Ashley's Adventures in the Archives  
Ashley Hasna

Upon being told I would need to research and transcribe a Victorian short story from an original journal for my final project, I was less than thrilled. How was I going to find an original source? I didn’t know the L. Tom Perry Special Collections even existed, let alone that it contained one of the best Victorian literature collections in the country.

Although I was directed to this new source of information I was then told I could only access the material from 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m., and I couldn’t even find the text myself. People had to bring me the item and allow me access to the locked glass reading room. I had to wait on a hard wooden chair with nothing but a computer and pencil (not pen)—no backpacks or coats. What was this place? A prison?

I was only allowed one item at a time, but I began to comb through the extensive collection of juvenile Victorian journals to find a story I wanted to transcribe: I went from *Children’s Treasury: an Illustrated Magazine for Boys and Girls* to *The Juvenile Scrap-Book*. Each journal lessened my irritation of the system surrounding it. Handling the original copy of each journal taught me so much more than reading text in a classroom did. I was able to see how illustrations were placed in the journals, but I also got to see how stories were serialized.

No journal taught this better for me than *The Monthly Packet*. After examining several different issues I noticed a story with the author of Lewis Carroll. Knowing of course that this was the author of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, I held my breath as I began to research if the same person wrote this story: He did. Turns out *The Monthly Packet* published what is now known as *A Tangled Tale*.

I was holding an original publication from an author I had studied. The thrill of this discovery has kept me coming back to Special Collections without being given an assignment. The Special Collections’ Victorian journal collection allowed me to bridge theoretical and classroom study with primary research. I was able to see what past texts have accomplished. Despite their intimidating and militant policies, Special Collections has still provided me with one of the most memorable moments of my education.