

CALIFORNIA
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Number 135
2022

Bulletin





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A Long-Awaited Re-Introduction to Gillis Hall

When the California State Library reopened in the Spring of 2022, visitors were greeted with a new look in the Gillis Hall reading room. During the pandemic closure of the State Library, the historic Gillis Hall underwent a small but noticeable overhaul. This process started with the proposal for a new mural but has encompassed the redecoration of several of its features including its ornate bookcases. The historic bookcases were reevaluated and emptied of all their older reference collections while reintroducing a collection that had almost been forgotten about, the Dewey collection.

About the Dewey Collection

The Dewey collection is named after the Dewey Decimal System, a proprietary library classification system that the California State Library stopped using in the 1950s when it adopted the Library of Congress (LOC) classification system. All of the pieces in the Dewey collection were acquired before the 1950s and some date back as far as 1850, the year the California State Library was established. The Dewey collection has been stored away for decades in a protected area until the new director of Information Services, Stephanie Manansala, had the brilliant idea of bringing them back into the public eye.



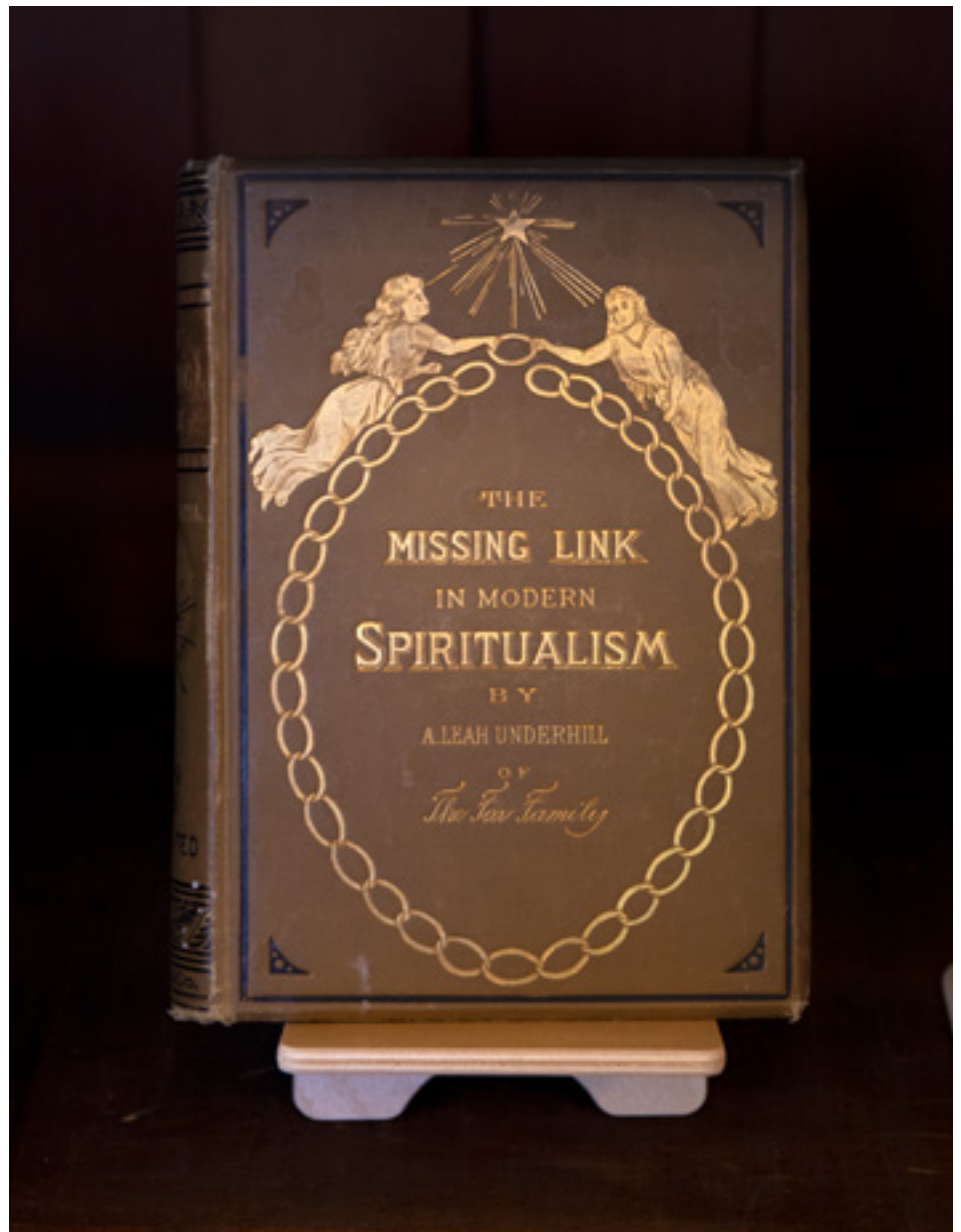


The Dewey collection is beautifully adorned and will catch many an eye as it is representative of a splendid age in printing. Many covers are gilded in gold lettering and illustrations while others might catch you with their typographical design and mystery. One will not find dust jackets covered in newspaper reviews within this collection. Instead, you will be greeted with the smell of worn leather and canvas along with a nostalgic trip into pre-1950s literature and research. Browsing the covers and titles alone will provide hours of intrigue for patrons and visitors of all ages.

All sections of the Dewey collection are represented in the overhaul, from art and home economics to science and sociology. Brilliant displays were created by the staff who were encouraged to choose one or more sections of the collection to put out on display. The staff worked together to bring out a phenomenal variety of sections and worked to create captivating shelving displays for patrons to enjoy. One end of Gillis Hall features a non-Dewey Decimal section of colorful bilingual children's books of all different languages, which can be read in the splendor of Gillis Hall or checked out

for your children to enjoy. At the opposite end of Gillis Hall one can find a small section dedicated to our winged pollen collectors and their keepers. A great section if anyone is interested in taking up apiculture, otherwise known as beekeeping.

Another interesting section on display from the Dewey collection is based on spiritualism in the 20th century. An apt collection to display as some believe that former staff of the California State Library still roam the stacks at night. We can only hope that they enjoy the reintroduction of the old collections to the hall.



What is Information Services?

The Information Services section provides books and other materials on a wide variety of topics to both state government employees and the general public. This section contains reference and bibliographic materials in all subject fields except Californiana and the law, (served by the California History Section and the Witkin Law Library). Information Services can be visited in Gillis Hall and reference questions can be addressed in the Ask a Librarian service via the California State Library website. As of recently, CSLF memberships and contributions can be designated to support Information Services and their staff. These funds help them purchase supplies as well as collections and can also assist in sponsoring events within Gillis Hall.