The Civil War

For Several Years the Library has had one foot in the Civil War. Some of our newspapers ran through that period, and from time to time we purchased or had given to us series of letters written home by soldiers during the conflict. We also had a Lincoln collection of printed works given to the Library in 1940 which inevitably contained material on the war.

As mentioned in the March Quarto, James S. Schoff, a member of the Committee of Management, presented to the Library his collection of unit histories of the Civil War. In the main these are regimental histories, although some are histories of smaller and larger units and a few dealt with campaigns or personal reminiscences. His collection also included several hundred photographs and engravings.

Now he has augmented this gift with an astonishing treasure trove of manuscript material—nearly 1600 letters written by participants on both sides, from generals down to privates. About 700 are in series, such as 150 from Connecticut artilleryman, 122 from a Michigan cavalry officer, 111 from an Illinois private, and 52 from a Virginia Union officer. In addition there are such gems as 33 letters from Grant, 27 from Sherman, 20 from Hooker, 20 from J. E. Johnston, 9 from Lincoln, and 8 from Lee. Moreover, there are ten soldier diaries in the lot. If all these riches sound like a miscellany, that impression is wrong. Most of them are concentrated in date during the war years, and by this unity of time and place, the pieces reinforce one another for research purposes. They also represent forty years of discriminating collecting.

Then Mr. Schoff acquired for us the archives of a Union prisoner of war camp at Point Pleasant, Md., the largest in the North and used principally for captured privates. The collection is made up of 3,170 accounts, receipts, sutlers' bills, and payment orders incident to administering the camp, and 616 letters to the provost marshal from Confederate prisoners wanting to take the oath of allegiance and from relatives of the prisoners inquiring about sons and husbands. They afford material for comparison with Confederate prisons and treatment of prisoners generally.

The cataloguing problem is formidable, but we look forward to it joyously, as there are no trivial pieces in the lot. Detroit's Civil War Roundtable has been invited to meet here in the fall.

Fall Assembly

The Man Responsible for the restoration of Shaker town, at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, will speak on that development at our annual Assembly on September 19, at the Library. Mr. James Lowry Cogar will deliver an illustrated lecture, which will commemorate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the sect in America. We will have an exhibition of some of our Shaker imprints. Invitations will be mailed shortly, so hold the date.

The Board of Governors will meet in the afternoon.

Second Lilly Grant

We Are Pleased to report a second grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc., which enables the Library to continue its research on neglected aspects of the Revolutionary War. We are examining reminiscences of veterans, never published, and expect to compile a book of action memories. We also are putting together a bibliography of source materials relating to soldiers and sailors of the Revolution, devoted to individuals rather than campaigns or political movements. You will hear more of these projects in the future.
The Him of the Republic

Samuel Gridley Howe (1801–1876) of Boston might well have been known as Mister "Julia Ward Howe," for he was the husband of the famous author of The Battle Hymn of the Republic. Yet in a long and active life he made his own name in an astonishing number of humanitarian causes.

After graduation from Harvard Medical School and service in Greece against the Turks, he returned and was soon appointed director of a new school for the blind eventually named the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind. Two themes run through his early annual reports: methods used to teach Laura Bridgman, a blind deaf-mute, to read and write, and the needs of his special printing press for the blind. For his publications he improved on the raised type invented in Paris in 1784 by reducing the size of the capital letters and interlinear space, and by eliminating flourishes below the line, creating angular letters known as Boston or Howe type. Though supplanted three decades later by the still more economical dot system, he greatly boosted the availability of such books. Before his advent, only a few books for the blind could be secured.

Recently we acquired a surviving example of his embossed books, The Blind Child's Spelling Book (Boston 1835). Following Howe's introduction are 80 leaves of spelling rules and word lists, all easily read visually today and less easily traced by finger tips of the blind. The book ends with a chapter of "Quotations from other languages which are frequently read." Howe did not expect less from handicapped pupils.

Conference on Discovery

At the end of October the Library will host a conference on the history of geographical discovery. The theme is "The New Worlds and the Old: Reciprocal Influences in the Age of Discoveries." Half a dozen distinguished scholars, two from England, will give papers, followed by commentaries. The speakers will emphasize particular European countries that sponsored explorations.

The conference is part of the program supported by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Three fellowships for study in this field have been awarded to graduate students. The History Department is offering a seminar in the period, and the Geography Department has a course in the history of cartography. The conference is open to all faculty and graduate students, and members of the Society for the History of Discoveries have been invited to attend, just in advance of its annual meeting, which will be held in the Library. We are looking forward to this distinguished gathering.

In the fall term Mr. Marshall, our Curator of Maps, will offer an evening course on the history of discovery to undergraduates in the Residential College.

Rafinesque

One of the most prolific writers on the natural sciences in nineteenth-century America, with over 900 works to his credit, was the European-born Constantine Rafinesque. A man of many talents, Rafinesque was also a successful business
man and author of works on banking and economics, but ichthyology and botany always retained his chief interests. After living in Sicily for ten years, he was led to emigrate to America in 1815 because of an unhappy marriage. Here he travelled widely and made a number of influential friends, one of whom secured a position for him as professor at Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky. He remained here from 1818 to 1826, enjoying a reputation as a brilliant teacher.

After leaving Transylvania he returned to Philadelphia, where he had formerly lived, and published his major work, the two-volume Medical Flora; or, Manual of the medical botany of the United States (Philadelphia, 1828-1830). The work describes and contains 100 plates of medicinal plants which he had observed in his travels throughout the eastern United States. In an era when most medical treatment was based on vegetable drugs, it was an extremely important work intended as a practical reference tool for physicians and pharmacists. This summer the Library was able to acquire this valuable title, which was purchased on the Harper Fund.

Northwest Passage Again

Another Valuable Pamphlet for the library's holdings in the Dobbs-Middleton controversy of the mid-eighteenth century over the long sought Northwest Passage is A Description of the Coast, Tides, and Currents, in Button's Bay published in London by J. Robinson.

The unknown author supports Dobbs' view that such a passage must exist. Although he contradicts Middleton's views, he does not go into the heated exchanges of Arthur Dobbs and Captain Christopher Middleton. He draws upon journals of navigators from 1722 to 1744 with minute observations about the western edge of Hudson's Bay. He offers reports from Indians, tide data, distribution of whales, and ice and current movements to support his belief in an open water route to the north Pacific. Finally, after citing these technical proofs, he concludes that there is a "navigable passage from Hudson's Bay to the Western Ocean of America."

The pamphlet of 24 pages is rare with the London imprint which was probably issued in 1744 or 1745, before the more common Dublin edition of 1746 with 27 pages. Other titles in the series by Dobbs, an Irish promoter, were also from the Robinson firm in 1744 and 1745.

Deaths in the Revolution

A Month Or So after you read this, you will hear of a new book, The Toll of Independence, Engagements and Battle Casualties of the American Revolution (University of Chicago Press 1974). It is edited by the Library director and represents the findings of almost a score of researchers who worked here and in the archives and historical societies of the eastern states, in the National Archives, and in secondary histories. They filled in preprinted forms about every military and naval engagement they could find, and the reports of American casualties suffered. Mr. Peckham examined these reports, selected the figures that seemed most reliable, and compiled a chronological list of those engagements, describing briefly each action. Opposite each one is the report of killed, wounded, captured, missing, and deserted.

No such list of engagements, totalling 1,546, has ever been made. The battle casualties, which Mr. Peckham emphasizes are a verifiable minimum, reach a new high figure. To this figure he has added an estimate of those Americans who died in camp and those who perished as prisoners of the British. The combined total exceeds 25,000 and marks the Revolution as a major war, almost as bloody as the Civil War. If you wish to peruse the findings, ask your library to order a copy.

This study was financed by a grant from Lilly Endowment. It will be followed by a second volume in 1975 on the size and composition of the Continental Army, month by month.

Conservation Conference

Mrs. GeorgiA haugh, Curator of Rare Books, represented the library at the national meeting of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries held at the University of Virginia June 30-July 2, attended by 200 curators, collectors, and conservators.

The business of the conference was preservation and restoration of rare books, manuscripts and maps. Discussions and demonstrations by nationally known experts explored new products and new methods. The tone of the conference was conservative (in another sense) with caution and skepticism about new products advised, and a program of thorough testing advocated. Participants were reminded that they were temporary custodians of materials important for future
generations. The advance of staff conservators was emphasized in view of the growing complexity of conservation and the increasing value of rarities.

**Autograph Collectors**

**ONE OF THE PENALTIES** of fame in nineteenth-century America was to be hounded by autograph seekers. The generals of the Civil War, no matter how obscure, were deluged with such requests, and autograph catalogues are full of their replies, devoid of real historical value. In the process of cataloguing our Aaron J. Cooke Collection, we turned up one from an ex-Confederate general which displays a rare sense of humor.

**New Orleans, Feb. 22, ’67**

Dear Sir,

In answer to yours on preceding page I must state that Genl. Bragg is in this city—Forrest lives in Memphis—Genl. Albert Sidney Johnson is in Heaven, and Pemberton is either in or ought to be in Hell. This gives you my autograph, and you can write to the foregoing named places for the others.

Yours Most Respectfully,

M. Jeff. Thompson

**University Bicentennial Committee**

The Library Director has been appointed chairman of the University Bicentennial Committee. Two meetings have been held. The committee will stimulate and coordinate college and departmental activities related to the theme of the Revolutionary Bicentennial, and it hopes to be able to procure outside funds for extraordinary activity. The focus of the University’s participation will be in the period from fall 1975 to the end of 1976. The Clements Library, with its rich resources on the Revolution, has several projects under way, of which more later.

**Historical Editing**

Our Assistant Curator of Manuscripts, Arlene Kleeble, was awarded one of fifteen intern fellowships to a two-week Institute for the editing of historical documents, held at the University of Virginia June 16 to 28. The Institute was jointly sponsored by the National Historical Publications Commission and the Center for Textual and Editorial Studies in Humanistic Sources.