

Richard W. Clement

Editor's Note

This issue marks a milestone for *RBM*: it is an expanded issue offering twice as many articles as usual. As guest editor Eric Holzenberg explains in his introduction to the volume, these articles were all originally given as papers at the 2005 Rare Books and Manuscript Section preconference in St. Louis, "Bridging the Gap: Education and Special Collections," for which he served as Program Planning Chair. Having put an extraordinary program together, Eric was faced with some very difficult choices in selecting considerably fewer papers to be published in *RBM*. This process was made considerably easier by John Hoover, director of the St. Louis Mercantile Library at the University of Missouri—St. Louis, who offered to provide funding to increase substantially the size of this issue to accommodate all of the papers Eric had selected. For this generosity, we are most grateful.

The theme of building a bridge ran throughout the conference, and images of the building of the historic Eads Bridge in St. Louis run throughout this issue. The significance of the bridge was noted in the conference program: "The Eads Bridge opened July 4, 1874, to great fanfare. It was the world's first cast steel bridge and St. Louis's first bridge across the Mississippi River. The piers supporting the bridge were sunk down to bedrock, as much as 100 feet below the river bed, through the use of airtight underwater caissons, a new and dangerous process. With three graceful 500-foot steel arches, four massive limestone piers, and two decks—the

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upper for horse-drawn vehicles and the lower for trains—the bridge was beautiful as well as innovative and functional. Today, after extensive renovation, the top deck is used by vehicles and pedestrians and the bottom deck by the area's mass transit trains." The cover illustration was supplied by the Department of Special Collections at Washington University in St. Louis; I want to thank Anne Posega (Head of Special Collections) who selected it. The remaining illustrations were provided by the St. Louis Mercantile Library, with thanks due to John Hoover.

This issue also marks the use of a new typeface throughout, Dante. Designed by Giovanni Mardersteig at the Officina Bodoni in 1954, it is a remarkably beautiful and legible face. It seems most suitable for *RBM*.

Credits: the image for the cover is from the Terminal Railroad Association Collection, University Archives, Department of Special Collections, Washington University Libraries. The remaining images are from *A History of the St. Louis Bridge*, by C. M. Woodward (St. Louis: Jones & Co., 1881), courtesy of St. Louis Mercantile Library, University of Missouri–St. Louis.



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