

A gift of \$2.5 million has been given to Washington and Lee University (W&L) to establish the Hal F. and Barbra Buckner Higginbotham University Librarian Endowment through a charitable deferred irrevocable pledge from the estate of the Higginbothams. John Tombarge, W&L's university librarian, will hold the inaugural position, the first to be established specifically for a faculty member of the W&L library. It is only one of a handful of similar endowments across the country. The gift marked the occasion of Hal Higginbotham's 50th reunion of the W&L Class of 1968, which provided a gift of just over \$11 million to the university. The couple's intent is to support special opportunities and needs of Leyburn Library in enriching the university's academic mission. The Higginbothams intend to begin funding the endowment with occasional outright gifts.

Virginia Tech's University Libraries' Special Collections department received a \$68,722 grant to preserve and make accessible decades of materials that tell the story of Fries, Virginia, and its textile mill. The grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the grants-making arm of the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, will fund a one-year archivist position to process the collection, organize community events, and promote the town's history through outreach and exhibits. The project, "They're Closing Down the Textile Mill: Creating Access to the Fries Textile Plant Records at Virginia Tech," illuminates the history of a small company town and its contributions to the American experience. In 1903, Colonel Francis Henry Fries founded the town of Fries and constructed the textile

plant in Grayson County, Virginia. He was president of the family-owned Washington Mills Company and used his political and business influence to build a connection to the main branch of the Norfolk and Western Railroad along with a dam on the New River to generate power for the mill. As a result of increased international competition in the textile industry, the mill closed in 1988. In 2016, the Fries Town Council officially donated the 150 cubic feet of company records to the University Libraries' Special Collections department.

Acquisitions

A manuscript written by Sir Isaac Newton that provides instructions for making the philosopher's stone, a substance thought to have special powers of transformation, has been acquired by the Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Illinois. The "Opus Galli Anonymi" is Newton's Latin translation of a French work on making the philosopher's stone, with corrections and notes by Newton based on his own scientific work. The library bought the manuscript at auction for \$275,000, thanks to a donation by Jim and Lionelle Elsesser of St. Louis, who are Illinois alumni. The Elsessers made a \$500,000 donation to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library to be used for materials for special collections. The philosopher's stone was thought to be a substance that would turn base metals into precious ones, such as lead into gold, and also cure illness and grant immortality. The manuscript is made up of four sheets of paper folded in the middle to make eight leaves. It must be translated into English, it needs some conservation work, and it must be fully cataloged and integrated into the collection. The most important consideration is how to house the fragile document. ♪

Ed. note: Send your grants and acquisitions to Ann-Christe Galloway, production editor, *C&RL News*, email: agalloway@ala.org.