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## Out of Circulation

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# Special Collections *Flyer*

## *Out of Circulation*

Special Collections has several sources for adding to its holdings: gifts (always welcome) and purchase through booksellers or auction are the most obvious. But one source, which costs little and can be quite productive, is transfer from the library's circulating collections. I want to use this SPECIAL COLLECTIONS *Flyer* to explain the rationale and principles used in deciding what should be transferred from the general collection into the more protected but admittedly somewhat less easily accessible confines of Special Collections. Incidentally, the books depicted in the illustrations are all ones which used to circulate but now do not.

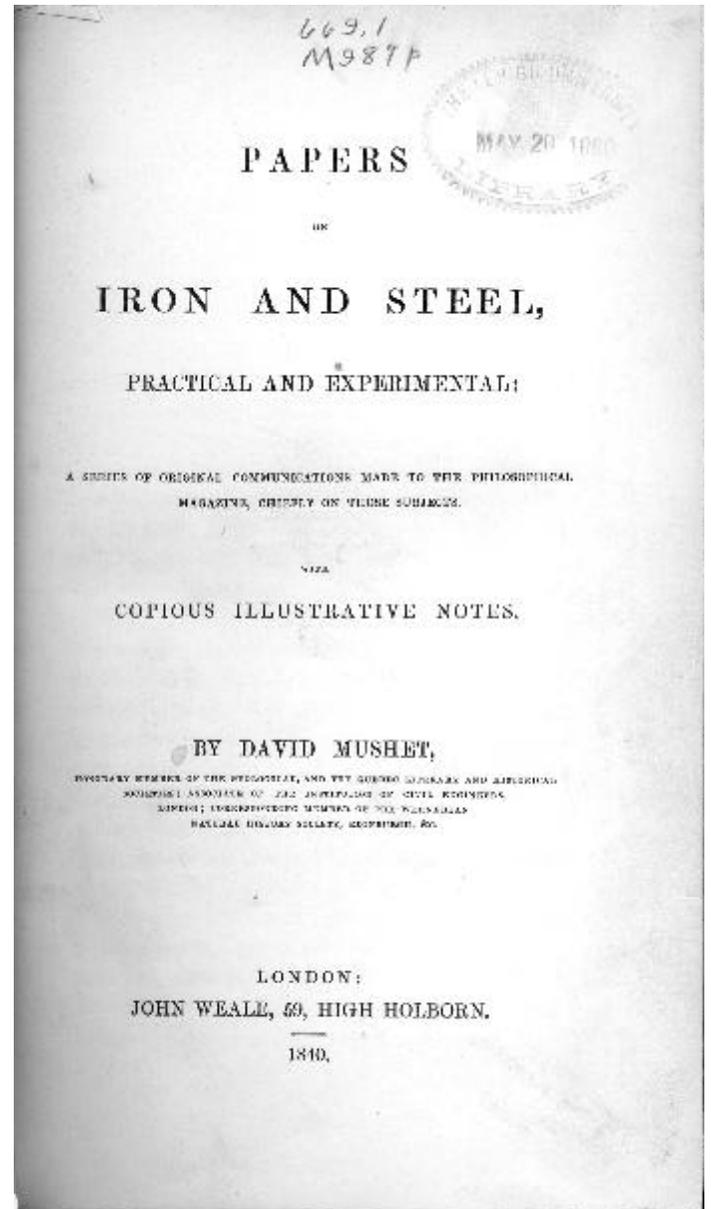
Transfer from the general collection constitutes in fact an important part of Special Collections' mission to preserve and interpret books of artifactual value. "Artifactual value" includes aspects of the object which a copy or facsimile can-not transmit, and which sometimes have the effect of con-ferring monetary value. What was just another publication a hundred or more years ago may now be an important document for purposes the original writer or publisher could not have imagined.

The library has developed a set of guidelines for

transfer, which are based on the date of publication and the nature of the material. These have been used to transfer more than 2500 titles. It is important to understand that these date criteria do not substitute for informed judgement. *The general principle is that any book falling before the applicable date needs a justification for leaving it in the general collection; after the date justification must fall on the side of removing it.*

With this in mind, here are the standards by which Lehigh's libraries make the decision. Other institutions may follow somewhat different guidelines.

1. All books with a publication date 1850 or earlier. However, a textually unimportant edition from the 1840s of a 19th century work would remain in the circulating collection. On the other hand, a post-1850 textually im-portant edition of, say, a Dickens novel



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*Special Collections materials are available for research and consultation without restriction. For further information contact Philip A. Metzger, Curator of Special Collections, or Marie Boltz, Special Collections Assistant. Reading room hours are Monday through Friday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. or by appointment. Telephone: (610) 758-4506; fax (610) 974-6471; e-mail: [inspc@lehigh.edu](mailto:inspc@lehigh.edu).*