

## Annual Meeting of the New York-Ontario Chapter of MLA

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On Oct. 3, 1998, I travelled with Kathleen McMorrow and John Whitepost to Buffalo, N.Y., where we represented the Ontario members at the annual meeting of the New York State-Ontario Chapter of the Music Library Association, held at the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library in downtown Buffalo. After brief remarks by Music Department Head Raya Then, we toured the Rare Book Room, including the Mark Twain Room, home of the original manuscript of *Huckleberry Finn*. Curator William Loos provided an informative history of the collection. The Buffalo Public Library was founded in 1836, and thus is home to a significant rare book collection, especially after its merger in 1954 with the Erie County Library, and the Seth Grosvenor Library, a private library founded in 1870 which had a large music collection. We viewed a display that included items ranging from a 16th-century Catholic processional to a playbill for a Buffalo opera house performance of *Old Blind Tom*.

We next visited the QRS Music Company, makers of piano rolls since 1900, and still selling 200,000-300,000 rolls a year. After a presentation by the president and expert pianola player Bob Berkman, we toured the factory, noting the original machinery, now helped along by the use of computer which contain the data formerly held on master rolls and which control the action of the pneumatic punch. Many of the machines have a

distinctly Rube Goldberg character. When I asked why some of the moving parts on one of them was held together with elastics, Berkman's immediate response was "R & D!"

After lunch, we toured the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Music Department. The highlight was viewing the sheet music collection of about 350,000 pieces, which features the collections of Harold Arlen and Jack Yellen (lyricist of "Ain't She Sweet"), Buffalo imprints, first edition Stephen Foster songs, World War I songs, national songs and instrumental pieces, and songsters. The library is also home to four separate orchestral libraries and a large number of 78s. All of these and many other parts of the collection are in closed stacks in the basement. Raya Then hopes that digitization projects will make this magnificent collection better known and more accessible to all.

The meeting adjourned after closing remarks by retired music librarian Norma Jean Lamb. Next year's meeting will be held again in Buffalo, and will celebrate the achievements and retirements of Carol June Bradley and James Coover, founders of the graduate program in music librarianship at SUNY Buffalo. Discussions are underway to hold the fall 2000 meeting as part of the mega-conference Toronto 2000, in which CAML is a participant.