Herman B. Wells championed the idea of constructing a building to house the burgeoning collection. Funded

by a bond issue, the Lilly Library officially opened its doors on October 3, 1960.

What makes the Lilly Library special, says Director Joel Silver, is that, unlike most other such libraries that require patrons to have permission to handle books and manuscripts, anyone visiting the Lilly Library can touch almost everything.

"A book is more than just text and illustrations," says Silver.

"Working with an original book or manuscript, you can inspect the bindings, read notes left by former owners, and touch and smell the paper. The smell of a book can tell you a lot about how it's been treated and where it's been."



**"A book is more than just text and illustrations," says Joel Silver, who joined the Lilly Library staff in 1983 and became its director in 2013.**

For Head of Conservation James Canary, touching and inspecting books, manuscripts, and puzzles is the best way to learn about them. "Every object is unique and conveys something about the time and place it came

from," he says. "In an early book binding you can see the actual tool marks made by the original binder and get a sense of how they approached making the book. You get a real education in the history of technology, art, pigment making, and a lot more."

While every possession in the Lilly Library's collection is a treasure, the staff has chosen 10 they deem especially remarkable.



**Gutenberg Bible, New Testament**

Circa 1450

The single most important book in the library is a first edition of the New Testament Vulgate Bible, a version of the Bible translated into Latin in the late 14th century and printed by Johannes Gutenberg in Mainz, Germany, in the mid-15th century. One of fewer than 50 known copies in the world and one of 10 in collections in the United States, the Lilly Library's Gutenberg "is the cornerstone of our collection," says Dowell. "It's incredible to have a copy of the book right here, knowing it's had such a pervasive impact on Western culture."



The printing of the Gutenberg Bible revolutionized the dissemination of knowledge in the Western world and is looked upon with reverence by visitors to the library, says Erika Dowell, associate director and head of public services.

and decorations as well as handcrafted capital letters at the beginning of each chapter.

"A lot of people look at the book with reverence, whether they're religious or not," Dowell says. "Its age, beauty, rarity, and cultural significance give it a real presence."

One of the relatively few objects not available for handling without special permission, the Gutenberg Bible is on permanent display beneath a glass case in one of the library's main exhibition rooms.



**Audubon's 'Birds of America'**

Originally published between 1827-1838

John James Audubon's four-volume set, *The Birds of America*, aren't books in the typical sense, at least not the kind you can curl up with in bed or read at the beach. Printed on double elephant folio paper (approximately 3 feet by 2 feet), these volumes, featuring 435 life-size, hand-colored engravings of North American birds, are not only the Lilly Library's largest books but also among its most valuable. A similar set of the books was sold at auction for more than \$11 million in 2010.

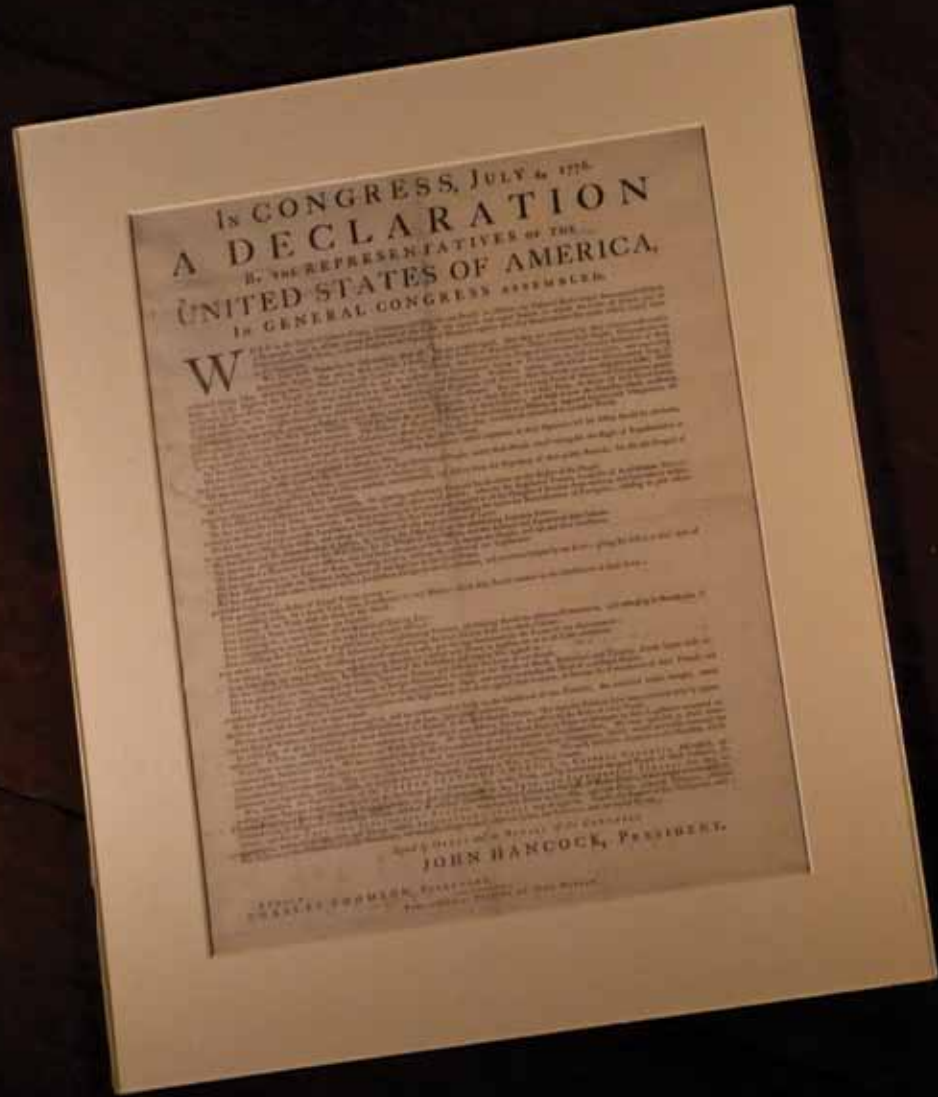
According to IU Professor of English and Audubon expert Christoph Irmscher, *The Birds of America* was the product of Audubon's obsession with painting every species of bird in North America. To study birds, he killed many and invented a method of using wires and thread to pose them in lifelike tableaus as he painted them. Unable to find funding for the project in the United States, in the mid-1820s he traveled to England, where he exhibited his work and hired engravers and printers to produce black-and-white prints which he then colored by hand using pastel crayons and watercolor paints.

To fund his work, Audubon adopted a pay-as-you-go model with subscribers receiving several prints every few months. Subscribers included Charles X of France, Queen Adelaide of the United Kingdom, and American senators Henry Clay and Daniel Webster.

It is estimated that fewer than 200 complete sets were printed, with 120 still in existence. "Many of the remaining volumes are in poor condition, but the Lilly's is pristine," Irmscher says. "We're very lucky to have such a rare, valuable, and beautiful book in Bloomington."



(above) A visitor looks at *The Birds of America* in the library's Main Gallery. This is one of 120 known copies of the collection, which is said to be in "pristine" condition.



3



### Declaration of Independence

July 4, 1776

The Lilly Library is proud to own one of the 26 surviving copies of the Declaration of Independence.

“Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were probably right there in the print shop, handling it,” Canary says. “I can’t say how many times I’ve seen families clustered around the document. It really takes you to that time and brings to life the importance of what was going on.”

Like Jefferson, Adams, and other famous historical figures who may have touched and read this copy of the Declaration, Lilly Library visitors can sit down with the document and inspect it up close. On display along with the Declaration is a handwritten letter that accompanied it. In plain but urgent language, John Hancock, president of the Second Continental Congress, advises Governor Nicholas Cooke of the colony of Rhode Island

to “dissolve all Connection [sic] between Great Britain and the American Colonies” and to disseminate the Declaration throughout Rhode Island. The letter also requests that Cooke have ship carpenters begin building a fleet to protect the newly declared United States of America from an imminent war of independence against Great Britain.

“Knowing that John Hancock had this letter in his hands and gave it to another real person is special,” says Cherry Williams,



curator of manuscripts. “It’s not just any copy of the Declaration, it’s a particular copy.”

Thomas Jefferson and John Adams probably handled this copy of the Declaration of Independence, says James Canary, head of conservation. Canary’s expertise ranges from caring for the Lilly Library’s vast collections to working on special projects, including preservation of Jack Kerouac’s famous 120-foot scroll of the original manuscript of *On the Road*.

4

### A Catalogue of Different Specimens of Cloth Collected in the Three Voyages of Captain James Cook 1768-1779

The famed English navigator and explorer Captain James Cook made three voyages to the Pacific Islands from 1768 to 1779, including trips to Tahiti and Hawaii. There, Cook and his crew collected hundreds of specimens of plants and objects, including tapa — a type of cloth made from the skin between the sap and bark of mulberry, breadfruit, banyan, or ficus trees.

When South Pacific cloth became popular in England in the 1780s, British army agent Alexander Shaw commissioned a “catalogue of samples” of tapa pieces, the bulk of which he obtained from the estate of James King, Cook’s co-navigator on the third voyage.

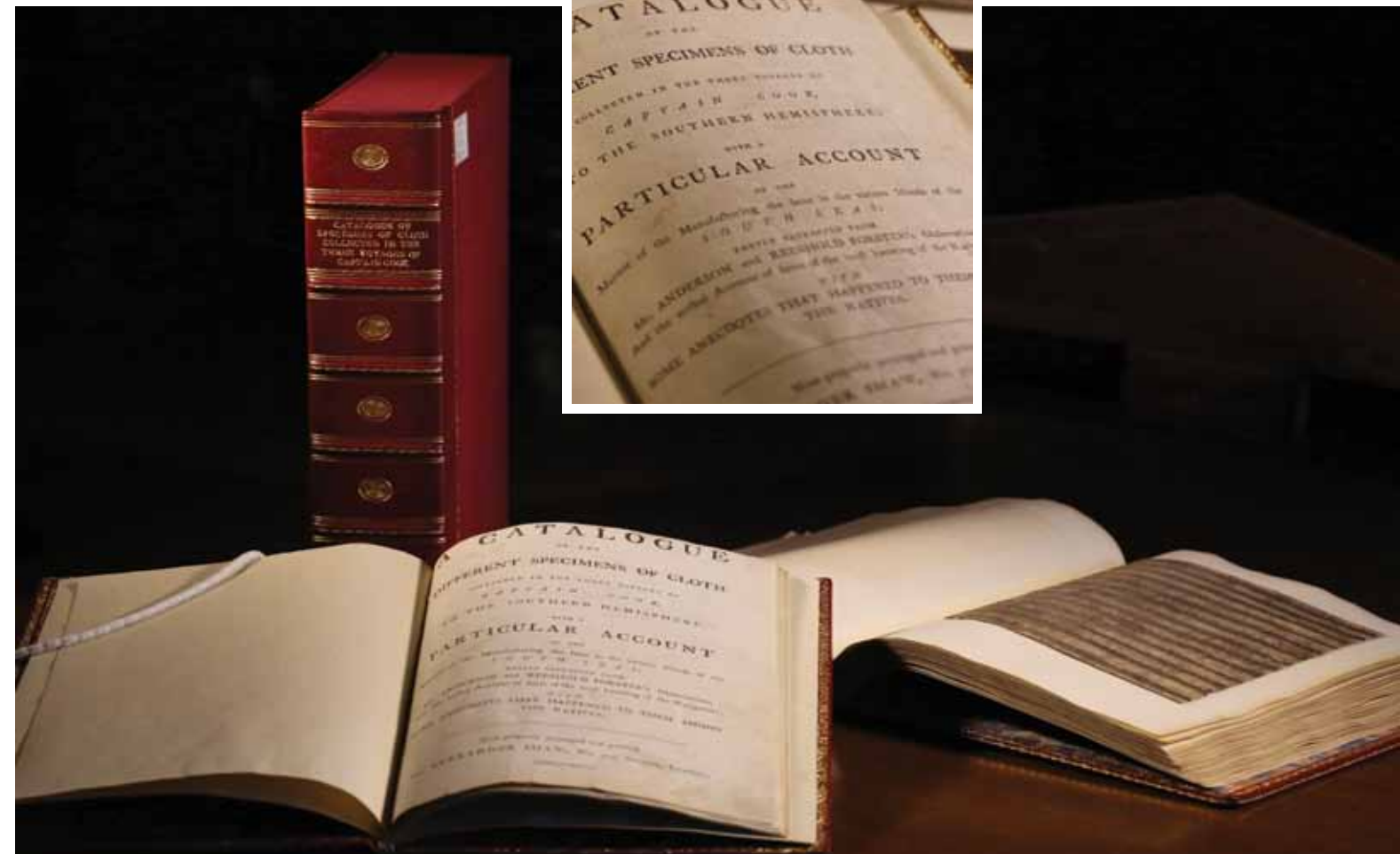
The Lilly Library owns one of 62 known copies of the catalogue created by Shaw, each featuring a different selection of tapa specimens. “It’s incredible to think that

these pieces were actually on board Cook’s ships,” says Lori Dekydtspotter, head of technical services. “Smelling and touching the specimens is a rich sensory experience that really brings history to life.”

For Canary, the cloth pieces are interesting not only as historical objects but also as art. “They’re gorgeous, featuring the beauty of natural dyes and the feel of unique textures,” he says. “Students from the [Henry Radford Hope] School of Fine Arts often come to handle the book, touch the pieces, and be inspired.”



Lori Dekydtspotter, head of technical services, says smelling and touching the different tapa specimens, once on board Captain James Cook’s ships, brings history to life.



### Ruth E. Adomeit Collection of Miniature Books

2047 B.C.E.–Present

With more than 16,000 pieces (and more being added every year), the Lilly Library's trove of miniature books — the bulk of which came from the personal collection of miniature book expert Ruth E. Adomeit — is one of the world's most impressive. The majority of the books are less than 3 inches tall and include a tiny cuneiform tablet [one of the earliest known systems of writing, distinguished by wedge-shaped marks] dating from 2047–2039 B.C.E., early printed books from the 15th century, a wide variety of “Thumb Bibles,” a large collection of almanacs and calendars, and new miniature books produced by contemporary presses.

“I'm in awe that anyone can make books this small that can actually be read, some even smaller than a thumbnail,” Canary says. “They're a remarkable feat of book production.”

According to Canary, some of the collection's most interesting pieces include a book of hours — a volume popular during the Middle Ages meant to teach young women to read, featuring prayers believed to be suitable for virgins; a handwritten 16th-century book showcasing important Christian devotional holidays that includes illustrations painted using a brush with a single hair; and 19th-century books for children.

Miniature books have been popular for centuries for many reasons, Canary says, partly because they're easy to tuck away in a pocket and, in certain cases, keep secret. “If you were a woman interested in learning about contraception during the 19th century,” he says, “it would have been advantageous to read about it in a book small enough to hide from public view.”

A page in the miniature book shown here, *Fruits of Philosophy, or the Private Companion of Young Married People*, is approximately 3 inches tall by 2 1/2 inches wide.



## 6

### Jane Johnson Manuscript Nursery Library

Mid-18th century

Like most English mothers of means in the 1700s, it was Jane Johnson's duty to educate her young son, George William (who would become the High Sheriff of Lincolnshire), before his proper schooling began. And so Johnson handcrafted a set of educational materials, including two volumes of text, alphabet cards, lesson cards featuring paraphrases of Biblical verses, and story cards. The set also includes 78 “word chips,” containing mostly words for various foods, kept in a handmade paper box decorated with playing card symbols.

Like many objects in the library's collections, visitors can touch and play with the Johnson materials, bringing them to life in a way that just looking at them could not, says Williams.

“The objects are not only beautiful and carefully crafted, but they also offer a glimpse of how mothers in England at the time taught their children moral and academic lessons,” she says. “The pieces are very inventive and highly personal.”



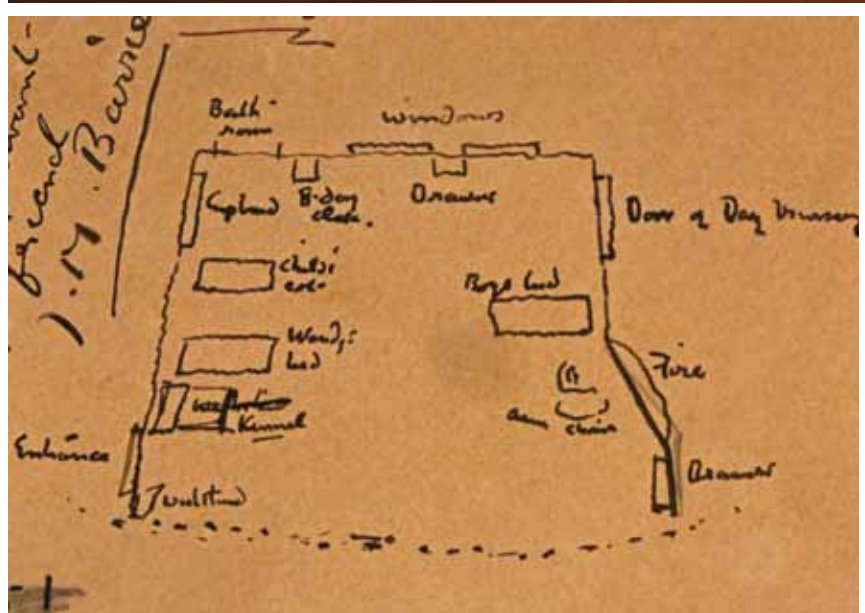
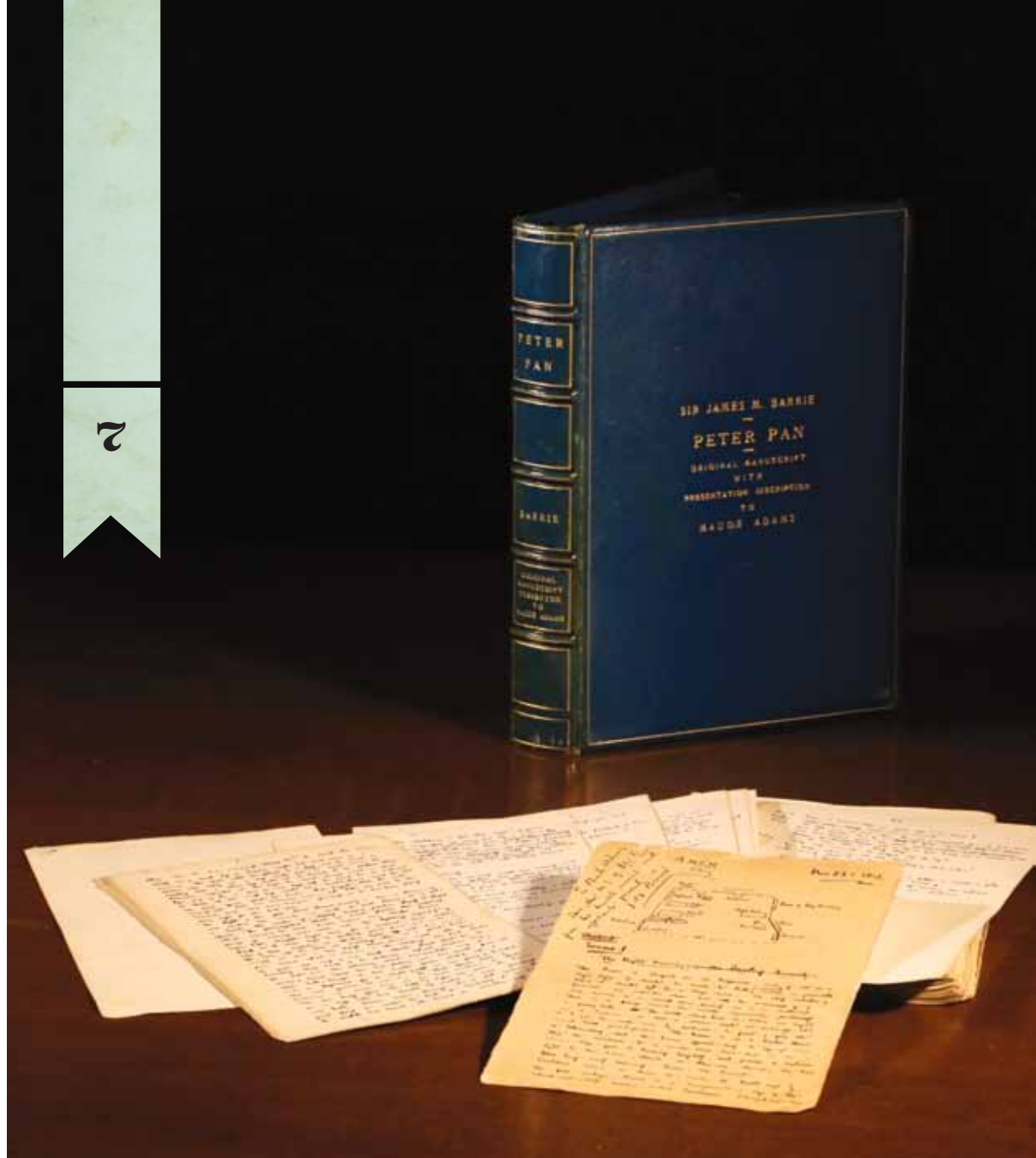
Curator of Manuscripts Cherry Williams says Jane Johnson's set of handcrafted educational materials offers a glimpse of how mothers in the mid-18th century taught their children.

**'Peter Pan' Manuscript**  
1904

Most of us know Peter Pan as a Disney cartoon. But the story originated in 1904 as a stage play entitled *Peter Pan, or the Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up*, written by Scottish author and playwright Sir James Matthew Barrie. The Lilly Library owns the original handwritten version of the story, which includes the author's signature, illustrations of parts of Neverland (the home of Peter Pan and Tinker Bell), and Barrie's many corrections and deletions. The manuscript is inscribed to Maude Adams, the actress who originated the stage role of Peter Pan.

"We're so used to the Disney version, but this manuscript brings the story to life in a new way," says Dekydtspotter. "It's how the author first saw the play. It must have been very gratifying for Barrie to see the production on stage."

For Canary, the manuscript is also valuable as an example of the creative process at work. "Students are often amazed to see that the author made so many errors and changed his mind," he says. "We're generally afraid of making mistakes, but that fear can hinder creativity. It's a great lesson for students that even famous writers don't always get it right the first time."



**8**

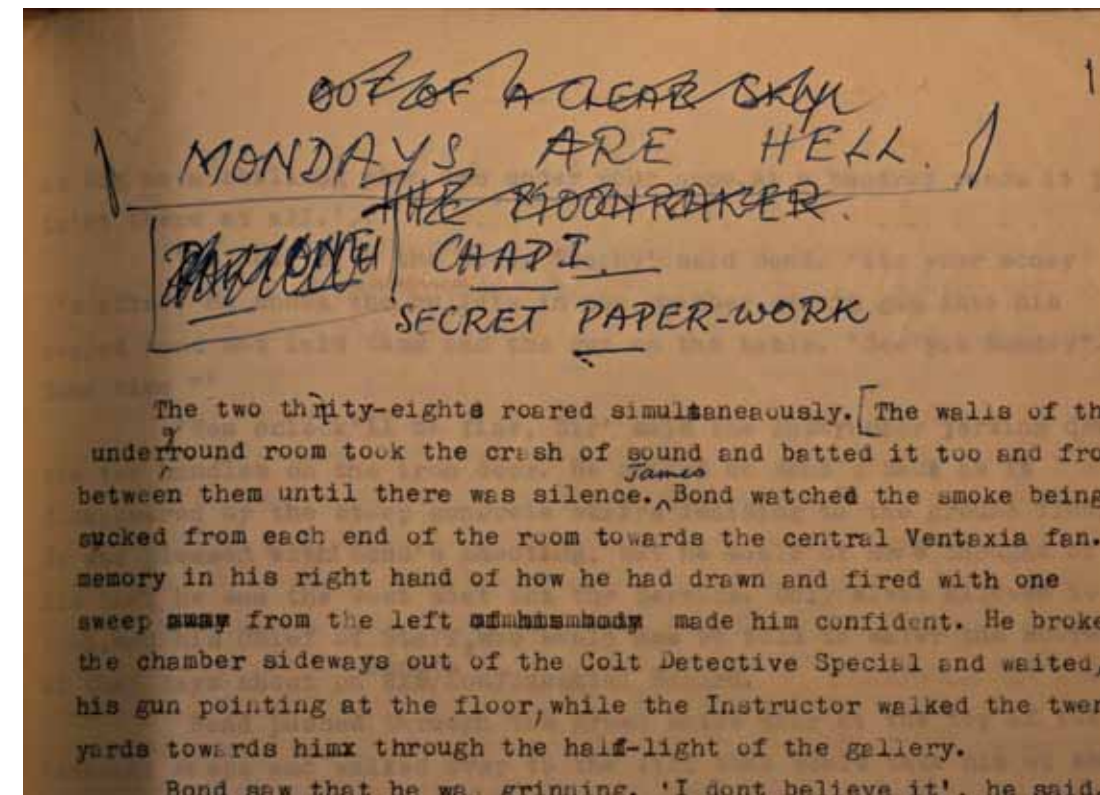


**Ian Fleming Manuscripts**  
1952-1963

For fans of James Bond, the Lilly Library's collection of the manuscripts of 007 author Ian Fleming is a gold mine. The collection includes the original manuscripts of *Casino Royale*, *Live and Let Die*, *Moonraker*, *Diamonds Are Forever*, *From Russia with Love*, *Dr. No*, *Goldfinger*, *For Your Eyes Only*, *The Spy Who Loved Me*, *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, and *You Only Live Twice*.

Like Barrie's *Peter Pan* manuscript, the Bond documents include Fleming's revisions, some of which are particularly striking. For example, the manuscript for *Goldfinger* shows that Fleming crossed out the title and replaced it with *The Richest Man in the World*, only to later return to the original title we know and love today.

For Canary, the typed manuscripts evoke a bygone era of authorship. "There's something about typescript," he says. "Pounding those keys is a very physical process, and when you read the manuscripts it's almost like you're there with the author, like you can hear the sound of the text becoming real on the page."





### John Ford Papers

1906-1976

The Lilly Library's collection of documents relating to film director John Ford, including correspondence, memorabilia, scripts and production notes, movie stills, shooting schedules, budgets, recorded interviews, and more, tell a compelling story about one of film's most seminal and intriguing figures.

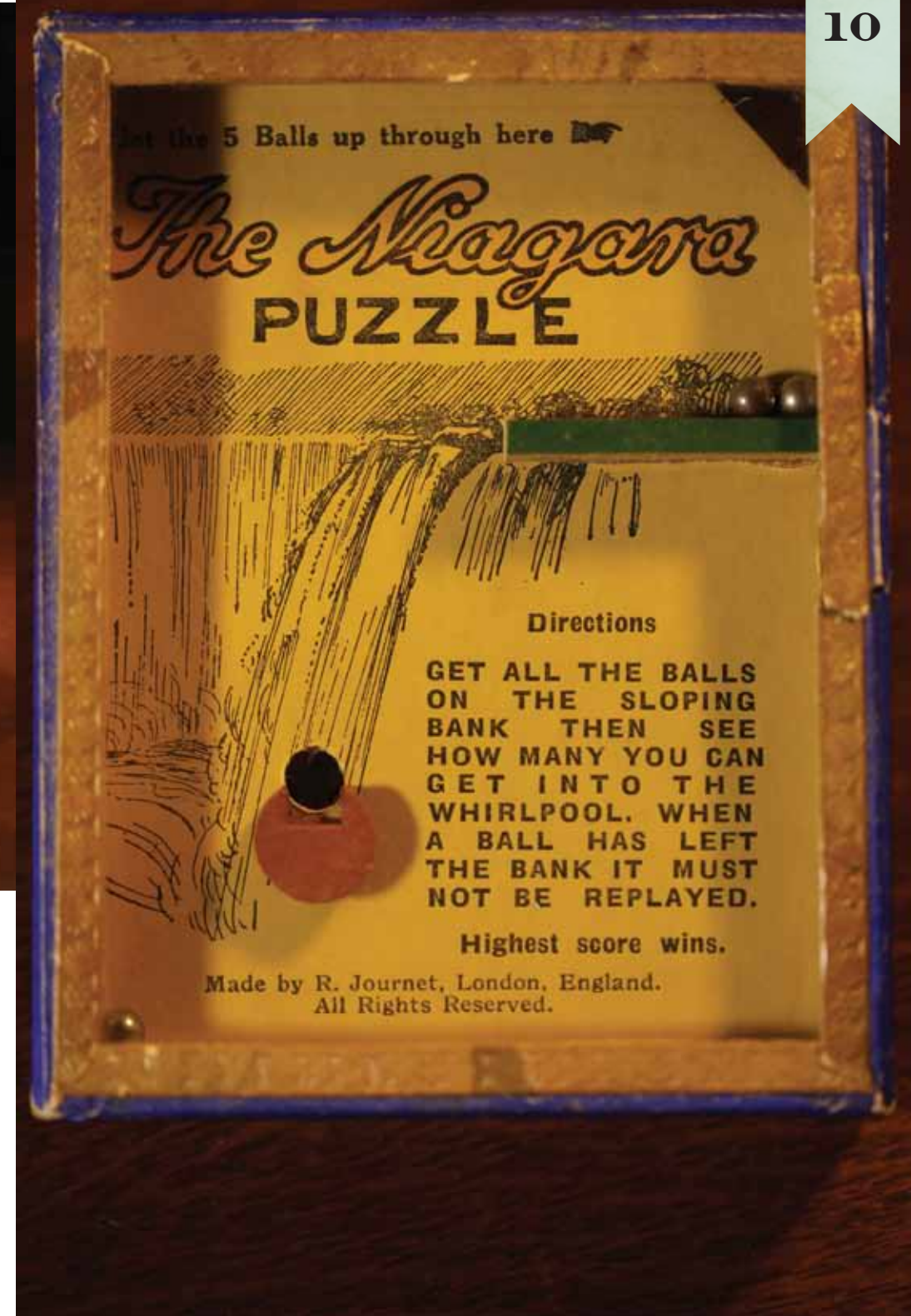
Beginning his career as a stuntman, actor, and prop man in silent films in the early decades of the 20th century, Ford went on to direct more than 130 movies, including Academy Award winners *The Informer* (1935), *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), *How Green Was My Valley* (1941), *The Quiet Man* (1952), and World War II documentaries *The Battle of Midway* (1942) and *December 7th* (1943). Ford also directed the classics *Fort Apache* (1948), *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949), and *Rio Grande* (1950), and he

**John Ford.** Courtesy, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

received the American Film Institute's first annual Life Achievement Award in 1973.

The collection also includes two of Ford's best director Oscar statues, those for *The Grapes of Wrath* and *How Green Was My Valley*, which visitors can hold. "Holding an Oscar is really cool," Williams says. "Everyone has seen an Oscar on TV, but seeing one up close is different. People are always surprised by how heavy they are. People love having their picture taken with a statue; we've even had Tibetan and Mongolian monks posing with an Oscar."

For Williams, the fact that Ford's Oscars are available to be touched and handled is a great example of what makes the Lilly Library special. "We're not just some stuffy old library," she says. "We're fun and interactive in surprising ways."



### R. Journet Niagara Puzzle

circa 1914

The Lilly Library's Jerry Slocum Collection of mechanical puzzles houses 30,000 puzzles and 4,000 puzzle-related books, with many special ones, including a Rubik's Cube, signed by its inventor, Hungarian architect and sculptor Erno Rubik, and a Chinese ring puzzle that would theoretically take more than 500 billion years to solve. But according to Curator of Puzzles Andrew Rhoda, one of the most fascinating is also one of the easiest to solve: The Niagara Puzzle.

Manufactured by British puzzle maker R. Journet around 1914, The Niagara Puzzle is, on its face, a simple "direct a metal ball into a hole" game. Featuring a line-drawn illustration of Niagara Falls, the directions instruct players to "Get all the balls on the sloping bank then see how many you can get into the whirlpool." What makes the puzzle



noteworthy is what was hidden inside: a small saw-toothed file, tiny compass, and map meant to help British soldiers escape from German POW camps during World War I.

The puzzle was so seemingly innocuous that the Germans allowed the British government to send them to its soldiers to help them pass the time. While it's not clear how many prisoners used the hidden tools to escape, Rhoda says, the puzzle is a unique artifact from one of the greatest periods of upheaval in world history.

"What's so interesting is that this object played a role in a worldwide event that changed history forever," Rhoda says. "It's awesome to be right there with something that brings history to life in a very particular way." ✨

Andrew Rhoda, curator of puzzles, says one of the most interesting puzzles is shown here: German soldiers allowed it into their POW camps during World War I.

