

NO.57 SUMMER 2001
BENE LEGERE
 NEWSLETTER OF THE
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The Library Associates

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In order to present readers with some insight on the various and diverse sources from which we acquire our collections, occasionally we will include an article which indicates why and how a particularly special collection came to the Cal Library. Below is a uniquely personal report from a Berkeley librarian on why he and his family gave to Berkeley a beloved and well used collection of materials from Africa.

Christopher Gutkind, Assistant Librarian, Reference and Information Services

My father, Peter C. W. Gutkind, who died recently, was a pioneer in urban anthropology who specialized in studying the unemployed and the laboring poor of the cities of East and West Africa in the years leading up to and after decolonization. Many of these people were migrants from rural areas, dislocated from their homes and hoping for more in an era of hope and optimism, but which too soon turned into a period of hopelessness and deprivation. Peter, a Berlin Jew, was dislocated as a young boy when he fled Nazi Germany six weeks before the war, being very lucky to be on the second-to-last *kindertransport*. That experience as well as his family's background of secularism and internationalism were to inform his thoughts for the rest of his life as he fought and helped others fight against injustice. In addition, over the course of his professional life, mostly at McGill University in Montreal and during many fieldtrips, he helped steer urban anthropology into its modern form, writing articles and books, editing collections, compiling bibliographies, organizing conferences, and supervising many grateful students with intelligence and sensitivity. At Cal we hold more than twenty of his publications, including his groundbreaking *Townsmen in the Making* (1956), written with Aidan Southall.



Most of his books that he hadn't already given away at the time of his death went, through the London-based organization Book Aid International, to African university libraries. But there were also many possibly rare and certainly fragile items that we as a family felt needed a home that could guarantee their preservation and access. Having recently taken a position at Cal as a reference librarian, and knowing the strength of its African Studies programme and the Africana collection, we felt that UC Berkeley would be a most excellent home. So my family and I are really pleased that the University has accepted this gift of 200 to 300 items. It really is an amazing little collection, and we look forward to seeing it used for the good of scholarship on Africa.

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