

PEWES → PEER- REVIEWED

TRANSFORMING A CHURCH LIBRARY INTO AN ACADEMIC COLLECTION

PEWS TO PEER-REVIEWED

AGENDA



RICHMONT'S PREDECESSORS

- Chattanooga Bible Institute
- Psychological Studies Institute

RICHMONT TODAY

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Clarity
- Alignment
- Accessibility
- Stewardship



RICHMONT'S PREDECESSORS:

Chattanooga Bible Institute, 1933-2001

Church News

CHATTANOOGA NEWS-FREE PRESS

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1981

B
SECTION

Chattanooga Bible Institute Given Braille Volumes

By RICHARD S. GREENE
N-FP Staff Writer

Even though Mrs. Buford (Aileen) Tucker did not have much personal use for her late husband's Braille Bible and concordance set, she knew a packed-away storage box would not be its best new home.

Mrs. James (Jeanne) Clark, librarian at the Chattanooga Bible Institute on Central Avenue, is extremely glad that Mrs. Tucker considered the institute as a permanent location for the 18-volume Bible and 10-volume concordance instead of a closet or basement.

After much discussion, family members of the late Mr. Tucker, who was a popular United Methodist minister in the Sequatchie circuit and former pastor at Clifton Hills UMC, decided to donate the set to the institute.

Mrs. Tucker presented the volumes to the Poindexter Library in a ceremony on Wednesday, Feb. 18. Mrs. Clark, who learned to read Braille under the instruction of Mr. Tucker before his death last August at the age of 62, graciously accepted Mrs. Tucker's donation.

This King James version, which was purchased for Mr. Tucker by the Tennessee Services for the Blind in Chattanooga, is believed to be the only Braille Bible in a public library in the local area.

"We had considered giving it to a church, but we didn't know of a specific one that needed it," Mrs. Tucker said.

"So I was talking with Jeanne and mentioned I had the Bible, and she said there probably would be more people at the Bible Institute who would be interested in using it," she added. "The family wanted to put it somewhere it would be used."

"The Bible would have been packed away, but I thought it was a good idea to donate it to the institute's library," Mrs. Tucker also said.

Mrs. Clark readily agrees.

"What is exciting about this is that we were considering purchasing one," Mrs. Clark said, adding that the current list price on a complete 18-volume set is approximately \$245. A concordance, published by the American Bible Society and offered through the American Printing House for the Bible in Louisville, Ky., costs about \$130. (When Mr. Tucker was given his Bible in 1972, it then cost \$130.)

"Aileen and I were talking one day, and we happened to start discussing the Bible, and she said she was considering donating it to us here," Mrs. Clark said. "We couldn't be more delighted and honored that the family made this decision."

Mrs. Clark explained that this newest addition to the library coupled with an extensive collection of cassette tape recordings of the Bible proves to be a "good beginning" for a program for the visually handicapped.

"This gives us another service to offer to someone who wants to know and study the Word of God," Mrs. Clark said.

The library is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Having Mr. Tucker's Bible set at the institute has its sentimental side for Mrs. Clark.

When she learned that she might become permanently blind because of diabetes, she along with another woman began to learn Braille from Mr. Tucker, who had gone blind when he was 52 years old. They started in April, and after remarkable speed, they finished the course on Aug. 7, 1980 — four days before Mr. Tucker died.

"Knowing him caused me to lose a fear or dread of possibly going blind," said Mrs. Clark, who now teaches Braille on Thursdays at the Eastside Community Center.

"Everybody who met him was amazed at him and inspired by him because he never considered giving up or letting down," added Mrs. Clark, who has since learned that she will probably not lose her sight and that laser surgery will not be necessary. "He put the rest of us with sight to shame."

"I was determined though that if blindness was going to come, then I would still be able to read the Word of God," she added.

Mrs. Clark said Mrs. Tucker's donation has made it possible for those who are blind or facing blindness to read the Bible also.

BIBLE INSTITUTE RECIPIENT OF BRAILLE BIBLE—Participating in a recently held donation celebration of a Braille Bible to the Chattanooga Bible Institute (600 Central Ave.), from left, were Baird McClure, associate director; Mrs. Aileen Tucker, Henry Henegar, executive director; Mrs. Jeanne Clark, librarian; and Mrs. Albert L. Covington, assistant librarian. (Staff photo by Mike O'Neal)



1933

Chattanooga Bible Institute (CBI) was established in partnership with First Presbyterian Church, Chattanooga, to train Sunday School teachers.

1974

CBI Library established at 1000 Oak Street location.

1983

CBI hires a full-time counseling staff and begins offering counseling services at its Oak Street location.

1989

Library contained 5,000 physical books and 15,000 cassette tapes.

RICHMONT'S PREDECESSORS:

Chattanooga Bible Institute, 1933-2001

1999

CBI becomes an extension campus of the Atlanta-based Psychological Studies Institute.

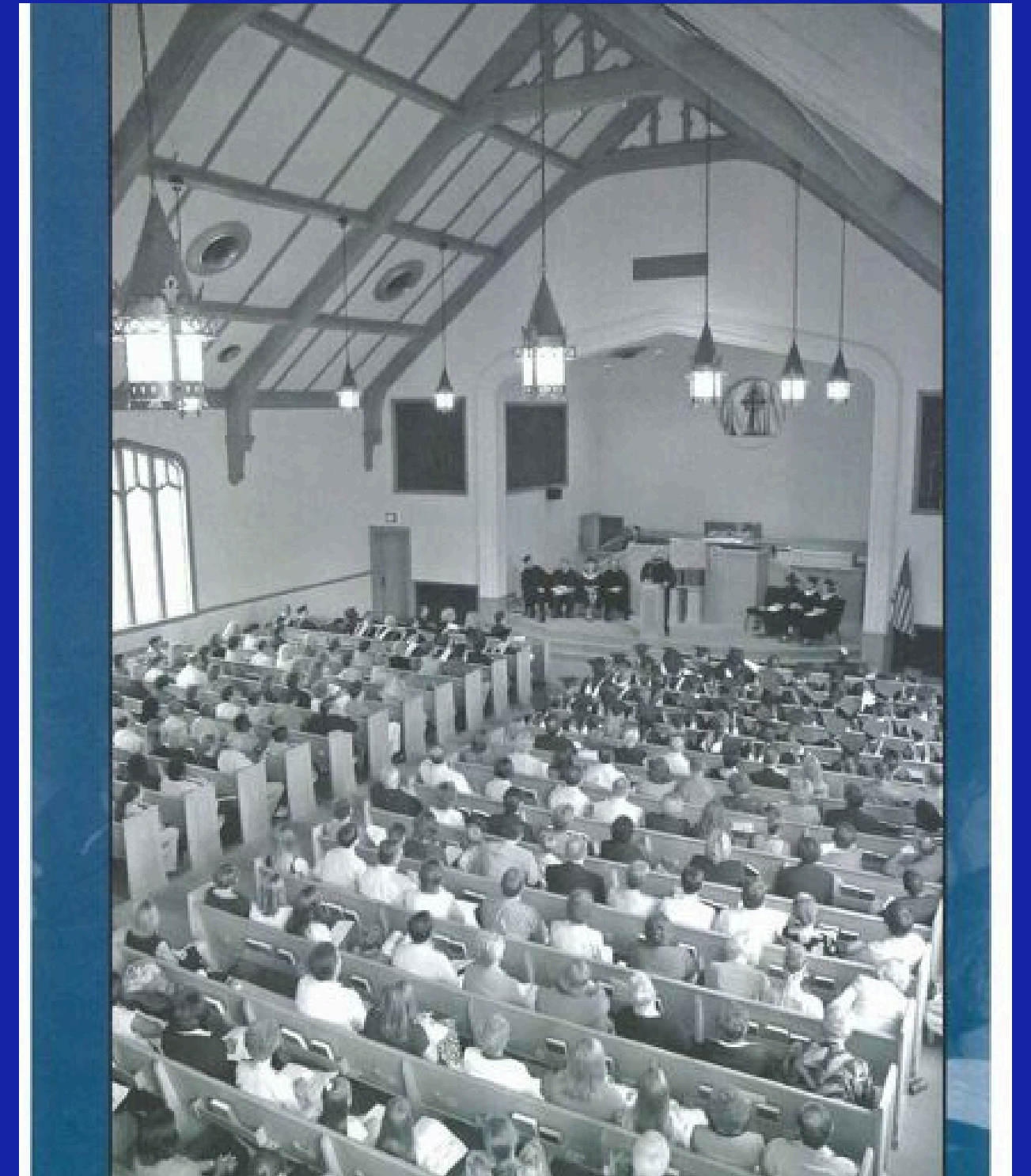
2000

CBI purchases and moves into the Central Presbyterian Church on McCallie Avenue.

Library circulation grows to 20,000 per year (out of a total collection of 35,000 books and A/V resources).

2001

CBI formally merges with the Psychological Studies Institute.



RICHMONT'S PREDECESSORS

The Psychological Studies Institute: 1973-2001

1973

The Psychological Studies Institute (PSI) was founded in Atlanta by Dr. William Donaldson and others (originally the Religious Consultation and Research Society).
Receives accreditation through Georgia State University.

1995

PSI moves to Mount Paran North Church in Marietta.

2001

Merges with Chattanooga Bible Institute.

2003

Receives accreditation from SACS.

2008

PSI/CBI changes name to Richmond Graduate University

Chattanooga Times Free Press



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN RAWLSTON

Jana Pressley, an assistant professor at Richmond Graduate University, teaches a class in family systems. Formerly known as Psychological Studies Institute, the school is expanding its mission in addition to changing its name.

RICHMONT IN 2026



- 3 campuses
 - Atlanta
 - Chattanooga
 - Online
- 341 students (Spring 2026)
 - 210 online
 - 231 in-person
- School of Counseling
 - M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling
 - M.S. in Mental Healthcare and Christian Integration
- School of Ministry
 - M.A. in Ministry
 - Doctor of Ministry

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

How do we build a rigorous, forward facing academic collection which supports Richmond's programs of study?



RICHMONT
GRADUATE UNIVERSITY™

CLARITY

- Revising/establishing policies
 - Collection development
 - Archives

ACCESSIBILITY

- Increased digital resources
- Demand-driven acquisitions
- Course guides

ALIGNMENT

- Weeding, weeding, and more weeding
- Updates to library spaces

STEWARDSHIP

- Small staff
- Flat budget

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



New collection development policy highlights:

- Popular → academic
- Physical → digital
- Diversity

Archival policy
Handbook

“The Richmond Libraries will prioritize the acquisition of resources which support the curriculum and research of the Richmond Graduate University academic community.”

--Richmont Collection Development Policy, adopted 8/2022

CLARITY

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

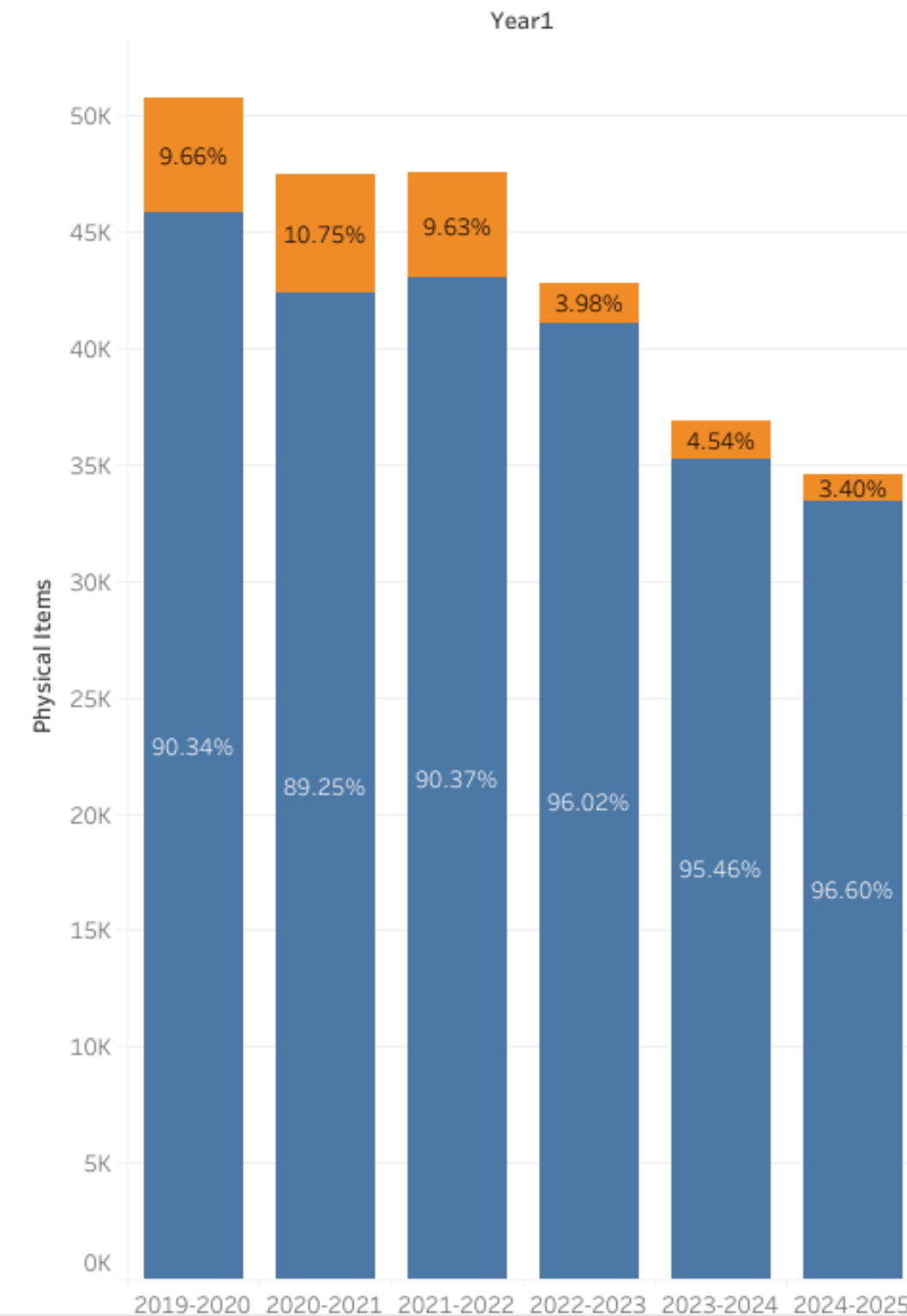
Weeding:

Because hoarding is not a collection development policy.

- Eliminated materials primarily based on:
 - age
 - content
 - quality
- Other considerations:
 - Condition
 - Circulation
- Physical journals
- Previous editions

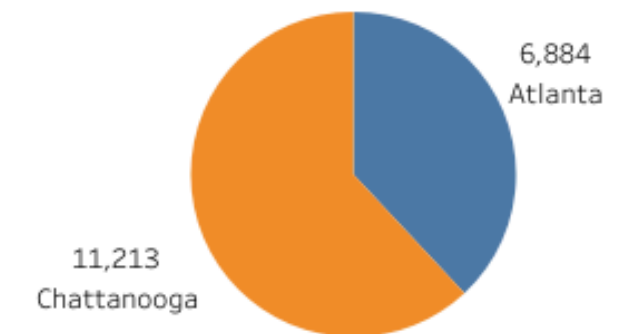
Historical Collection Statistics

Volume Count by format by year



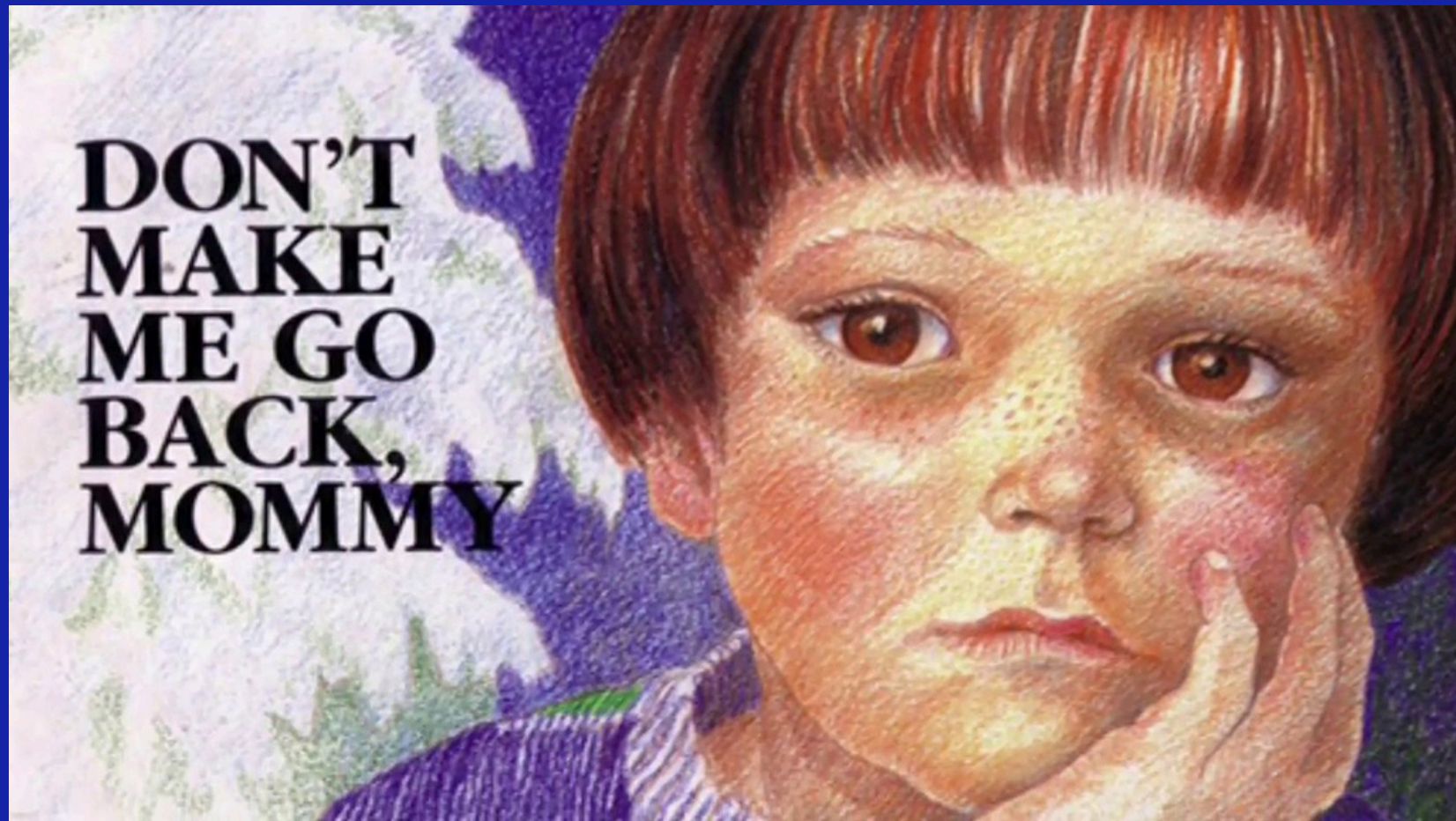
Richmont Graduate University, Chattanooga Campus

Total physical items weeded by campus (since June, 2021)

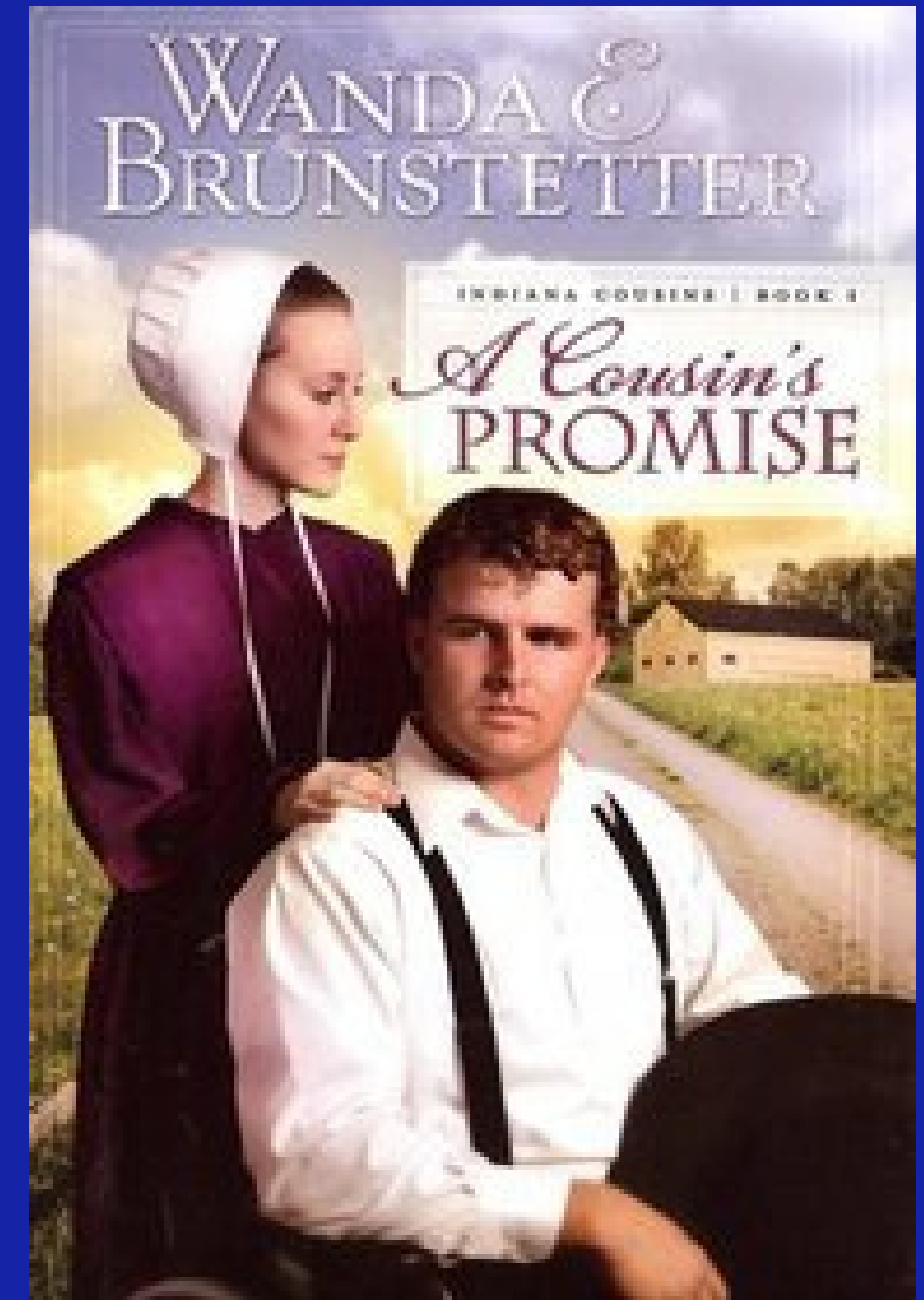
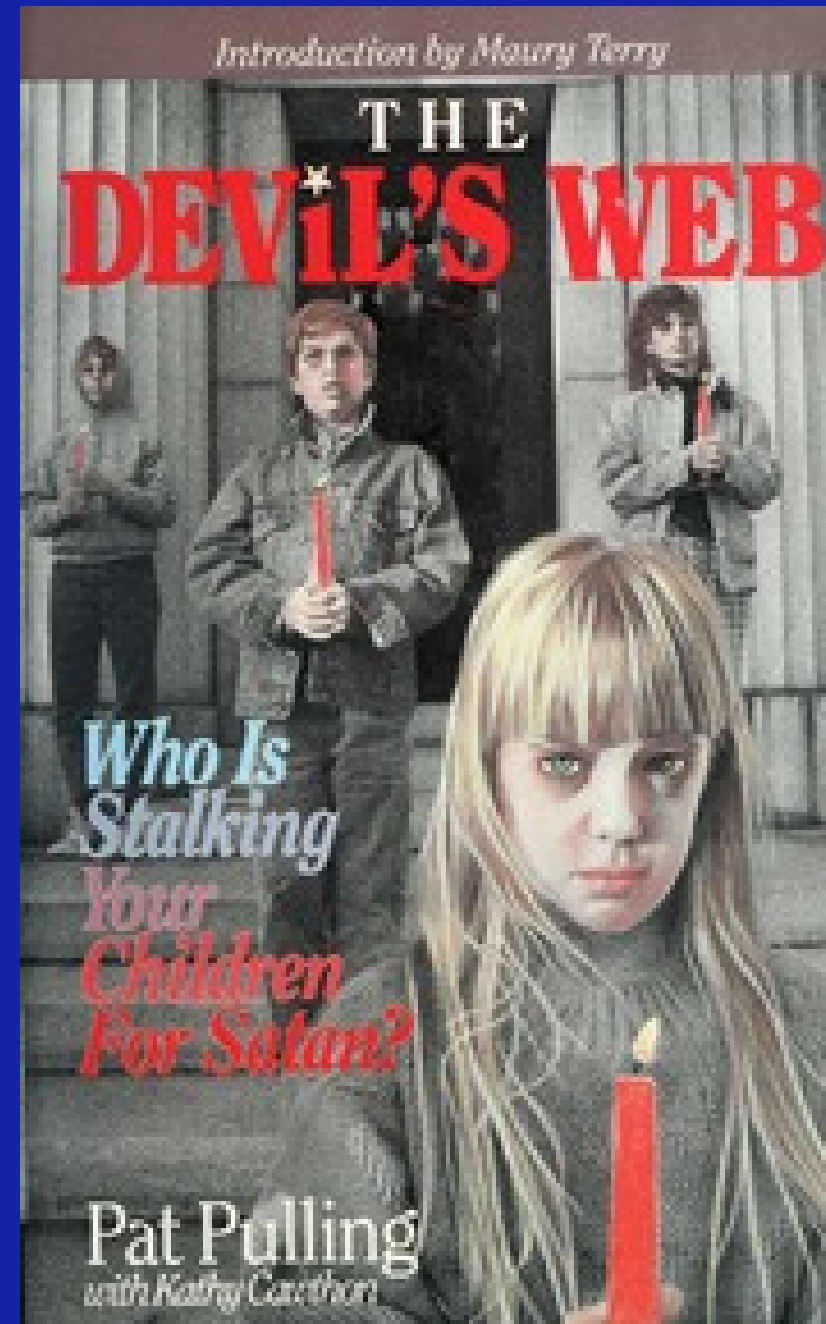


ALIGNMENT

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Misleading
Ugly
Superseded
Trivial
Irrelevant
Elsewhere



ALIGNMENT

2020



2026



Weeding isn't just for books!

ALIGNMENT

2020



2026



Weeding isn't just for books!

ALIGNMENT

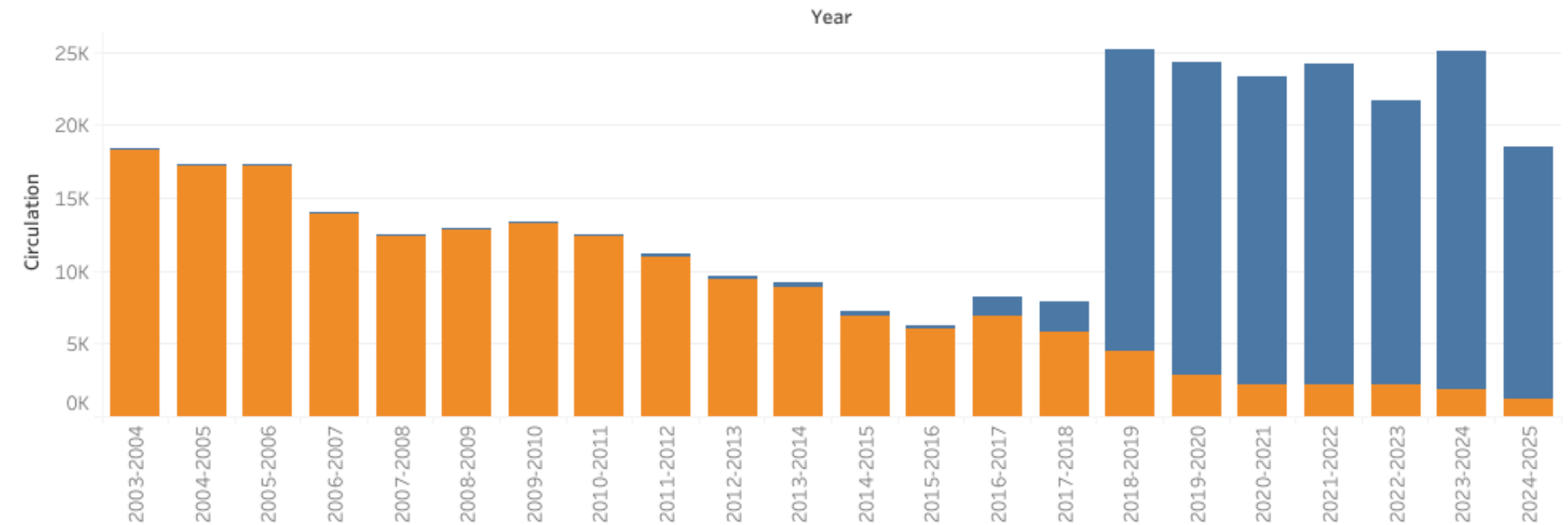
ACCESSIBILITY

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

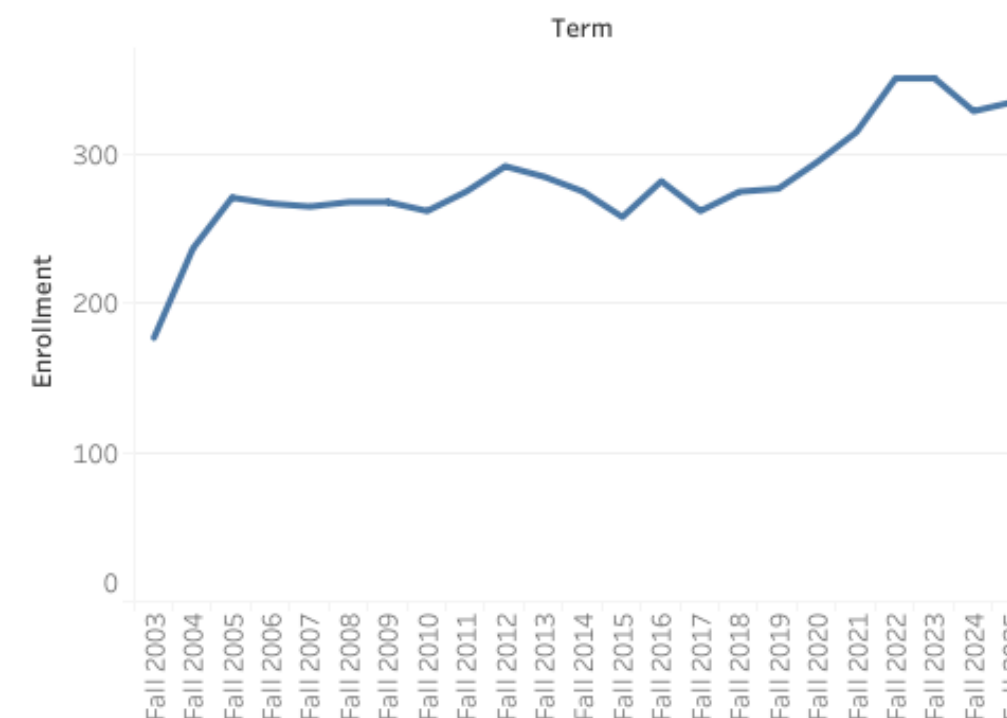
[TABLEAU LINK](#)

- Decline in physical circulation
 - Public patrons
 - Commuter students
- Increase in eBook holdings
 - Accessible 24/7
 - Online students
 - Price of eBooks
 - Demand Driven Acquisition
- LibGuides
- Online Orientation Materials

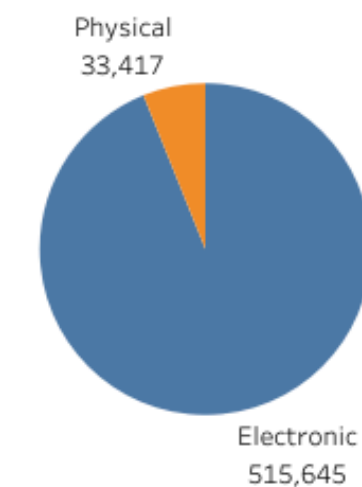
Physical vs. Electronic Circulation (Monographs only)



Richmont Total Enrollment



Physical and Electronic Collections as of March 2026



STEWARDSHIP

**Atla
Religion
Database**
by **atla**

GOODBYE, PHYSICAL JOURNALS!

- Redundant titles between digital and physical editions
- Little use of physical copies
- ~\$14k line item

HELLO, MUCH NEEDED DATABASES!

- Atla Religion
 - D.Min. program starting 2023
 - 400 full-text journals
 - 3000 indexed titles
- Psychotherapy.net
 - Upgraded video resources
 - Faculty request



REFLECTIONS

- Early career librarians
- Inclusion of first doctoral program
- Correcting past mistakes
- Meeting faculty demand

QUESTIONS?

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