

LGM

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MAGAZINE
JULY/AUGUST 2026

THE SOURCE

Where Curiosity
Sparks Discovery

Inside

Found: A Long-Lost Film
From the Dawn of Cinema

Making Magic with Miles:
The Papers of Gil Evans

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■ A student explores The Source, the new experiential research center for children, teens and families at the Library. *Shawn Miller*

Mission of the Library of Congress

The Library's mission is to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

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■ **On the cover:** A young visitor checks out the towering card catalog in The Source. Shawn Miller

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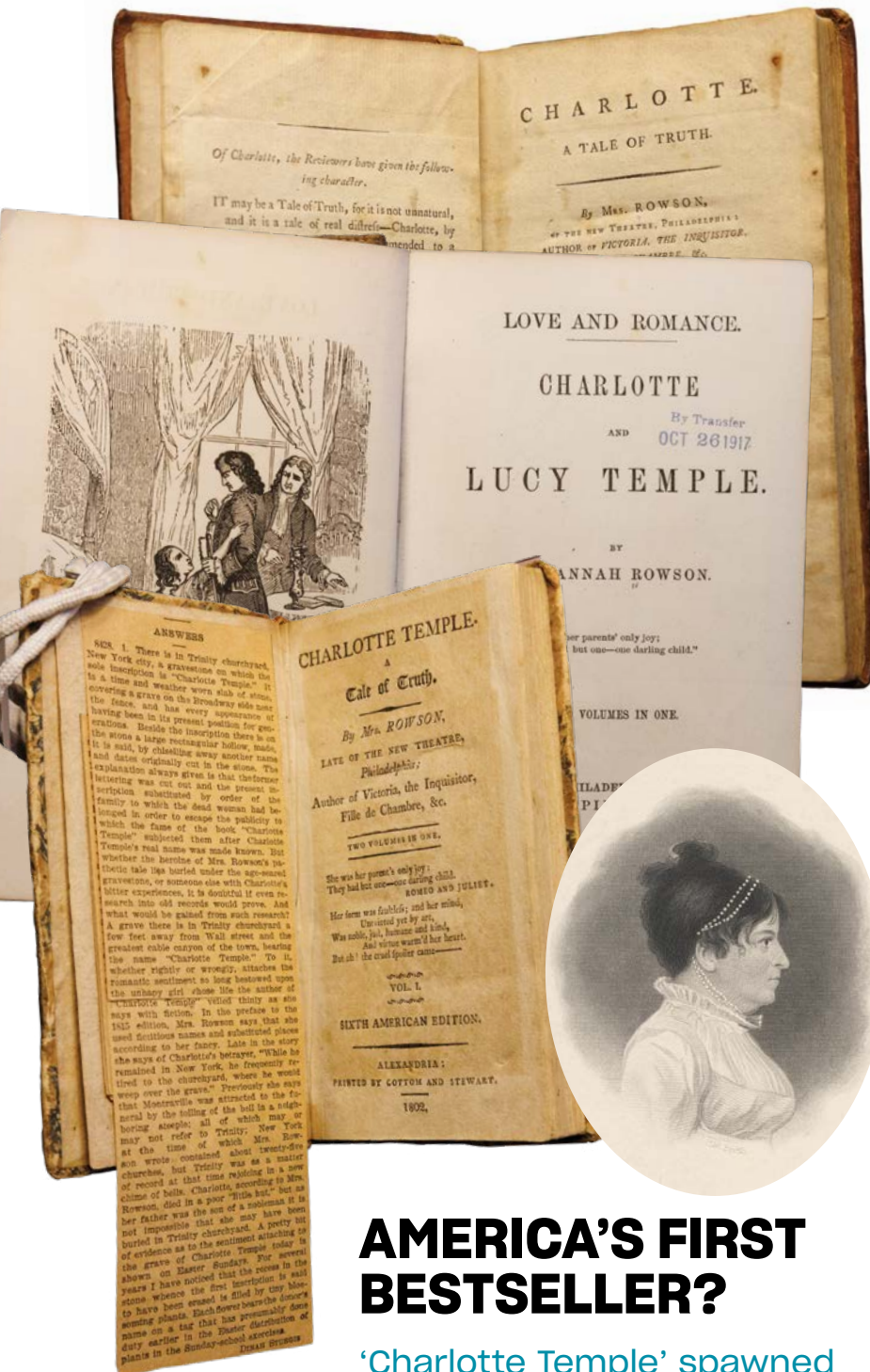
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CONNECT ON

loc.gov/connect



OFF THE SHELF



AMERICA'S FIRST BESTSELLER?

'Charlotte Temple' spawned generations of devoted fans.

Before bestseller lists and BookTok, there was "Charlotte Temple," an 18th-century novel that created one of America's first and most lasting literary fandoms. Generations of readers devoured the tragic story of

Charlotte, a young English girl seduced and abandoned by a British soldier during the American Revolution.

The Library's Rare Book and Special Collections Division holds at least a dozen copies of "Charlotte Temple," including an 1802 edition in which a later reader inserted newspaper clippings describing how, by the end of the 19th century, the New York City grave of a real-life woman named Charlotte Temple became a pilgrimage site for readers who mistook her for the fictional Charlotte.

Author Susanna Rowson understood how to hook her readers: Originally published in London in 1791 as "Charlotte: A Tale of Truth," Rowson insisted in the book's preface that she was merely fictionalizing a true story. And, in fact, she could write firsthand of the human suffering endured by many during the American Revolution. As a child, Rowson and her Loyalist family were exiled from New England and returned to Britain, where she began working as a writer and actress.

In 1792, Rowson and her husband were recruited by a Philadelphia theater manager to join his troupe in America. Through their work onstage, the Rowsons developed a relationship with printer and theater critic Matthew Carey, who brought out the first American edition of "Charlotte Temple" in 1794.

The scandalous subject matter, Rowson's popularity as an actress and the American setting of the book no doubt contributed to its success. By 1812, Carey wrote to Rowson that "Charlotte Temple is by far the most popular ... novel ever published in this country" and estimated that the number of copies sold "must far exceed 50,000."

In the meantime, Rowson opened a school for girls and remained dedicated to educating the young women of her "dear adopted country" until she died in 1824 – not only an American, but an American legend.

–Rebecca Rose is a reference specialist in Duplication Services.

■ The Rare Book division holds at least a dozen editions of "Charlotte Temple," the classic novel authored by Susanna Rowson (inset). Rare Book and Special Collections Division; Prints and Photographs Division



BARK BOOK OF BATAK MAGIC

This wooden volume from Sumatra is filled with shamans' spells.

The book is from an island in Indonesia. It was likely created in the 19th century, but it looks much older. It is thick, heavy and dark. Black wooden boards as covers. Brown pages made of tree bark. On those pages are words and mysterious drawings. It rises 3 inches off the table, looking like a tome of spells and incantations.

Which, actually, it is.

This is "Poda ni pagar si jonnga," or "Instructions for Magical Protection," a book used by shamans of the Batak peoples in North Sumatra more than 100 years ago, written in a rarified script that few people could read then and fewer still now.

That was by design. The Hata Poda writing system was reserved for Batak traditional healers or shamans. Given the inroads of Islam, Christianity and other religions across Indonesia over the past centuries, and the

rise in regional use of Romanized script, there just aren't many people who can read it today.

"It's a manual with instructions for various methods of divination and/or hints to remind the shaman who is already familiar with the methods," says Joshua Kueh, head of the South Asian, Southeast Asian, Tibetan and Mongolian section in the Asian Division. "It's one of the more fascinating items in our collections, but it's in an esoteric language and we don't know all that much about it."

The 104-page book is one of four Batak manuscripts in the Library's collections. Staff experts from the Asian, Southeast Asian, conservation and digitization divisions spent a couple of weeks preparing them for imaging, then photographing each page, so that they are now all online.

"They're very unique, they're valuable, but a lot more work needs to go into translating and understanding them," Kueh said. "Hopefully getting them online will be a service to scholars and people who know a lot about them. My hope is to be able to spark conversations with them and get more information."

—Neely Tucker is a writer-editor in the Office of Communications.

■ These pages, made of tree bark, contain mysterious drawings that held meaning for shamans of the Batak peoples. Asian Division/ photo by Shawn Miller

■ Conservator Heather Wanser prepares Thomas Ayres' drawing of Yosemite Falls for display. Shawn Miller

FIRST LIGHT ON THE VALLEY

Thomas Ayres' drawings revealed the rugged majesty of Yosemite to the nation.

It was a hot day in late June 1855. Thomas Almond Ayres and a small group of adventurers made their way along mountainous, rugged trails into Yosemite Valley, a place almost completely unknown to the larger world.

It was breathtaking: Ayres, a landscape artist from back East who had come to California in the Gold Rush, was awestruck by a mountainous realm of waterfalls and peaks. For the next five days, he sketched and refined with graphite, ink, chalk and charcoal on paper.

One of his first drawings, "The High Falls, Valley of the Yo Semity, California," measuring 20 by 14 inches, depicts what is now known as Yosemite Falls.

When it (and a companion lithograph) was published a few months later, Yosemite became a sensation, enchanting the rest of the country just as Ayres himself had been. His images predated the famous photographs by Carleton Watkins and the monumental paintings by Albert Bierstadt in the 1860s that would cement the valley's reputation as the romantic dream of the American West incarnate.

The Library recently acquired "The High Falls" sketch and its companion lithograph, preserving them – and their moment in national history – for generations to come. The items were acquired with support from the Library of Congress James Madison Council.

"The High Falls" shows small human figures gathered around a flickering campfire in the foreground, smoke curling upward and dissolving into stillness. The peaceful scene is dwarfed by towering granite cliffs and a silver ribbon of waterfall cascading in the distance. He signed it "Thos. A. Ayres." The companion lithograph, "The Yo-Hamite Falls," measuring 23 by 15 inches, was issued by publisher James Mason Hutchings in October 1855.

Before Yosemite became famous,

before roads, railings, mass tourism and presidential efforts to preserve it, Ayres, 39, and his five-man expedition climbed steep, unguarded trails where a single misstep could send horses and riders tumbling into ravines. The group followed paths and swollen creeks, led by two Miwok guides under the auspices of Hutchings, a shrewd English-born entrepreneur determined to promote and preserve California's natural wonders.

Native Americans had lived in the region for thousands of years before the Spanish first tried to colonize the area in the 18th century. After the 1849 Gold Rush, California became a U.S. state in 1850.

The Mariposa Battalion of the California Militia were the first people of European descent to see Yosemite the following year, raiding Native American settlements as part of a regional war.

Hutchings, the publisher, learned of the valley from a newspaper account of the battalion's raid. He hired Ayres to accompany him to Yosemite to sketch images for publication in his *Illustrated California Magazine*. Ayres and Hutchings wanted everyone else to see what they had, too.

A mover and shaker, Hutchings lived to see Yosemite converted to a state park in 1864 and a national park in 1890.

Ayres continued sketching expeditions in California but with fateful consequences. In 1858, after finishing work in Southern California for Harper's Weekly, he boarded a schooner bound for San Francisco. Concerned about its safety, he switched to another one that he thought was safer. But his new ship sank in rough seas; Ayres drowned, his drawings lost. (The risky schooner he avoided made it safely to port.)

If you're ever inspired by Yosemite, tip your hat to Ayres, an underrecognized but pivotal figure whose drawings introduced Yosemite to the nation and paved the way for generations of artists and photographers documenting its unparalleled beauty.

—Maria Peña is a public affairs specialist in the Office of Communications.

MORE INFORMATION

"The High Falls, Valley of the Yo Semity"
loc.gov/pictures/item/2026163522/





MAKING MAGIC WITH MILES

Library acquires the papers
of jazz legend Gil Evans.

BY NEELY TUCKER

In late 1959, Gil Evans took out his pencils and, on the blank music sheet in front of him, started sketching out a complex arrangement, beginning with “harp = castanets” and flurries of notes and chords and then writing “Miles” in red above the ninth bar.

This was the beginning of “Concierto de Aranjuez,” the piece that would open “Sketches of Spain,” his famous 1960 album with Miles Davis, and brother, he meant for you to play it just like he wrote it.

“He had it exactly how everything was, musically speaking, so if somebody would just breathe, he would have that in there, too,” Davis later wrote about the album’s recording sessions. And: “He was a perfectionist.”

Evans’ handwritten score – and a multitude of other works from a brilliant, decadeslong career – was recently acquired by the Library’s Music Division. There are more than 350 of his scores included, making a significant addition to the Library’s already impressive jazz holdings.

Evans, born in Canada, raised in California, then a fixture in New York until the end of his life, always seemed to be hosting, hanging out and rehearsing with everyone. His New York apartment in the late 1940s was the spot for young jazz lions.

“I was over at Gil’s place most of the time,” remembered Gerry Mulligan, another midcentury jazz fixture, in an interview that is included in his papers at the Library. “It finally got to the point where Gil and I were taking turns using the piano and taking turns sleeping, and there were people in and out of the place all the time. Day and night we’d have people over there, and so there was no schedule like with normal people.”

“I can still sleep with noise going on everywhere,” laughs Noah Evans, his son (who, along with his brother Miles, brought the collection to the Library). “Because if I couldn’t have slept during rehearsals when we were growing up, I never would have slept.”

Miles recalls that although his dad played the piano on stage and in recordings for decades, he never really considered himself a pianist: “He thought the piano was a tool for composing.”

Evans was awarded just about every prize that mattered; in 1985, he was named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master, considered the highest honor in the field. He was nominated for 13 Grammy Awards and won three, including for “Sketches of Spain.”

Evans was 14 years older than Davis, but the men shared a musical drive and vision, and they worked together on other high-profile projects. “Birth of the Cool” was a transitional work in jazz history; their version of Gershwin’s “Porgy and Bess” is considered a classic interpretation; the album “Miles Ahead” became a standard.

Davis was godfather to both of Evans’ children (and had playfully urged Anita Evans, their mom and Evans’ wife, to name the couple’s second son after him). The pair remained lifelong friends. Evans died in 1988.

“His sound was like a rainbow,” Anita Evans told a reporter at the time. “If your ear could see a rainbow, that’s what his music was.”

In his autobiography, “Miles,” Davis paid tribute to him repeatedly, calling Evans “probably my best and oldest friend.”

He said that he had “conversations” with him even after Evans’ death, as he was “in my head” forever. That probably applies to most jazz fans. Evans’ work across so many genres with so many masters has proven to be timeless.

■ **Composer and arranger Gil Evans at his piano.** *Prints and Photographs Division*

In the background, Evans’ score for “Concierto de Aranjuez,” written for Miles Davis and his classic album, “Sketches of Spain.”

Music Division/photo by Shawn Miller

FOR YOU



DISCOVERING GEMS

For 35 years, junior fellows have explored the collections – and, sometimes, found a new career path.

Since its inception in 1991, the Junior Fellows Program has welcomed 1,100 undergraduate and graduate students to explore the Library's vast physical and digital collections, making hundreds of thousands of items accessible to Congress and the American public.

Near the end of the 20th century, the Library faced a challenge: a burgeoning collection of unprocessed materials, the result of nearly 200 years of robust collecting.

To tackle it, the Library proposed two programs to the James Madison Council, the institution's private-sector philanthropic support group. The first: provide senior fellows with support to study the collections (this eventually became the Library's John W. Kluge Center). The second: an undergraduate program that would enlist junior fellows (the name stuck) to help process collections.

The junior fellows dug into the Library's treasure trove, inventorying, cataloging, arranging, preserving and researching copyright or gift collections. Each year, they unearthed gems in the collections.

Many junior fellows discovered something more: a new career path.

Maurita Baldock joined the Prints and Photographs Division as a junior fellow, working on the collection of modern designers Charles and Ray Eames the same summer the Library's major exhibition on the Eameses opened. Today, she serves as assistant head of the preparation section of the Manuscript Division.

"My time as a junior fellow provided me with the knowledge and experience I needed to begin my career," Baldock said. "After my internship, I was able to obtain a job as an archivist and then as a curator of manuscripts. In my new roles, I was able to hire interns for my own projects and provide them the same guidance and mentorship I had received."

There are many such cases.

Patrick Brown, then a graduate student at the University of North Carolina, worked on Russian-language monographs as a junior fellow in the European Division. Now, he is a librarian in the U.S. Serials and Government Documents Division.

Sara Duke was completing her Ph.D. at SUNY Stony Brook when she joined Prints and Photographs as a junior fellow, working on the Civil War drawings of Alfred and William Waud and on the Patent Office Labels collection. Today, she is the curator of popular and applied graphic art in the same division.

"What I learned as a junior fellow was dogged accuracy (and apologizing for the inevitable mistakes), passion for collections and the wealth here that allows us to go the extra distance in making collections available to researchers," Duke said.

The Talent Recruitment and Outreach Division administers the Junior Fellows Program and produces Display Day, the much-anticipated event in mid-July at which the fellows showcase the collections treasures they discover.

Travis Hensley was an undergraduate at the University of California, Davis when he interned in the Geography and Map Division, working with digital maps and in the Southeast Asia map collection.

"My favorite part was getting to know the institution and the bonds I made with my fellow junior fellows," said Hensley, now a Kluge Center program specialist. "I absolutely fell in love with the institution that summer. The Library is the oldest federal cultural institution in the country, the largest library in the world, with the largest accumulation of knowledge ever assembled by humankind. There is no better place to work for librarians, bibliophiles or the intellectually curious."

—Donna Sokol is a lead program management specialist in the Internship and Fellowship Programs section and a Junior Fellows alumna.

■ Daniel Wu discusses his work as a junior fellow during the 2025 Display Day showcase. Today, he works as an inventory management technician in the Library's Preservation Directorate. Shawn Miller



The
SOURCE

Where Curiosity Sparks Discovery

A first-of-its-kind
experiential gallery
for young people.

BY MARIA PEÑA

The drawers from the card catalog are meant to surprise you.

Open one, and a tornado from “The Wizard of Oz” swirls to life. Another reveals a rocket launch. A third shows Rosa Parks’ pancake recipe.

At The Source, the Library of Congress’ first-of-its-kind experiential research gallery for young people, the familiar wooden card catalog becomes an entry point into history, inviting visitors to explore the past not as something dusted off in a dog-eared textbook but as something they can actively discover.

Here, the past unfolds in multiple formats. Voices echo from across time, and collection items pull young visitors into the role of budding researchers. From the moment they enter the ground floor of the Jefferson Building, they are encouraged to ask questions, make connections and explore history through a blend of nostalgia and modern technology.

Seven years in the making, The Source: Where Curiosity Sparks Discovery opened in May as a learning space designed to upend expectations. Created with input from 29 youth advisers and more than 40 teen interns, it reflects years of collaboration between them and Library experts (see page 16). The youth advisory council met with staff over a dozen times from 2021 to 2024, shaping ideas now included across four immersive zones dedicated to collection items in text, image, sound and film formats.

For Shari Werb, lead curator of The Source and director of the Library’s Center for Learning, Literacy and Engagement, the gallery is as much about discovery as it is about skill-building. By combining curated, age-appropriate materials with intuitive digital tools, The Source allows visitors to explore and interpret content in ways that make research approachable and fun.

“We wanted to design a space that resonated with kids, so we invited them into the design process,” Werb said. “This space provides young researchers with an opportunity to follow their curiosity, as they discover the primary sources at the Library.”

Unlike traditional museum exhibits, where people walk past glass-enclosed displays, The Source centers on three core ideas: engaging with primary sources, building

research skills and sparking creativity. Children and teens ages 8 to 15 are invited to analyze materials, ask questions and draw their own conclusions.

That approach aligns with the Library’s broader mission. As the largest library in the world, stewarding more than 184 million items – from manuscripts and photographs to books, maps, recorded sound and film – the Library has long preserved history in its original, unadulterated form. The Source translates that mission into an experience tailored for young people, making collections accessible, engaging and relevant.

Developed as part of the Library’s long-term Visitor Experience Master Plan, with bipartisan support from Congress, The Source represents a sustained investment in expanding public access.

■ **Opposite and below:** Visitors explore The Source at its grand opening on May 9.
Shawn Miller





■ A visitor checks out flip books in the welcome room (left) of The Source on opening day. In the image zone (right), young researchers can explore 150 photographs, maps, posters and more.
Shawn Miller



It also marks a shift in how research is introduced. For many young people, research can feel abstract and daunting, confined to textbooks or search engines. In the gallery, it becomes a tangible game changer: A newspaper can be scrolled on a replica microfilm reader, a photograph can be examined up close, and a single question can lead to discoveries across multiple formats.

The new learning space is, by design, self-directed and driven by curiosity, encouraging visitors to take on the role of investigators.

The welcome room sets the tone, with 30 overhead graphics reproduced from collections and 10 pull-out drawers featuring items such as “Take Me Out to the Ballgame,” Spider-Man comics and historic newspaper front pages announcing the moon landing,

the March on Washington and the sinking of the Titanic, among others. The drawers, when pulled out, trigger related sounds and animations.

At its core, the gallery supports what educators call “reading to learn” rather than “learning to read.” It’s aimed at kids who already have foundational literacy skills and are ready to deepen their understanding of the world.

That philosophy undergirds the space, with high-quality reproductions that offer meaningful entry points to the Library’s vast holdings. Digital tools reinforce hands-on learning, allowing visitors to zoom in on details, follow prompts and develop their own interpretations. Life-sized video displays of seven librarians add a human element, as they share insights about their work and tips on navigating collections.



These tools help to demystify the research process, making it feel personal and achievable, rather than an overwhelming sensory and informational overload.

Across four zones, visitors encounter the breadth of the collections. In the text zone, 40 manuscripts and 10 newspaper front pages document historic moments, from the signing of the Declaration of Independence to the end of World War II. A replica microfilm reader shows how researchers explored such topics in the past.

In the image zone, visitors can examine more than 150 photographs, portraits, stereographs, maps and posters as they search for clues and context.

In the sound zone, drawers containing 50 recordings – from early broadcasts to oral histories, accounts from veterans and songs – can be played on a replica phonograph, giving voice to pivotal moments.

In the film zone, 59 samples of newsreels, documentaries and early clips flicker to life on a replica projector, showing how stories have been captured and shared across generations.

Threaded throughout are investigation stations featuring more than 200 curated objects, encouraging visitors to build their own interpretations.

Among the most distinctive features are research boxes – 12 completed so far – covering topics such as the Ghost Army of World War II, the evolution of basketball and research by former National Ambassador for Young People's Literature Meg Medina into 1970s New York. These boxes let visitors follow a researcher's journey and reach their own understanding.

Caleb Sinnwell, who joined the youth advisory group at age 14, worked on a research box about the Ghost Army, a U.S. military unit known for its use of myriad visual and audio deception tactics.

"I pushed for including a film clip that sparked my interest in the Ghost Army, which showed the unconventional methods they used to deceive Nazi forces," Sinnwell said. "Seeing and hearing a giant speaker blasting out fake battle sounds or watching a soldier pick up and move an inflatable tank is shocking. I felt it would draw kids into



■ In the sound zone (left), Dianne Choie of the Library's Informal Learning Office leads a school program about using sound recordings for research. In the film zone (right), visitors can screen 59 historical film clips on a replica projector. Shawn Miller



■ **Above:** Monica Valentine of the Informal Learning Office acquaints visitors with The Source at its grand opening. *Shawn Miller*

Opposite: Visitors post inspirational thoughts on the Share Your Ideas board in The Source. *Shawn Miller*

the exhibit to learn more.”

Now a rising sophomore at Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon, Iowa, Sinnwell believes the gallery’s youth-centric approach will resonate with visitors.

“I never knew how much I loved history until I started studying and researching it using primary and secondary sources. I hope young people realize how fun and amazing researching history can be,” he added.

The educational experience extends beyond the gallery’s walls through The Source Creative Research Journal, a 48-page companion journal designed as a continuation of the visit and available for purchase in the gift shop.

Together, the 4,000-square-foot gallery, the journal and The Source website (loc.gov/thesource) create a continuous experience from curiosity to exploration to creation.

Designed with accessibility in mind, The Source includes open-captioned videos, large-print guides and sensory kits with noise-canceling headphones and fidgets. Staff wearing Source-themed T-shirts are available to facilitate the visit.

Operating Tuesday through Saturday, the gallery can accommodate up to 188 visitors

at a time and is expected to welcome about 150,000 people annually, from families to school groups. Over five years, that could mean more than 1 million young visitors engaging with primary sources – many for the first time.

At a time when information saturates the web and social media, The Source encourages the next generation of thinkers, creators and informed citizens to examine evidence and consider context to better understand an increasingly complex world.

In a place where magical card catalog drawers offer a glimpse into the past, the lesson is not just what to find but how to keep looking.

“We want kids to leave here feeling equipped – able to seek out reliable sources and think critically about what they encounter,” Werb said. “Information is everywhere, but meaning still needs a place. At The Source, young people move beyond answers to explore ideas, ask new questions and make discovery their own. In a world of instant information, this is where curiosity deepens.”

–*Maria Peña is a public affairs specialist in the Office of Communications.*

It's hard to know
- you just
stay open and
out it

KNOWLEDGE
Is
POWER!

Create a world where
every life has a home
and finding a purpose
that is fulfilling is as
easy as saying your name!

Humiliation is
So punk!
Watch the
Musical

Live
+
Learn


**What will you
create, explore,
or change?**
**Join a community
of researchers**

on 5/1/20 I visited the
for the first time. I typically
libraries and art galleries
enjoy them so much my children usually feel
as though this place had been their school. I will
be bringing my children back as I feel as though
The Source might be pleasantly surprising to them.
The Library of Congress literally has something
to everyone. The Source is vibrant and with a
cool "hanging space" I think children of all
ages would absolutely love! Erica K.

COLLABORATION BRINGS THE SOURCE TO LIFE

The Source: Where Curiosity Sparks Discovery is a direct result of public-private partnerships at the Library of Congress. We are grateful for the collaboration between the Library, Congress, the Architect of the Capitol and a group of private philanthropists who raised their hands to help young Library visitors begin their lifelong research journeys.

Specific elements of The Source were funded by matching donor interests and passions with bespoke activity areas for students.

For example, James Madison Council members Barbara and Thomas Bozzuto helped fund the researcher desk, which provides a curated set of research boxes that include sample collections and materials for young visitors to explore. Each box represents a story told and question asked of librarians.

"We are thrilled to provide this experience for future generations of researchers and inspire students to utilize the primary sources at their fingertips at the Library of Congress," the Bozzutos said.


**Share your
ideas**

STAY OPEN
Keep
Learn



■ Weston Moats served on the youth advisory council, helping the Library brainstorm ideas and refine concepts for the The Source. *Shawn Miller*

THE PRIMARY SOURCE FOR THE SOURCE: KIDS

How young people helped shape the new gallery.

The Source: Where Curiosity Sparks Discovery is built on two powerful forces – the expertise of the Library’s staff and the insight of young people across the nation.

In fall 2021, the Library convened a youth advisory council of about two dozen children, ages 8 to 12. At the first meeting, they reviewed preliminary designs for the new space. The designs sparked a wide spectrum of kid responses – from the blunt honesty of “I like the walls, but the floor is bringing the mood down” to “oohs” and “ahhs” and thumbs-up emojis in the message chat. It quickly became clear that the voices of these young people would dramatically shape The Source’s look, feel and content.

For the next three years, the staff met with children every few months. In early sessions, the kids helped refine core messages and initial concepts. They brainstormed themes, which the Library’s content experts then used to identify compelling collections

items for the space. The kids then voted on selections, workshopped names and logos and even concept-tested ideas for interactives.

The meetings were virtual but led to real connections. Staff members had the opportunity to meet many of these advisors and their families during visits to Washington, D.C. The Library’s Informal Learning Office even hosted one council member’s eighth-grade field trip.

After the first year of meetings, a participant reflected: “It was clear from the updates that were done to the spaces you were taking our ideas into consideration. You actually paid attention to what we had to say.”

We hope that every young researcher who visits The Source will discover the power of seeking out trusted resources for accurate information. During this process, the Library’s staff certainly learned the true value of its primary sources – the young advisors and their thoughtful, constructive feedback.

—Alli Hartley-Kong of the Veterans History Project served as an Informal Learning Office education specialist for The Source project.

Shari Werb helps the public connect with the Library.

Describe your work at the Library

As director of the Center for Learning, Literacy and Engagement, I have the privilege of leading a team of talented colleagues who create programs and experiences that help people connect with the Library – whether they're visiting in person, joining online or engaging from their own communities. Our work spans the offices of Library Events, Signature Programs, Informal Learning, Literary Initiatives, Visitor Engagement, and Professional Learning and Outreach Initiatives, all shaped by a deep and ongoing understanding of our audiences.

In my role, I focus on setting direction and creating the conditions for this work to thrive. That includes building consistent, audience-focused programming frameworks – like Live! At the Library, Afternoons With the Library and Family Days – that give people welcoming, predictable ways to engage. These platforms also make it easier for colleagues across the Library to bring their ideas to life and reach the audiences they care about.

How did you prepare for this position?

I've been working in cultural institutions for more than 35 years, which still surprises me. I began my career at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum before it opened, where I had the opportunity to play a small role in shaping the permanent exhibition and thinking about how visitors would experience it. I also earned a master's degree in leadership in museum education from Bank Street Graduate School of Education.

I later moved to the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, where I led Education, Outreach and Visitor Experience and led the development for Q?rius, a science education center for young people.

Across these experiences, I've focused on ensuring that programs reflect the authentic voice of the institution – working closely with collections and experts while bringing in audience perspectives through research and advisory groups. That same approach guides my work at the Library.



SHAWN MILLER

What are some of your standout projects?

I'm especially proud of Live! At the Library. We had a lot of strong programming happening across the Library, but it was previously more dispersed. We created a consistent Thursday night series along with concession sales to help build a regular audience – particularly younger and working-age adults. It has grown into a weekly cultural destination averaging 850 to 1,100 attendees each week, and it has introduced many people to the Library for the first time in a way that feels welcoming and dynamic.

What have been your favorite experiences at the Library?

I'm a huge crossword puzzle nerd, and we held a Live! At the Library event with author Adrienne Raphel and New York Times crossword editor Will Shortz, who had done research with the Library's puzzle collections. For the program, we shared some historical puzzles and Shortz created special puzzles for the audience – a great example of how the Library can bring together scholarship, creativity and public engagement in ways that feel surprising, personal and accessible.

Another especially meaningful experience has been developing The Source gallery. It's been years in the making, with librarians across divisions helping identify collections and internal and external educators piloting and shaping how young people will engage with the space. What excites me most is seeing how kids respond – how quickly they connect with primary sources and begin to see the Library as a place for them.

CURATOR'S PICKS

THE SOURCE

Exhibits Office interpretation chief Naomi Coquillon chooses favorite things in the new gallery for young people.



SOURCE BOOK: COMPILE AND SHARE

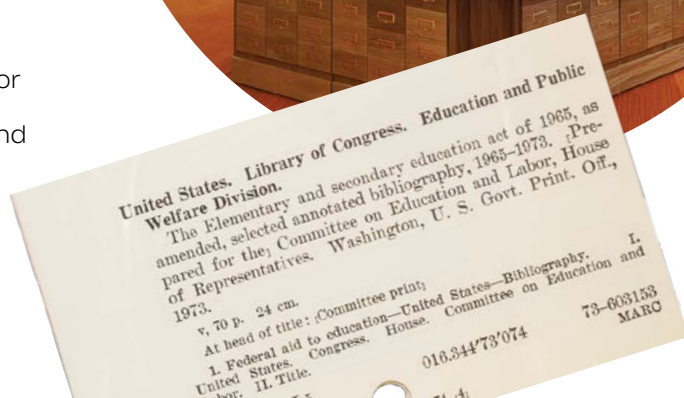
To represent the idea that researchers learn from each other and are part of a community, we developed the digital Source Book. Visitors can select from images of items from the space and pull them together into collages to show how they might use them – to write a story, organize a club, create artwork or other research outcomes. Then, they can add it to the wall display.

MEET LIBRARIANS: ASK EXPERTS

Librarians use reference interviews to clarify a researcher's needs. We wanted to represent that experience and highlight the important work of the Library's staff at the librarian's desk. Visitors can watch short videos featuring seven Library staff members, who share what they love about their work and recommend an item or experience to explore within The Source.

CARD CATALOG: GET CURIOUS

The interactive card catalog in The Source, with items flowing from it, represents the way the Library organizes information and makes collections accessible. And it's an opportunity for intergenerational conversation. Parents and caregivers who remember using a card catalog in their school or local library can share stories about their research experiences with the young people in their lives. The card catalog also is an invitation for visitors to follow their own curiosity – they can open drawers to discover collections and trigger related animations and sounds.





INVESTIGATION STATIONS: SPOT THE STORY

More than 200 replica items from across the Library are available in the four format zones in the space: text, sound, image and film. Visitors can swipe an item, enabled with an RFID tag, at an investigation station and take a deeper dive. By selecting hot spots on the scanned items, visitors can discover more information and consider how a researcher might use them for their work.



RESEARCH BOXES: JOIN A JOURNEY

Visitors can follow a research journey at the researcher desk. Each archival box includes the story of a researcher who used Library collections to explore a question, create something new or change their world.





A LONG- LOST FILM, FINALLY FOUND

In a dusty box of old reels, the Library discovers a short by a filmmaking pioneer.

BY NEELY TUCKER

The reels of film were old and battered, and no one knew what was on them.

They were from before World War I and had been shuttled from basements to barns to garages and had just been dropped off at the Library. There were about 10 of them, and they were rusted. Some were misshapen. The nitrate film stock had crumbled to bits on some; other strips were stuck together.

The librarians peeled them apart and gently looked them over, frame by frame.

And there, on one film, was a black star painted onto a pedestal in the center of the screen. The action was of a magician and a robot battling it out in slapstick fashion. After a moment, a gasp of realization: They were looking at “Gugusse and the Automaton,” a long-lost film by iconic French filmmaker Georges Méliès at his Star Film company.

The 45-second film, made around 1897, was the first appearance on film of what might be called a robot, which had endeared it to generations of science fiction fans, even if they knew it only by reputation. It likely had not been seen by anyone in more than a century. The find, made last September and announced earlier this year, is a small but important addition to the legacy of world cinema and one of its founders.

“This story is one that you see movies or television shows written about,” says Jason Evans Groth, curator of the Library’s Moving Image Section.

“This is one of the collections that makes you realize why you do this,” said Courtney Holschuh, the archive technician who unraveled the film.

Equally delighted was Bill McFarland, the donor who drove the box of films from his home in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to the Library’s National Audio-Visual Conservation Center in Culpeper, Virginia, to have the cache evaluated.

His great-grandfather, William Delisle Frisbee, had been a potato farmer and schoolteacher in western Pennsylvania by day and a traveling showman by night. He drove his horse and buggy from town to town to dazzle the locals with some of the world’s first moving pictures.

A Méliès film would have been an unforgettable experience to almost anyone in the 19th century.

A prominent French stage magician, Méliès turned to filmmaking as soon as he saw the Lumière brothers’ world-first motion pictures in Paris in 1895. He built his own camera and a glass studio (like a greenhouse) in Paris. He pioneered filmmaking tricks such as double exposure, black screens and forced perspective. All of these became staples of cinema.

Méliès was a devotee of the science fiction work of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells, and his films often featured surreal, fantastical sets. An image from his most famous film, “A Trip to the Moon” – that of a rocket landing in the eye of the man on the moon – became the image representing early cinema. His 1896 short, “Le Manoir du Diable,” is considered the world’s first horror film.

“Gugusse,” for its part, is a one-shot, one-reel short filmed in front of a painted screen made to look like a workshop in

■ **Opposite:** A loupe, placed over the negative, provides a close-up view of a scene from Georges Méliès’ 1897 short film, “Gugusse and the Automaton.”

Shawn Miller

Below: Technician Courtney Holschuh inspects the nitrate negative of “Gugusse” at the National Audio-Visual Conservation Center in Culpeper, Virginia. Shawn Miller





■ The nitrate negative spent decades languishing in a small trunk and suffered considerable degradation before coming to the Library last year. *Shawn Miller*

which clocks and automatons were being made. In the film, the magician (Méliès) winds up an automaton dressed like the famous clown Pierrot. Once wound, the clown beats the magician with his walking stick. The magician retaliates by bashing the automaton over the head with a sledgehammer, each blow seeming to shrink it in half, until it is just a small doll. The magician then smashes it into the floor.

Méliès made more than 500 films but never progressed beyond his early technical achievements. The film world passed him by. In World War I, the negatives for most of his films were melted down for silver and celluloid, and he burned more himself after the war.

But because his work had once been so popular – and because of widespread pirating – duplicate copies remained, and

today about 300 of his films are known to exist. The Library has about 60. The “Gugusse” print McFarland gave to the Library is a duplicate at least three times removed from the original.

Library technicians spent more than a week scanning and stabilizing it onto a digital format, so that it can now be seen by anyone online – in 4K, no less.

The cache of Frisbee’s films also contained another Méliès film from 1900, “The Fat and Lean Wrestling Match,” as well as fragments of an early Thomas Edison film, “The Burning Stable.” They survived due to McFarland and his family preserving them for a century, if often in haphazard circumstances.

After Frisbee died in 1937, two small trunks of his old projectors and films, along with diaries and papers, went to his daughter (McFarland’s grandmother), who passed

them along to her son (McFarland's dad), who passed them to him.

McFarland didn't know what was on the reels – they could no longer be safely run through a projector – and after years of searching for a home for them, a lab technician in Michigan suggested he contact the Library.

"The moment we set our eyes on this box of film, we knew it was something special," said George Willeman, the Library's nitrate film vault leader.

McFarland, relieved to have finally found a home for his family's treasure chest, found it all fascinating, the films and the diaries of his wandering showman of a great-grandfather.

"He talks about full houses, and rowdy houses, and canceled shows, and he went all the way to the Pennsylvania-Maryland line, and I think into Ohio as well," he said. "He made as much as \$20 bucks a night, I see in his records, and sometimes he made \$1.35 for the night, you know?"

It was, this deep dive into the old boxes and trunks in the attic, a magic trick known to researchers, historians and librarians – documents from another time drawing you back into a world gone by.

■ Digital film preservation specialist Patrick Queen edits a digital scan of "Gugusse." Library specialists spent more than a week scanning and stabilizing the film in a digital format.

Shawn Miller

MORE INFORMATION

"Gugusse and the Automaton"
loc.gov/item/2026125501/



AROUND THE LIBRARY



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.

1. Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction winner Geraldine Brooks talks with book critic Ron Charles in the Coolidge Auditorium on May 28.

2. Visitors explore an art book display at the Rare Book and Special Collections Division's "Our Common Ground" symposium on May 14.

3. Lily Henley and Duncan Wickel perform Sephardic Jewish music as part of the Homegrown concert series on May 13.

4. Julie Dawn Cole, who played Veruca Salt in "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory," looks over a collections display on June 2.

5. A synthetic DNA storage pellet encoded with digital copies of Library collection items is displayed alongside Thomas Jefferson's draft of the Declaration of Independence.

6. An ensemble cast performs during a tribute to composer Burt Bacharach in the Coolidge Auditorium on May 11.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHAWN MILLER

Recording Registry Inducts Works by Beyoncé, Swift

Taylor Swift's transformative pop album "1989"; Beyoncé's standout "Single Ladies (Put a Ring On It)"; The Go-Go's debut album, "Beauty and the Beat"; and the original Broadway cast album of "Chicago" were among the 25 recordings selected for preservation in the National Recording Registry of the Library of Congress.

Acting Librarian of Congress Robert R. Newlen in May named the 25 recordings as audio treasures worthy of preservation for all time based on their cultural, historical or aesthetic importance in the nation's recorded sound heritage. The public made more than 3,000 nominations of recordings to consider.

The 2026 class of inductees spans 70 years of music and recorded sound. The recordings selected this year bring the number of titles on the registry to 700, representing a small portion of the Library's vast recorded sound collection of nearly 4 million items.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-26-037

Awards Honor Excellence In Federal Librarianship

The Federal Library and Information Network (FEDLINK) recently announced the winners of its national awards for federal librarianship for fiscal 2025. These awards celebrate the innovative ways federal libraries, librarians and library technicians serve with distinction and meet the information demands of the government, business and scholarly communities and the American public.

The winners were: Susan Plotner, chief librarian of Army University at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas (federal librarian of the year); Anita Crum, a library technician at the Robert F. Sink Memorial Library at Fort Campbell, Kentucky (federal library technician of the year); the Ralph J. Bunche Library at the U.S. Department of State (large library of the year); and Marine Corps Base Hawaii Library at Kaneohe Bay in Hawaii (small library of the year).

The Institutional Repository Revitalization Project at Dudley Knox Library in Monterey, California, received the 2025 Project Award.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-26-030

LOCal Immersive Experience Opens at Oklahoma Library

The Library of Congress, in partnership with the Eastern Oklahoma Library System, recently opened an immersive experience called "Memories in the Current" in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

Library of Congress staff members created this new experience in the Muskogee Public Library, where visitors can encounter rivers of text projected across the walls and floors, carrying the memories of local Oklahoma residents alongside historical accounts from the digital collections held at the Library of Congress.

"Memories in the Current" is part of the Library's LOCal initiative – a grant-funded pilot to connect Americans to the Library's digital collections and resources by co-designing bespoke experiences and programs with public libraries. As part of the initiative, the Library also established a partnership with the Cleveland Public Library System. Programming there will begin this fall.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-26-040

Summer Movies on the Lawn Offers Film Registry Selections

The Library is hosting its annual Summer Movies on the Lawn series, starting July 9. The series, which features films from the Library's National Film Registry, is presented Thursday evenings at sundown on the southeast lawn of the Jefferson Building.

This year's series is part of the Library's celebration of the nation's semiquincentennial, America 250: It's Your Story.

The scheduled films include "Clueless" (July 9), "Rocky" (July 16), "Back to the Future" (July 23), "A League of Their Own" (July 30) and "Apollo 13" (Aug. 6). Aug. 13 will serve as a rain date.

Located on the corner of 2nd Street SE and Independence Avenue, the southeast lawn of the Jefferson Building is a scenic space to enjoy films on Capitol Hill. No tickets are required, but visitors are encouraged to arrive early as space is limited.

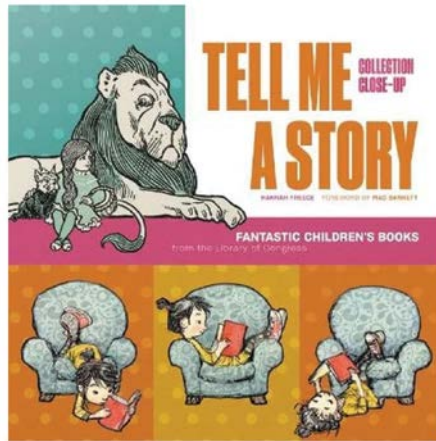
MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-26-032

SHOP



'Next Chapter' Onesie
Product #21303754
Price: \$19.95

This adorable onesie is for the next chapter in your family's story. Available sizes: 0-6 months, 6-12 months, 12-18 months, 18-24 months.



'Tell Me a Story: Fantastic Children's Books from the Library of Congress'
Product #21110046
Price: \$26.95

From classic books to little-remembered gems, this engaging volume features more than 200 children's books published in the U.S. from the 18th century to today.



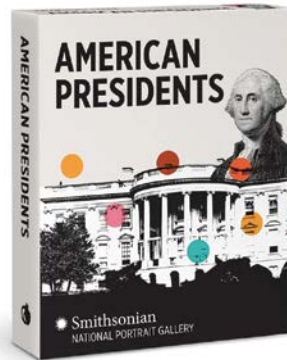
Library Logo Socks
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Price: \$16

Wear this bold display of institutional pride – a salute to our favorite Library. Designed with a gray background and repeating Library logo all over. One size.



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Price: \$12.95

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Mosaic Silk Scarf
Product #21302004
Price: \$65

The mosaic design printed on the scarf replicates the ceiling of the magnificent Great Hall of the Library's Jefferson Building. 100% spun silk.

■ Order online: loc.gov/shop ■ Order by phone: 888.682.3557



PHILANTHROPY FOSTERS OPPORTUNITY

Internship and fellowship programs create new pathways to the Library.

Private philanthropy has catalyzed innovative work that is now woven deeply into the fabric of the Library of Congress.

When the James Madison Council formed in 1990, paid internships and fellowships were an early focus and priority. The late Mrs. Jefferson Patterson, a member of the Madison Council, established the Junior Fellows fund and helped sustain the program in its first years. Supported by numerous gifts for individual programs, the Library's internships and fellowships span a range in duration, subject area and program focus, each providing a different step on a ladder of opportunity.

Now in its 35th year, the Junior Fellows Program has provided a vital launching pad for hundreds of individuals while also bringing new voices and experience to programs and activities across the Library. The program was sustained by gifts from individual donors Gerry and Marguerite Lenfest, who established the Knowledge Navigators Fund, and the subsequent significant contribution by the late Nancy

Glanville.

In 2021, the program's reach expanded. The Mellon Foundation generously provided an institutional grant of \$15 million to fund Of the People: Widening the Path, a multiyear initiative that has created new opportunities for more Americans to add their perspectives to the Library's collections, allowing the national library to share a fuller American story.

In addition to building the Library's collections, Of the People allowed the Internships and Fellowships Program to broaden and innovate its practices, such as hybrid and remote cohorts, strengthened professional development, expanded institutional outreach and cohort interaction and networking.

Major gifts to the Internships and Fellowships Program have established a secure platform for visionary growth and success.

The Junior Fellows Program, in particular, continues to inspire further giving from individual donors interested in adding to the opportunity for more students, graduates and early career professionals to benefit from the Library's internship programs.

And newly activated spaces like The Source provide pathways for internships and fellowships in new subject areas. The vital seed funding from the James Madison Council, the indelible contributions from the Mellon Foundation and individual donors produce the unlimited possibilities for impact still to be cultivated.

■ Junior fellows showcase their collections discoveries at the annual Display Day event. *Shawn Miller*

LAST WORD

MEG MEDINA

During my tenure as national ambassador for young people's literature in 2023 and 2024, I was often confronted with a dilemma. How could I help the Library, with its massive holdings, marble staircases and ornate halls, feel more welcoming to young people and their families who visited?

I can point to many activities and exhibits that have been bridging that gap. Think of the free concert series and family days, for instance. But nothing matches the excitement I feel for the latest outreach to young people: the recent grand opening of The Source.

Designed for (and with the help of) young people ages 8-15, The Source: Where Curiosity Sparks Discovery now offers visitors a gorgeous new entrance space that is a hands-on introduction to the Library's holdings. It's a place where families can get a small taste of research as an exciting information hunt. There are sure to be favorite, high-tech features, such as the highly anticipated animated card catalog and the video chats by seven dynamic librarians talking about the different archives.

But The Source also offers the wow factor of being able to click back through time and explore images of some of the Library's more kid-friendly and relatable holdings, such as rare comic books and memorabilia from blockbuster movies.

School-aged kids will be able to see how the process of collecting research has changed, starting with the opportunity to experience the "joys" of loading and using microfilm reels of yesteryear. (I still shudder at my college memories of this!)

They'll also be able to peruse The Source box collection, current research items collected largely by students like them. One is about the Ghost Army of World War II, essentially a group of artists who were charged with fooling our enemies with props in the battlefield in the place of real tanks and artillery.

I'm very proud to say that visitors will also see a source box built around my young adult novel, "Burn Baby Burn," which was set in New York City in the 1970s. I did lots of research for the novel at the Library, and the box contains samples of the many



SHAWN MILLER

fun rabbit holes I explored, from disco soundtracks and newspaper clippings about the city's most notorious serial killer to the bus routes that my main character, Nora, had to navigate to get home.

Research has the potential to open young people to new ideas and to broaden their understanding of what shapes our world. The Library, boasting the largest holdings of any library in the world, offers a place to nurture that potential. How wonderful to have this new resource for young people here at our nation's most celebrated library. It's an invitation to young people, a way to say, We are here to help you discover, learn and grow.

—Meg Medina is the award-winning, bestselling author of books for children and young adults. She served as the 2023–24 national ambassador for young people's literature.



■ Colorful panels displaying Library collection items hang from the ceiling of The Source. Shawn Miller

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS



THE DECLARATION'S PROMISE

Opening July 3

HERE TO STAY: THE LEGACY OF GEORGE AND IRA GERSHWIN

Ongoing

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S LIBRARY

Ongoing

More information

loc.gov/exhibits