

Sonja Pinto

Peter and Ana Lowens University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections Student Fellowship

November 15, 2021

Throughout my time as an undergraduate—and now graduate—student in English Literature at UVic, I have noticed a disconnect between historical texts and how they are often studied separately from their print origins in post-secondary classrooms. However, I am captivated by print culture and its relationship to literary texts. This curiosity has propelled my research in Victorian literature, queer history, and print culture for most of my academic career. UVic Special Collections (SC) has provided me with a window into the rich detail that print material offers researchers, augmenting my research on everything from Victorian periodicals to Canadian poet Phyllis Webb. My proposal for this fellowship seeks to share how object materiality is critical to a complete understanding of a literary text. Specifically, I intend to focus on Michael Field's *Long Ago* (1897, PR4699 F5L6) to illustrate how study of this material object adds layers of depth to an analysis of the text. My proposed output for this program is a digital exhibit and analysis of the print object accompanied by a presentation summarizing my research and its relevance to existing scholarship and to our present day. Though Field's *Long Ago* is digitized on platforms like Google Books, its historical context and exigency is lost to audiences without historical and literary training. Furthermore, the copy held at SC contains two distinctive and rare details not available through digitized versions of *Long Ago*: a botanical insert and an inscription by the author. My project would make this text legible to the public by providing context and original analysis of this print object to illustrate the importance of materiality in textual study through these unique details.

I am an excellent fit for this program because I have extensive experience working with SC materials in my own research, in SC-based classes, and through past workshops hosted by SC. During the program, I will gain valuable connections with peers exploring similar interests and contribute my own insights and leadership to others in the program cohort. This program will also support my ongoing MA project on how *The Yellow Book* disrupted the Victorian print market and complement my interest in making scholarship accessible and exciting to public audiences. The workshops offered by this program will deepen my understanding of print-based methodology and digital tools and provide me with an opportunity to learn from, engage with, and collaborate with likeminded students. I will benefit from working with a mentor who will help me hone my ideas and offer practical feedback on my project. Ultimately, I want to apply my existing research skills to print material and learn more about methods and resources from experts on the material in SC. What I love most about doing research is being able to share it with those around me, and this program will allow me to build meaningful connections with a peer cohort and share my knowledge and passion with others in the community.