## Introduction

In a world where crime is reported daily, the second largest category of crime is within the fine arts market and includes the theft of Blaeu, Mercator, Jefferson, nineteenth-century U.S. government documents and other maps. Early 20th century materials are now more than 100 years old, out-of-print, and essentially irreplaceable without some considerable investment. Maps in atlases and books are often very valuable and especially vulnerable as the removal of a map or two is not immediately apparent when the volume is returned.
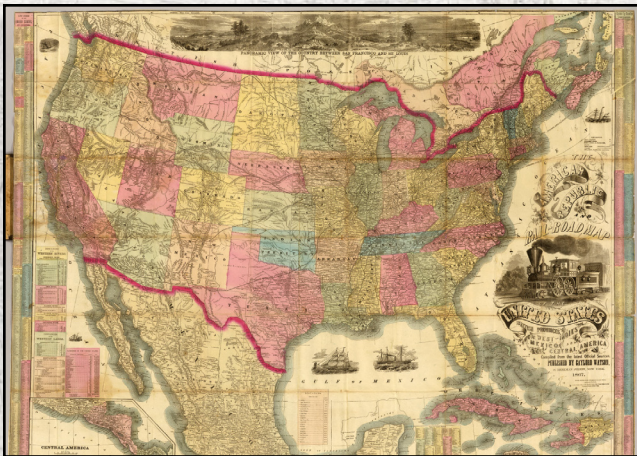
Curators must be more cognizant of the marketplace and the increasing prices of early maps and even twentieth-century road maps. Increased security of our collections must be synonymous with increased responsibility. Librarians, as curators, should reassess their collections and administrators must provide collections with an infrastructure and staffing that will allow appropriate access, preservation, and security. The following guidelines will allow curators to better assess their collections, prepare requests to their administrations, and provide a more secure environment for their map collections.

Collections

Librarians and library staff must be able to clearly identify materials that belong to their collections. Positive identification of materials and ownership of materials will be required when attempting to recover stolen items. Digital imaging of rare and significant materials is rapidly becoming a process to increase security and identify missing items.

• **Collection Processing** should be done in a space separate from areas accessible by users.

• **Items Must be Marked** with a visible and appropriate property stamp immediately upon receipt. Property stamps work well as a first deterrent in preventing theft.

• **Catalogues and Finding Aids** provide the framework of data that describes the extent of the collection, and should include the details of unique aspects that may aid in the identification of items.

• **Collection Inventories** should be conducted on a regular basis, and retained as a baseline for future inventory and for comparisons should a loss or theft be suspected.

• **Appraisal** (monetary, personal/emotional, research, contextual) provides an estimation of the value of the collection and of especially noteworthy items. This is helpful for insurance and fundraising purposes, however, at no time should this information be distributed. Transfer high-value maps out of vulnerable situations (open stacks) and into closed stacks or restricted access areas such as remote storage.

• **Copying and Scanning** facilities should be located within the cartographic collection area; only the collection staff should handle the antiquarian maps. Digital copies serve as surrogates, protecting valuable and fragile originals, and can also useful in identifying the unique aspects (stains, marks, tears, etc.) of items which might stray from the collection.

Facilities and Security

Facilities and facility organization need to be structured to maximize security while providing for use of materials.

• **Physical Configuration** of furniture, map cases, vertical files, shelving, and walls in public areas should be arranged so they do not impede line of sight for staff members. Limit egress points to a minimum and allow only a single controlled entry.

• **Monitor Access** to the reading room. Staff members must check personal items being brought into and taken out of the collection by readers. When readers are using the collection, the staff member assigned to monitor the reading room should be doing no other task. If a camera is in place, it must be operational.

• **Keys, Keycards, Passwords** should be issued in minimal numbers and only to those staff requiring them. Change them on a scheduled basis and any time that there is a change in staff.

Staff Members

Staff members are the greatest asset in protecting a collection and, potentially, the largest risk to the collection. Through their work with the collection and users of the collection, staff become intimately familiar with holdings. They may give the alert that things are missing. They also have insider knowledge of what is available.

• **Background Checks** should be run and all references contacted as a regular part of the hiring process.

• **Train** the staff in appropriate security measures and procedures, including information on legal rights and responsibilities.

• **Hours Open** should be commensurate with staffing levels and infrastructure; a minimum of two staff must be present.

Readers

Because of the possible monetary value and irreplacability of cartographic materials, readers will need to present identification when they request to use the materials.

• **User Registration Forms**, including a statement of collection access and use policies, must be completed when the reader arrives.

• **Objects Being Carried Into the Collection** must be inspected by a staff member prior to entry.

• **Closed Stacks** prohibit readers from retrieving materials on their own. When open access is allowed, readers should not be allowed to carry any personal items into the stacks area besides slips of paper for jotting down notes.

• **Readers' Belongings Must be Inspected** by a staff member before readers are allowed to depart from the collection space.

Policies and Procedures

Policies regarding cartographic collections should be posted and all staff must be thoroughly familiar with the policies

• **Reader Access** to collections should be allowed only when a staff member is present.

• **Use of Materials** should be a limited to a sensible and trackable quantity, and restricted to single item for rare materials.

• **Interlibrary Loan** of originals is not recommended; copies or high-quality scans should be sent instead.

• **Distribution of Keys and Passwords** should be documented, and records retained indefinitely. Change Locks and passwords at least annually.

Administering the Security Plan

Create a communications plan whereby all parties (administration, librarians, and staff) know how to react when a theft occurs. Initial and immediate contacts should be with local safety officials. Once the building is declared secured, librarians and preservation staff should evaluate the situation and determine the status of the collections. An early warning system is critical as the map trade moves quickly, particularly in the general marketplace (i.e. EBay and other online sales).

Routinely checking map-related websites and listservs is an important communication device to alert the map trade and librarians about security issues.

• **Map History** http://www.maphistory.info

• **MapHist:** maphist@geo.uu.nl

• **Map Trade:** maptrade@raremaps.com

• **Maps-L:** maps-l@listserv.uga.edu

• **ExLibris-L:** exlibris-l@listserv.indiana.edu

The full document map collection security guidelines are available online from the **Map and Geography Round Table (MAGERT), American Library Association:** http://www.ala.org/ala/magert/magert.cfm

Prepared by:
Task Force on Library Security for Cartographic Materials
MAGERT,
American Library Association.

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MAGERT
Map and Geography Round Table

MAP COLLECTION SECURITY GUIDELINES

ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

MAGERT
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