



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

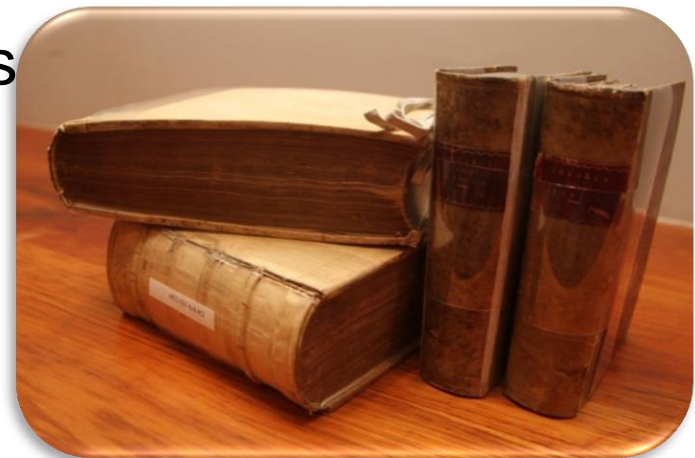
The Relevance of Rare & Historical Collections To Today's Parliament

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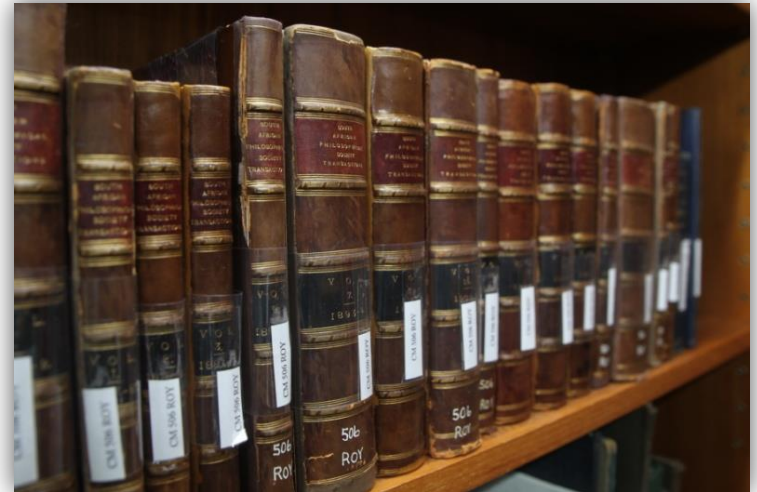
1. Introduction
2. Background
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Introduction

- National treasure
- Documentary record or heritage of man
- 16th century Englishman

Some believe old books are a medium through which we can touch our past as they provide evidence of the “great civilizations” of long-ago.



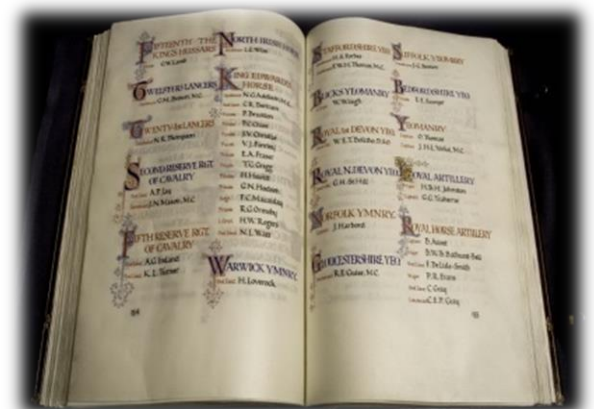
The challenge / problem statement

- Cultural relevance within South African context
- Technological advances
- Space management
- AIM: relevance of special collections to Parliament



Definitions

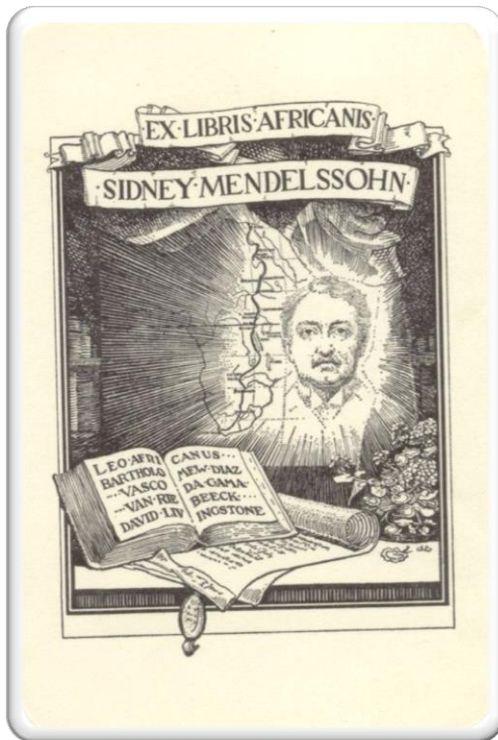
1. **Special collections** are those materials containing primary evidence for scholarship that require special treatment in their description or handling.
2. A **rare book** is usually old, but it can also be a valuable book which is not easily replaceable or is irreplaceable, and furthermore, it could be described as a particular copy of a book.



Relevance of special collections

- Historical, social and cultural research
- Cultural identity

Sidney Mendelssohn collection William Jardine collection



Why do we conduct historical research?

- To answer questions
- To identify the relationship that the past has to the present
- To record and evaluate the accomplishments of individuals, agencies, or institutions
- To assist in understanding the culture in which we live and
- To uncover the unknown



Relevance of special collections cont.

- To understand the future
- Inherent developmental and social transformative value
- Source of pride, expertise, and excellence
- Working resource for research
- Distinctiveness



Legal Deposit Act of 1997

Preservation of the national documentary heritage

Recommendations

- Rethinking collecting focuses for special collections
- Knowledge of regional resources and cooperative plans
- Acquisition of 20th and 21st century materials
- Accessible through digitization
- Accessible through more complete descriptions
- Publicize the resources

- **Informational value** - this is the research value that is offered in relation to places, people, events, periods, projects or processes.
- **Administrative value** - this is the functional usefulness of the resources to an organisation such as is found in records of activities.
- **Artifactual value** – this is in the case of rare items or interesting objects where the value is derived from the nature of the material.
- **Associated value** – this is where materials have a relationship to an eminent person, e.g. Nelson Mandela's personal diary.

History is open-ended.

Truth is never fully formed, it is always flexible and each generation has to write its own history, seeing how the dots from the past project into the future.



Thank you



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