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Odds & Ends

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ODDS & ENDS

Issues of this publication have, for the most part, discussed those things that people expect to find in a special collections: hand printed books, color plates, important manuscript collections, and the like. But there is another aspect, which will be featured in an upcoming exhibition in the permanent art gallery of



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the Zoellner Arts Center, and that is as a repository for some of the eclectic pieces – the odds and ends – that can probably be found in any special collections.

However, I hasten to add that, just because they're oddities doesn't mean they're frivolous. Often they can evoke a time past, or brighten up an exhibition. I'd be sorry to do without any of them.

Take for example the small envelope I found shortly after coming to work at Lehigh. The envelope contained a dozen or so brown and white rosettes made of ribbon and mounted in a sturdy metal holder obviously meant to be inserted in a buttonhole. Moreover, to judge from the dimensions of the metal, this



was a buttonhole in a heavy wollen suit, not a modern tropical worsted. It's no stretch of the imagination to picture Lehigh bigwigs at the turn of the century wearing one of these rosettes proudly.

Nearly all of the material, which we've gathered together in a collection called "Lehigh Memorabilia" – and most of it does pertain to the history of the University – has no information as to how it was acquired. It's safe to assume, however, that many of the objects in the collection, like to corncob pipes used by the class of 1970 during alumni weekend, came as occasional gifts over the years.

In other cases, skimming up the artifacts of a publicity campaign, like the t-shirt and buttons announcing Lehigh's first online library catalog in 1985, was the method of acquisition.

However, not all of our odds and ends pertain to Lehigh history. In fact, the somewhat facetious answer to the question "What's the oldest book in the library?" is provided by our collection of twenty-four Sumerian cuneiform tablets, dating from 2000 B.C.

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