

SCAMeL Speedy Startups 2022 Final Report

April 28, 2023

Archival Treasure of the Month Display

Moody Medical Library, University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston

The South Central Academic Medical Libraries Consortium (SCAMeL) graciously awarded the Moody Medical Library at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB) funding to establish a rotating “Treasure of the Month” exhibit that showcases materials held in the Truman G. Blocker, Jr. History of Medicine Collections (Blocker Collections) and the University Archives.

Exhibits

To exhibit a larger variety of our materials, we were mindful of not displaying from the same collection consecutively. Each month’s display alternated between the Blocker Collections (rare books, artifacts, etc.) and the University Archives to highlight materials and stories relating to UTMB’s history.

Two posters were created to be permanent fixtures inside the exhibit case. After setting up the first display, we decided that we would rather put more “treasure” into the case and removed the poster to an easel nearby.

We were presented with two opportunities to curate exhibits in response to scheduled events in the Blocker Collections. A faculty award ceremony was held in the Blocker Collections reading room, so we displayed items relating to the person for whom the award was named. We met with an administrator of the School of Nursing who was making plans for various events to celebrate Nurses Week and asked if we would curate an exhibit, as well as tours, of our archival nursing materials.

“Treasure of the Month” displays:

1. Dedication of the Moody Medical Library: The first exhibit coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Moody Medical Library. Photographs and materials from the dedication ceremony were displayed.
2. Louis Pasteur Collection: The Blocker Collections holds a significant collection of materials once owned by or relating to Louis Pasteur. This display reused research and items from a previous exhibit.
3. Love Letters from a First Year Medical Student: The 103 love letters written by 1926 School of Medicine graduate, Felix Butte, were selected for digitization through a Rescuing Texas History mini grant from the Portal to Texas History. This was a popular exhibit that was left up for an additional two weeks. As soon as this exhibit ended, the materials were shipped off to be digitized.
4. The Oldest Books in the Moody Medical Library: Three books from the rare book collection were put on display. The oldest, *Rosa Medicinae* John of Gaddesden (1390s), is frequently brought out for tours. The other two, *Nuremberg Chronicle* Hartmann Schedel (1493) and *Liber Physiognomiae* Michael Scot (c. 1490), are significant works but too fragile/large to use for tours.

5. The First Three Graduates: Photographs, signatures, and grades of the first School of Medicine graduates, class of 1892.
6. The Postcard Collection: We are currently digitizing this collection of over 5,200 postcards depicting a variety of medical buildings worldwide.
7. *Sawbones on a Sandbar*: The Rose Grundfest Schneider, PhD Award is given to a faculty researcher at UTMB every year. The award ceremony was held in the Blocker Collections reading room. We featured a musical script about UTMB and Galveston history, written by Dr. Schneider in 1967.
8. Andreas Vesalius: 2023 marks 480 years since Vesalius' revolutionary work on human anatomy was published. Our first edition copy is often used for tours.
9. Nurses Week: Faculty of the School of Nursing requested a display of archival School of Nursing materials to celebrate Nurses Week 2023.

Interactions

At the beginning of each exhibit, an announcement was made to the UTMB community through a campus-wide email and a photograph was taken for the [Moody Medical Library website](#) to advertise the exhibit. During the first week of an exhibit, several patrons would specifically come to the Blocker Collections reading room to see the "treasure." After a few months, we began to see a handful of repeat visitors. Library staff also encouraged patrons to visit. We kept track of all interactions with the "treasure." Most were in-person visitors. There were only a few phone calls or emails for the duration of the project. Each exhibit saw an average of 70 interactions, more than double our expected 30.

Conclusion

We have had positive reactions to the exhibits and are planning to continue the "Treasure of the Month" display. We hope to collaborate more with professors, student groups, and other UTMB departments for future exhibits. The SCAMeL Speedy Startups Award enabled us to increase visibility and access to the myriad of rare and unique materials held in the Blocker Collections.