



ABOVE: Archivist Gerry Scheibel, holds the *Nuremberg Chronicle* dating to 1493.
RIGHT: A statue of Father Bacciochi, a Corsican priest, who settled in Swift Current, Sask., and friend of Father Athol Murray, stands on guard in the rare book collection room.
BOTTOM RIGHT: A portrait of General Robert E. Lee, painted on glass, was donated to the museum.



WILCOX, SASK. | MUSEUM

Ancient treasures of medieval Europe in rural Saskatchewan

TALES FROM THE ROAD



ARLENE & ROBIN KARPAN

It's as if we've wandered into a medieval monastery. We gaze over a collection of rare, ancient books, some dating to the 13th century, everything from original treatises of philosophers and saints to handwritten decrees by popes and kings.

Yet we haven't travelled far to discover this age-old treasure, just a short drive south of Regina to Wilcox. How some of the world's rarest books ended up in the middle of the Canadian Prairies is as intriguing as the books themselves.

Wilcox is home to Athol Murray College of Notre Dame. Its larger-

than-life founder, Father Athol Murray, was a Catholic priest who combined academics, faith and sports in education. He led the fledgling institution through hard times in the Depression, eventually building it into a flourishing college with an international reputation for its hockey program.

Besides telling the fascinating story of Father Murray and development of the school, the college's museum and archives house an eclectic array of artwork, historic artifacts, documents and displays on former students who became NHL stars.

The centrepiece is the climate-controlled, fire-proof room housing the Rare Book Collection, the largest collection of 13th to 17th century books in Canada and possibly in North America.

Samples include two Martin Luther Bibles from the early 1500s, a book by Dutch theologian Erasmus from 1516 and a handwritten *1603 decree of King James I of England*, complete with royal seal on the calfskin.

A decree of Pope Gregory X handwritten in 1275 on goatskin has a chain and lock incorporated into the binding so that it could be secured in the monastery for safekeeping. *The Epistles of St. Paul*, written by St. Thomas Aquinas in 1481, is the sum of all theology known at the time.

Some books are one-of-a-kind, painstakingly hand-printed by monks before the days of the printing press.

The most visually impressive book is the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, printed in 1493 on the Gutenberg Press and relating the history of the world. Using more than 1,800 detailed illustrations printed from wood-cut blocks, it is considered one of the first books in the world to integrate text and pictures.

Gerry Scheibel, college archivist, said Father Murray wanted to establish a library to be granted university status. Books came from his own collection and many were donated or willed to him.

"Father Murray had a love for books



and he used many of these in the classroom," he said.

Some of the oldest titles came from Father Bacciochi, a priest from Corsica who was the grand-nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte. Father Bacciochi eventually moved to Swift Current, Sask., became friends with Father Murray, then left him the books in his will. The notorious French emperor was an avid collector, although he mainly collected countries. It is possible that some of the books once belonged to Napoleon.

Another famous personality featured in the library is General Robert E. Lee, leader of the Confederate forces in the U.S. Civil War. His grand-niece, Laura Lee Davidson, was a friend of Father Murray.

She inherited a portion of Lee's library, then left some items pertain-

ing to Lee to Father Murray. An unusual portrait of the general looks like a glass-covered photograph at first glance, but is a painting on the glass itself.

The museum and archives are open weekdays, except holidays. While at the college, be sure to visit St. Augustine Church, with impressive stained glass windows portraying saints, philosophers and historic figures. Next door is the unique Tower of God, designed by Father Murray to pay tribute to the world's three great monotheistic religions, Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

For more information, contact 306-732-1275.

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IMMIGRATION LAW | LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Immigration lawyers tackle problems, paperwork, legal issues

A PRAIRIE PRACTICE



GAIL WARTMAN, B.A., J.D.

Q: How can an immigration lawyer help you?

A: The face of Western Canada is changing, and the immigrant population is rising steadily, even in rural areas.

There are government websites, general information websites and private agents who are hired to assist in these matters. However, an immigration lawyer specializing in this area of the law and an understanding of the processes can be a great help.

Consider the example of a young wife who wants to join her husband in Canada but is sent back to her homeland because immigration officials do not believe that their relationship is legitimate.

An immigration lawyer can help the couple put together documentation required and prepare for hearings. The lawyer can help explain the processes and advocate for the young people every step of the way.

Another example of how an immigration lawyer can help is when someone wants to enter Canada from the United States but is prevented from doing so because he has a past driving under the influence conviction.

For example, the person might be a systems consultant needed by clients in Canada and may lose his job if he cannot fix his clients' problem. An immigration lawyer can help get the necessary paperwork, on an emergency basis, to allow him to cross the border and fulfill his job obligations.

Here's another example.

A young woman from another country, living in Canada, has not yet received her landed immigrant sta-

tus papers. She gets word from her country of origin that there is a family emergency and she must return to her homeland.

However, if she leaves Canada for any reason, will she be able to return if she has not received her official papers? With a lawyer's help she is able to obtain the temporary paperwork that can ensure her safe return to Canada.

All of these examples are based on true stories. For a much clearer dramatization of these stories, see the videos produced by the Canadian Bar Association's Immigration Law Section at www.cba.org/CBA/sections_Cship/main/Videos.aspx.

There are three videos titled *How*

an Immigration Lawyer Can Help.

The CBA is the voice of the Canadian legal profession and advocates for lawyers and judges, but it also works in areas such as law reform, access to justice and upholding the rule of law.

The Immigration Law Section provides professional development for lawyers as well as general information to the public on matters of immigration law. It also makes submissions to government and the courts on immigration law issues.

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