



Wayne A. Wiegand
F. William Summers Professor

Phone: (850) 644-8123
Fax: (850) 644-6253
Email: wwiegand@ci.fsu.edu

April 18, 2006

Members of the Selection Committee
Library History Seminar XII

Dear Members of the Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter endorsing the proposal of the Center for Middletown Studies at Ball State University to host Library History Seminar XII in Muncie, Indiana, between October 21 and 24, 2010.

As many of you know, for years I have been part of a small group of library history scholars who have argued that we need to reach out beyond the boundaries of traditional librarianship, and link up with humanities and social science scholars whose own research interests might find comfortable connections to the history of libraries. The mix of ideas generated by such a cross-disciplinary focus on historical librarianship would inevitably benefit everyone who participates, expand our network of scholars, and augment multidisciplinary historical research on the library in areas where it is woefully under-researched, like “reading and libraries,” and the “library as place.”

The fascinating “What Middletown Read” project described in the proposal and currently being fashioned by the Center for Middletown Studies promises to do exactly that. The prospect of sharing ideas with a group of non-LIS people who have studied the reading patterns of everyday public library patrons in one historically significant Midwest town at the turn of the 20th century seems to me too tempting to pass up. The Center has crafted a complete proposal with several venues that promise an intellectually engaging and multidisciplinary conference at relatively low cost. And if memory serves me correctly, this proposal represents the first time a group largely from outside librarianship has asked to host a library history seminar. I strongly urge the Committee to approve their proposal, and accept their invitation.

If I can be of any further service, or provide any additional information, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Wayne A. Wiegand