

artifact

Map Quest

ONE OF MORE THAN 189,000 maps housed in Baker-Berry Library's second-floor Evans Map Room, this 1665 view of the then-known world is the work of Dutch mapmaker Joan Blaeu, chief cartographer of the East India Co. (He shows California as an island.) A 36 1/2 inch-by-53 1/2 inch facsimile resides in the map room, and a copy of the original 11-volume atlas in which it appears is at Rauner Special Collections Library. There it is shelved in an atmospherically controlled room along with other rare books—all of which can be requested in the reading room. A similar atlas sold for \$348,000 at Sotheby's last spring, according to special collections librarian Jay Satterfield.

According to *The Mapping of the World* by Rodney Shirley (Early World Press, 2001), Blaeu's maps were "lauded as the finest expression of Dutch cartography at the height of its development." Printed on his father's copper-plate printing press, they were colored in piecemeal by workers. "Maps, like books, were status symbols in that period," says Lucinda Hall, a reference bibliographer who assists students whose assignments take them to the map room. "It's important to remember that maps are not only historical but political. They often reflect work done to please a sponsor."

The map room is a resource well beyond the world of geography and history, Hall notes. Courses that included map work last year ran the gamut from "Linguistics" to "Rhetoric and Writing." In academic year 2010-11 the staff assisted 2,120 visitors, 550 of whom had cartography questions. ■

