Shakers, Etc.

A LARGE AUDIENCE at the Fall Assembly, September 19, was delighted by James Lowry Cogar’s illustrated lecture on the restoration and development of Shaker town at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky. Mr. Cogar directed that work. The occasion also opened our exhibition on the Shaker sect, this year being the 200th anniversary of the landing in America of Mother Ann Lee and her followers.

The Board of Governors met in the afternoon and made several important purchases for the Library which are described in other columns of this issue. They established a new class of membership for those persons contributing $25 to $99, called “Favorers.” The word is taken from the titlepage of our most famous book, Hariot’s Virginia (London 1588), which was “directed to the Adventurers, Favourers, and Welwillers” of the colonizing effort. We hesitated to use either of the other two terms, but “Favorer” has a pleasant antiquarian flavor.

The Library director participated in the Shaker conference held in Cleveland October 11-12 by the Western Reserve Historical Society. He then went on across New York and Vermont, calling on rare book dealers, and attended the annual meeting of the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Mass. Prof. John Shy of the Library’s Committee of Management was elected to membership in the Society. Frazier Clark of the Board of Governors is already a member.

Discovery Conference

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS GRACED the conference sponsored by the Library at the end of October on “The New Worlds and the Old: Reciprocal Influences in the Age of Discoveries.” It was held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Society for the History of Discoveries at the Library. The lectures were given in Rackham Auditorium and were open to history students, faculty, and the general public.

The program was planned by a joint committee consisting of representatives from the Library, and the departments of History, Geography, and English. Expenses were taken from the grant made by the Mellon Foundation to promote the history of discovery. A history seminar is being offered in the field by Prof. Charles Gibson, and three fellowships have been awarded to graduate students.

The speakers were Miss Eila Campbell of the University of London, on the relationship between geographical discoveries and Renaissance technology; Prof. Thomas Goldstein of the City University of New York, on the role of Italian merchants in exploration; Prof. Charles Boxer of Missouri University, on Portuguese expansion; Prof. Amy G. Gordon of Denison University, on the effect of discoveries on French thought; Prof. J. H. Parry of Harvard University, on the illusion of Asia in the West; Prof. Edwin Van Kley of Calvin College, on the influence of discoveries on Dutch popular culture; and Prof. David B. Quinn of the University of Liverpool, on English contributions to overseas discovery. There was a commentator for each session.

The conference was an unusual undertaking for the Library, but the amount of interest aroused in the period, in which we are strong with books and maps, was gratifying. Douglas Marshall, our curator of maps, took care of the details of arrangements to everyone’s satisfaction.

The Society for the History of Discoveries held its annual meeting here in conjunction with the conference. The members stayed on an extra day and held their own meeting in the Library, which was their host. Our books of discovery and exploration were brought out on exhibition by Mr. Marshall. He was elected to the council of the Society.
An Unrepentant Rogue

The Life of John Southack: Written by Himself
(Charlestown, Mass., 1809), is a rare item on an early American rogue. Southack specialized in insurance fraud but became involved in a variety of other crimes, including forgery and embezzlement. He finally landed in jail in 1803 for arranging the sinking of the brigantine Hannah, which was heavily insured. The second part of the book, on the Charlestown prison, is based on his own experiences there and also includes the laws and regulations governing that institution. At the end of the book Southack pays lip service to the idea of living a virtuous life, but his conversion sounds unconvincing. The tone of most of the book is one of complete enjoyment of his own rogery. It was one of the titles chosen by the Associates for purchase at their recent meeting.

Maryland's Troubles

Although Lord Baltimore had been granted land in America as a refuge for Catholics, he did not exclude Protestants. From 1634 on, Maryland was settled by both groups of Christians, and religious freedom prevailed under the proprietary government. In 1649 some Puritans in Virginia, objecting to the established Anglican church there, were exiled to Maryland, where they should have been happy. But they grew suspicious of the Catholics, largely because the French they feared were also Catholics. The liberal views of the Calvert family proprietors prevailed until 1689. In that year Parliament ousted James II and installed William and Mary as monarchs, as assertion of Parliamentary superiority.

In Maryland John Coode led a militant Protestant association that fomented opposition to Catholic toleration. In the confused period of changing kings, they seized control of the Maryland government. To justify such insurrection, the Protestants issued a Declaration of the Reasons and Motives for the Present Appearing in Arms of Their Majesties Protestant Subjects in the Province of Maryland, first printed in Maryland (although no copy is known) and then reprinted in London also in 1689 (six locations but only four copies in the U.S.).

Their grievances were focused on Lord Baltimore's "popish" government and such nonsense as a conspiracy between Catholics and Indians against the Protestants. William and Mary, not to their credit, either believed the Declaration or used it to deprive Baltimore of his proprietorship. Maryland became a royal colony, its governor appointed by the monarchs. We have other books on early Maryland, and the Associates bought this rare seventeenth-century imprint for us.

An American With Cook

The Associates purchased a long-sought account lacking in our collection of voyages: A Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, and In Quest of a North-west Passage by John Ledyard (Hartford, 1783). The author was an adventurous and luckless adventurer born in Connecticut, who went to England to enlist as a British sailor. He signed on as a marine corporal with Cook, and was with his ship when the Captain was killed by the Islanders in 1779.
Upon his return in 1780, Ledyard was interned by the British for refusing to fight his fellow Americans. He escaped and after the peace, his friends encouraged him to write this report, the first book on the Northwest Coast by an American author, and the only one on Cook’s voyages by an American. Ledyard did not continue writing as a career, but embarked on a series of hazardous attempts to open up trade with China via the Northwest Coast but was thwarted by the Russians. He met an untimely death at the age of 38 in Cairo en route to an expedition to the interior of Africa.

Another Anthology

In addition to the above, the Associates authorized a compatible purchase: A New General Collection of Voyages compiled by J. Green (London, 1745-47) in 4 volumes sometimes referred to as the Astley collection after the publisher. This extensive compilation reprints narratives of travel to Asia and Africa as far back as 1246, and later to the West Indies and South America. Descriptions of the countries visited incorporate observations on the inhabitants and reports of important historical events. There are 227 maps and plates in our handsomely bound set. The volumes add to our sources for discovery history.

The Way West

After the discovery of gold in California in 1848, there was a great demand for guide books to the gold regions; but until 1849 most of the books describing the trails went only as far as the Sierras. One of the first to outline the complete route was Joseph Ware’s The Emigrant’s Guide to California (St. Louis, 1849), and for years it was considered the best guide book available. At the time he wrote it, Ware had not made the trip himself but relied on Fremont’s reports and on oral interviews in St. Louis. The guide includes a map compiled from government surveys and engraved by the author. Three years after its publication, Ware finally made the western trip himself but died en route to California. The gift of this title by the Associates provides an important addition to the Library’s collection of overland journeys to the Pacific.

Yankees vs. Pennsylvanians

Eliphalet Dyer, a Connecticut lawyer and judge and member of the Continental Congress, was also a prime mover in the Susquehanna Company which purchased territory in northeastern Pennsylvania in 1754 from the Indians for Connecticut expansion. A bitter struggle ensued resulting in blood-shed with Pennsylvania, a natural claimant. Dyer as a company agent went to London in 1764 to present the Connecticut claims without success. A pamphlet war was waged, too, between the rival states, and a scarce title just acquired by the Associates showed there was also internal dissension. In this pamphlet, Remarks on Dr. Gale’s Letter to J.W. (Hartford, 1769), Dyer answered an attack by Benjamin Gale, a member of the Connecticut Assembly who had voted against the Susquehanna Company.

Eventually in 1782 the land was awarded to Pennsylvania in the settlement of state land claims after the Revolution. Connecticut did not lose out entirely, however, as Pennsylvania finally allowed the Yankee emigrants to transfer their land titles, and the state was permitted to retain its claim to another vast grant of land, “The Western Reserve” in northern Ohio.

Civil War Newspaper

The Associates did not overlook newspapers in adding to the Library’s holdings. An opportunity to pick up two years of the Daily Missouri Republican (St. Louis) was seized because they were war years—1862-63. Middle western papers are often harder to find than eastern ones, and since the fighting was hot in Missouri this is an appropriate source to have.

Manuscripts, Too

In spite of soaring prices on the letters of Nathanael Greene, the Associates obtained for us one of war date, 1779, at a very reasonable price. Greene wrote of the raid on Connecticut by Gen. Tryon, which so shocked New England.

In addition, the Associates acquired for us a dozen letters during the Revolution written to Sir George Jackson, undersecretary of the Navy. Nine were from Adm. Sir Samuel Hood during his tour of duty in the West Indies, fighting the French. He engaged De Grasse in February 1782. The other three letters were from Hood’s son, also in the Navy.

First Carolinians

Lea’s Map of South Carolina (London 1690) was based on a survey made eight years earlier by
Joel Gascoyne. The Gascoyne map was included in the famous Blathwayt atlas, made up in one copy, for British colonial administration. Both editions of the map identify the owners of 33 plantations. In the Lea edition the coastline has been revised and re-oriented, with north at the top. No other map of South Carolina as accurate was to appear until later in the 18th century. It has special importance for demographers, and the Associates insured that we got it.

American Poetry

The First Anthology of American verse, A Collection of Poems. By Several Hands (Boston, 1744) was compiled by friends of Mather Byles, one of the most distinguished pulpit orators of his day. His poetry was not well known, however, and the anthology was an attempt to enhance his reputation in that medium. Although the poems appeared anonymously, ten of them have been identified as written by Byles, and the authorship of some of the others has also been established. The topics are subjects of current interest, such as the death of King George I and Admiral Vernon’s capture of Carthagena. The Associates have just added this important title in the history of American literature to the Library.

Attention, Michigan Members

By A New Act of the state legislature, contributions to the University of Michigan that are used exclusively for its benefit and under the control of the Regents (as our Board of Governors is) can receive state income tax credit.

Previously such designated funds as Associates’ contributions were not recognized as benefiting the University; they could be credited only against federal income tax. Now, for Michigan residents a credit against the state income tax may be entered also. We are much pleased by this good news.

Hawthorne Exhibition

Some Choice Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne are on exhibition at the Library. No, they are not ours. This is a loan exhibition, which we very rarely have, but the generosity of C. E. Frazer Clark, Jr. of Bloomfield Hills, who has been collecting Hawthorne for years, made possible this splendid display. We embraced the opportunity to show some of his treasures to the academic community. In addition, Mr. Clark has made available a descriptive leaflet for visitors. Consequently we will not attempt to highlight here.

Civil War Buffs

Members of the Detroit Civil War Roundtable were guests of the Library on the evening of November 21, to hear about the Civil War Collection and see some of its manuscript pieces. John Dann, our curator of manuscripts, spoke to the group and reviewed our holdings. It was a pleasure to have such an informed audience, persons who were familiar with the events of that war and therefore immediately grasped the significance of the documents presented.

Despite the distance and the weather, about 70 enthusiasts showed up. Staff members served cider and doughnut holes after the lecture.

Another Book on the Revolution

The Second Study of the American Revolution, undertaken by the Library on a grant from Lilly Endowment, has been completed and delivered to the publisher. It is entitled The Sinews of Independence, Monthly Strength Reports of the Continental Army, compiled by Dr. Charles Lesser, who was appointed researcher for this purpose. The book will consist largely of charts and notes showing not only the size of the regiments and brigades each month during the Revolution, but also their commanders, composition, and location. It should be published next fall.

The study was initiated because of the presence in this Library of a huge manuscript folio volume detailing this kind of information from mid-1778 on as kept by the adjutant general. But there were a few gaps and the records for the first three years of the war had to be found elsewhere and were not so neatly kept. We trust we have located everything available, and the result is that Dr. Lesser knows more about the size of Washington’s army than Washington knew.

The charts have been meticulously typed and proof read, and will be reproduced by photo-offset. The book is designed for reference and will be used by historians in various ways. Two more volumes will be compiled from a second Lilly Endowment grant. As publications of source material, they are appropriate for the Library to sponsor and demonstrate a research function.