

Remarks by David Rumsey at the Stanford Library on the Occasion of the Donation of his Map Library to Stanford University, April 14, 2009.

Looking at these images of my map library in San Francisco reminds me that collectors like me can get very attached to the things they collect – memories of the drama of acquiring (an auction, a dealer, another collector), the first look at the map or book, studying it, cataloging it, digitizing it, thinking endlessly about it. Multiply this by 10 of thousands of map interactions and you can get a sense of how this collection exists in my consciousness. It looms so large in my imagination that it might be more



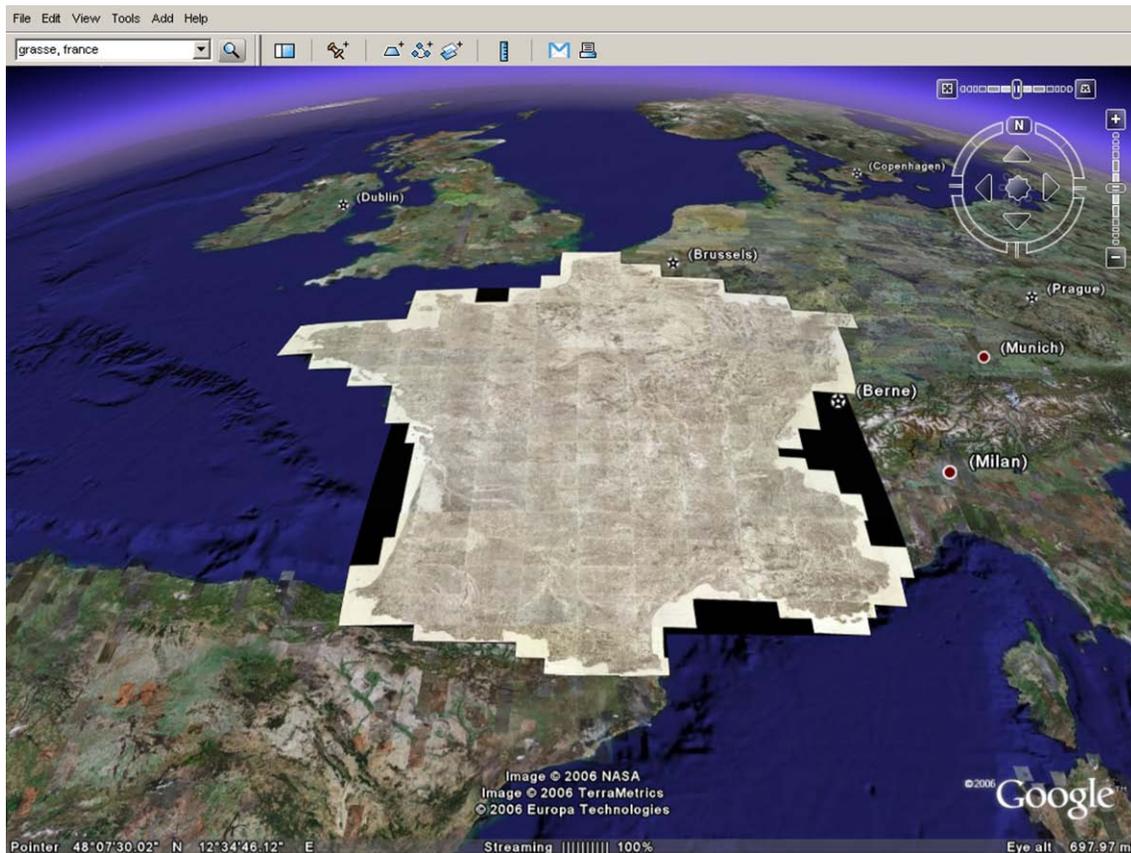
Views of the Rumsey Map Library in San Francisco

appropriate to say that I exist within the collection as an expression of my journey over three decades of building it and shaping it.

Giving this collection to Stanford is not letting go of these long time friends – my maps and books – but rather joining myself to the Stanford Library through the collection coming here. Ralph Ehrenberg, when he was head of the Geography and Map Division at the Library of Congress, told me that collectors should try to imprint themselves on their collections by adopting some unique approaches to creating and forming the collection, embedding themselves within the collection, so to speak. I think I have done that. So I feel that I really am never far from these materials - their very assemblage reflects some important part of me and expresses my views and interest in cartographic

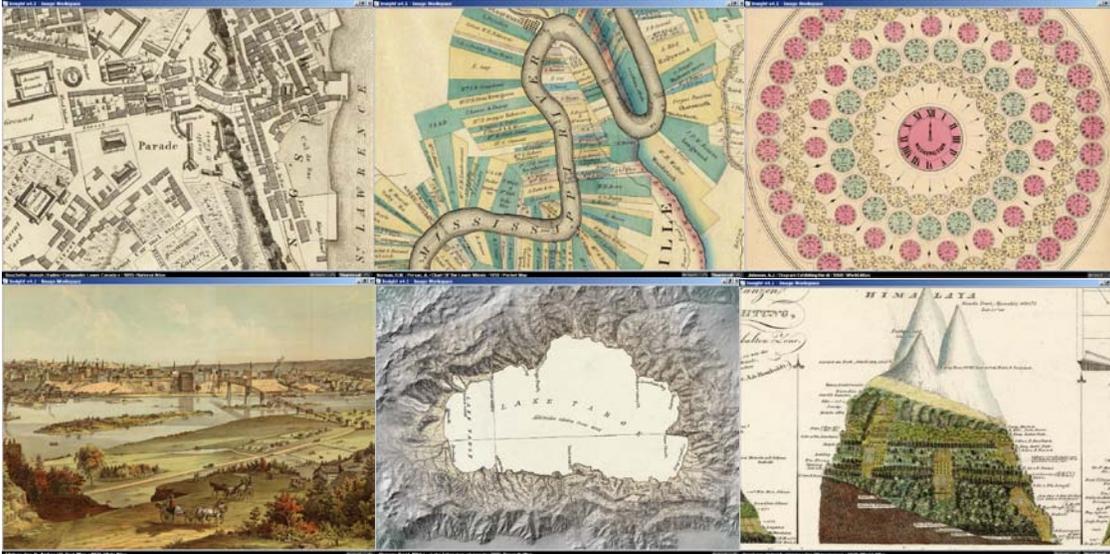
history. This eases the pain of separation. And of course, having the deep digital representations available to me, even on my iPhone, doesn't hurt either...

I think my first introduction to the Stanford Library and some of its map holdings occurred through a visit I made with Warren Heckrotte about 20 years ago to see the late Margaret Sowers and look at the 18th century Cassini Map of France that the library holds as individual sheets, and which will make a wonderful companion to the two - volume set coming from my collection seen in these images and in Google Earth.



The Cassini Map of France assembled in Google Earth

The Cassini map sheets were the first scientific survey of a whole county, an early example of GIS really, and as such made a deep impression on me at that time to think of my growing collection as being about the rise of modern cartographic science. The visit impressed me with the beauty of the library, its integration into the active campus life, and the sense of purposeful use of its materials. Since that time, through Mike Keller I have been a member of the Library Advisory Board and through that board I have been able to learn much about the library and its role here. And through Julie Sweetkind-Singer I have participated in the library's digital preservation program of geospatial information. I have also given several talks about maps over the years and attended many events here. All of these experiences have deepened my relationship with the library and my appreciation of it.



Images from prior talks given by Rumsey at Stanford University

So when I considered where to place the collection for long term preservation and access, Stanford was the ideal place for many reasons. Institutions and Libraries are not faceless things. They are as much about the people that run them and shape them as are the maps and books and manuscripts themselves. I have always felt that of the many libraries I have been involved with over the years, Stanford's library community led by Mike Keller was very special and the admiration I have for all of you inspired me to think of adding my collection to your already outstanding holdings. I also wanted to keep the collection on the west coast where generally speaking there are not as many historical maps in libraries as are available on the east coast or the mid west. Importantly, Stanford has active scholars like Richard White and Karen Wigen who engage with historical maps. And Mike Keller has made the Stanford Library a real pioneer in the creation of digital libraries, as well as maintaining access to original primary resources. Finally, Stanford is close to where I live so I would be able to maintain an active involvement with the collection in the coming years.

And very importantly, Stanford has agreed to preserve not only the physical collection but also to preserve the digital library that I have built from it and to continue to make that freely available to the public when I am not longer able to do that. And I know that Stanford has the capability to deliver on that promise.

I am excited about the creation, in about five years, of a cartographic study room in the Green Library that can both house the physical maps in Stanford's growing collections and provide digital access to those same maps and maps from other libraries, as well as multiple software tools such as GIS, text data mining tools, virtual reality spaces for maps, and more. This combination of physical and digital library is very promising and moves us towards a both/and solution to the digital/analog conundrum instead of an either/or.

Our plan for digitization of the collection is to make sure that each group of materials that comes here has been fully digitized and cataloged. That was the case with my first gift this past December and we will continue on that path. I expect to be able to digitize about 50,000 maps and related images before we say enough. That will represent

a significant resource that can be expanded over time. Perhaps one day all 150,000 maps will be digitized.

In forming my own library I have been assisted by many people too numerous to name here – scholars, dealers, librarians, collectors, technologists, and more. To all of you I give my thanks. Three librarians have helped form the collection: the first, Julie Sweetkind- Singer, is now the head of the Earth Science Library here; Phil Hoehn followed Julie and worked for many years shaping the online catalog and Marc records that we share with other libraries; and today Dan Holmes is not only continuing the cataloging effort but also investigating ways we can use GIS interfaces for searching the collection. For the scanning of the collection, Kristian McManus had been invaluable and diligent (and very organized) in building our now over 20,000 high resolution digital images of the collection. And all the people at Luna Imaging have helped to make the collection free and public for over 10 years to more than 20 million visitors.



Combining the paper maps with their digital versions in the map library of the future

A few words about the coverage of the collection for those of you less familiar with it – the main focus is North and South America, from about 1700 to 1925 – roughly the period that represents the rise of modern cartographic science, culminating in our present day GIS. I was very much a contextual collector, meaning that I tried to always gather materials that would inform each other as primary resources – so, for atlases I would try to assemble continuous runs of the same atlas covering 30 or 40 years, so one can see change over time and how commercial and government cartographers expressed that. Also, I would collect letters, catalogs, ephemera, and multiple product types of map

publishers – pocket maps, atlases, school geographies, books with maps, map puzzles, globes, and so on. These things all reinforce each other in producing a record of the time.

Stanford will also receive and preserve statistics on the web site showing visitor use over multiple years, the derivative images that have moved the collections into Google Earth and Maps, into other GIS software by ESRI, the development of special software for the web library site such as the collection ticker and QuickTime VR's, the



Rumsey's avatar, Map Darwin, on the Rumsey Map Islands in the virtual world of Second Life

files that represent parts of the collection in virtual worlds such as Second Life, and documents relating to the development of other supporting software such as the Luna Insight software.

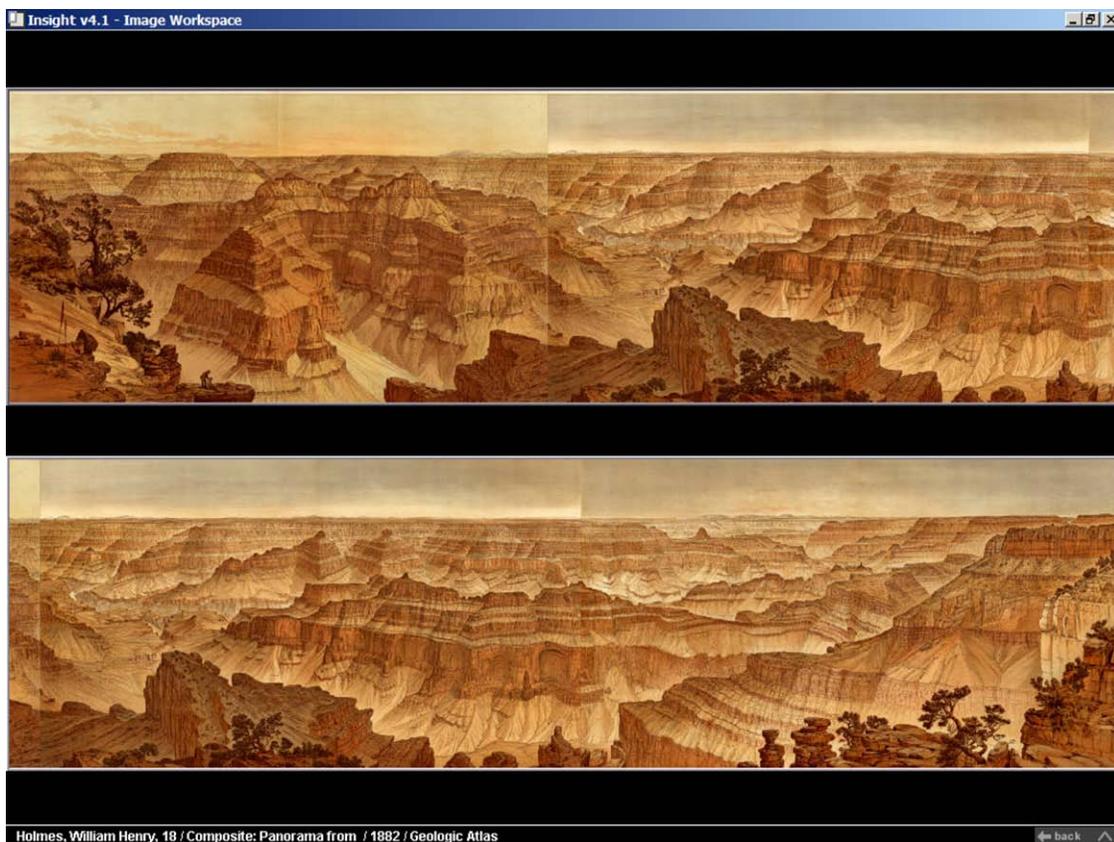
I hope that this gift will attract other gifts of maps and cartography to the library over time. I will certainly do my best to help with that process. Already we have been able to add some digital gifts of important maps and we hope to expand that. I think giving digital images will become an important part of collection building as the analog world becomes digitized – it is a way for collectors and dealers and others to contribute to building the Stanford digital map library without having to commit the original materials – perhaps to do that later, or not at all, depending on the circumstances. By my example, I hope to also encourage other collectors of maps (and other special collections in fact) to consider giving both the originals and a digital version of their collections.

Looking ahead 100 years, it is clear that all mapping from now on will be born digital – GIS products, satellite views, databases of information that can be visualized as

maps and more. These will be the new collections formed and given to the library by succeeding generations of spatial thinkers. Stanford will be in a very strong position to attract these materials as it builds its digital library for access and preservation.

Stanford understands that 21st century researchers and scholars will use digital tools more and more as time goes by, and many of those tools will be both developed here (thinking of the Google Books project and possible text data mining tools that will come from that) and employed here. One can easily imagine that tools for indexing all the text on maps similar to the OCR of book text may be developed here. This will allow combining map and text search in new ways. So I really do see my old maps getting a second life here as digital manifestations of their underlying data, unlocking their wealth of information for use in many disciplines.

I will close with an image of one of my favorite maps in the collection – William Henry Holmes' wonderful topographic drawing of the Grand Canyon in 1882. As



William Henry Holmes, Panorama from Point Sublime, 1882

Holmes' vision of the western landscape opened peoples' eyes to the new vistas, I hope that my donation of my maps to Stanford will serve to open up new possibilities of philanthropy both by giving primary resources to the library and the community of scholars and students it serves onsite; and by giving the digital library to the worldwide community of scholars and the general public, realizing in a new way the dream of men like Holmes to bring distant places closer to us, to give our imagination new places and new landscapes.