Schaffer Library’s Digital Projects team has created a new historic campus guide that will be published on the library’s website in October 2011. This guide is based upon information and stories gleaned from letters written between 1895 and 1904 by Anne Dunbar Potts Perkins, beloved campus resident, creator of Mrs. Perkins’ Garden, and wife of Maurice Perkins (Union College Professor of Chemistry, 1865-1901). The new guide includes an interactive campus map and will provide visitors with links to pictorial, biographical, and other information about family and College life at Union during this mid-point in its history.

**BACKGROUND**

A treasure trove of over 700 letters sent to family members by Mrs. Perkins over the last decade of the 19\(^{th}\) century and first decade of the 20\(^{th}\) was donated to Schaffer Library’s Special Collections in 2009. All were written while Mrs. Perkins was not only living in the center of the Union College campus (in what is now Hale House) but deeply involved in its intellectual and social life. The letters reveal Mrs. Perkins to have been a vivid writer and woman, who actively pursued her own work while recording her lively interest in national as well as local and family affairs. Mrs. Perkins’ letters are also an incomparably rich source of information about College and student life during the period and offer a unique woman’s perspective on what was then an all-male institution.

As a first step in making information from Mrs. Perkins’ correspondence available to the College community, the Digital Projects team in Schaffer Library has created a “clickable” map highlighting the many areas on campus – from the new fraternity houses being built along Library Lane to its westernmost “Pasture” – that feature in her letters. Period images and brief stories and/or excerpts from the letters are linked to each location. Additional links on the project website provide contextual information about Union College at the time Mrs. Perkins was writing, a list of the plants she tended in her garden and home, and short biographies of many of the individuals she mentions including Andrew Van Vranken Raymond, Moses Viney, Julia Benedict (who looked after Jackson’s Garden), and a variety of professors and their families. The site also includes information for a self-guided walking tour, but in conjunction with the release of the Perkins website and as part of the celebration of Schaffer Library’s 50\(^{th}\) Anniversary in the fall of 2011, guided tours will also be offered during Union’s Homecoming and Family Weekend as noted above.