Yankee Ingenuity

Long before Thomas Edison, America was known for its inventors. Writers in the early nineteenth century emphasized "Yankee ingenuity." No son of New England possessed this quality in larger measure than did Rufus Porter, whose first book, *A Select Collection of Valuable and Curious Arts* (Concord, N. H., 1825), we had the good fortune to recently acquire.

Porter was born in Massachusetts, and by age thirty had been a shoemaker, soldier, school teacher, musician, traveling portrait painter, teacher of dancing, and sailor on a voyage to the Pacific. He liked to tinker, to try out methods of making or doing things and improve upon them. His recent biographer, Jean Lipman, describes him as "a sort of natural sponge for the curious arts of his time, which he enthusiastically absorbed and then gave back to the public in ready-to-use recipes." The book contains directions for gilding, for making dyes, inks, and varnishes, etching, engraving, and casting. He provides formulae for such diverse products as vanishing ink, fireworks, laughing gas, galvanic batteries, and blow torches. Of particular interest to art historians are his directions for landscape painting on plaster walls. A number of Porter's own murals survive in New England farmhouses.

Porter went on to more grandiose schemes in later life. He was the founder of *Scientific American* and the nation's first strong advocate of airships and transcontinental air travel. He tried to promote an Inventors' Institute in the late 1840's which would encourage poor inventors and subsidize research needed to patent and produce new products. Except for a brief flirtation with the Millerites in 1843-1844, Porter was a rationalist in religion and a pamphleteer in the field.

For some reason, almost all of his publications are exceedingly scarce. We acquired this with the proceeds of the Frederick S. Upton Fund.

Retirement

Agnes Pope, secretary, receptionist, and bookkeeper at the library for twenty-four years, retired on December 15. She joined the staff in June, 1954.

Agnes' efforts in behalf of the Clements Library Associates—keeping the accounts and records, answering the phone, providing a warm, personal contact with members, and encouraging potential members and donors—have contributed greatly to the organization's success.

In the past two years Agnes has undergone operations which have been successful, and she wishes to take advantage of her good health to enjoy personal activities severely limited by full-time employment: sewing, cooking, spending more time with friends and grandchildren, and perhaps traveling. She is a long-time, active member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and a member of its Board of Education. Her family's gain is our loss, but we wish her many years of happy retirement.

Southern Imprints

There was a marked geographical imbalance in the printing of colonial America. Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Hampshire accounted for well over half of pre-Revolutionary imprints. New York and Philadelphia accounted for a significant portion of the remainder. Except for legal forms, sessional laws, and newspapers, the colonial printers of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia produced relatively few of the pamphlets so common in New England and very few books.

The disparity is reflected in acquisitions as well. For every colonial imprint south of the Mason and Dixon line, we acquire two hundred from Philadelphia, New York, New London, Newport, Boston, Newburyport, and Portsmouth. We were particularly pleased, then, to acquire recently an early Virginia item and an Annapolis imprint.
The map shows the position of the Spanish fleet at the time of the siege and a British ship in the harbor. There are 12 numbered references and soundings. Four of the Spanish ships are positioned at the mouth of the harbor where they ran aground on the treacherous sand bar. This is the only manuscript map of the battle, either British or Spanish.

**Going Naked**

**Quakers Today** have an image of disciplined, rational intellectualism. There is an attractive quality to their austerity, and even in their opposition to military conflicts, a controlled dedication to their beliefs. Meekness is a quality we associate with such moral leaders as John Woolman. It is easy to forget that they began in mid-seventeenth-century England as a sect remarkable for its exuberant emotional piety and restrained speech. The Quakers came largely from the lower middle classes, not only Puritans but the fringes of other sects—ranters, shakers, seekers.

William Simpson, a native of Lancashire, was one of the earliest followers of George Fox's new sect. Long before Fox had established his systematic network of Quaker meetings, Simpson began preaching the Quaker doctrine, but with his own special innovation.

Simpson began to appear in the streets of London and rural England naked, with his face blackened, exhorting people to repent. He warned them that “a day of reckoning is coming upon thee . . . as naked shall you be spiritually as my body hath been temporally naked in many places in England, as a sign of the nakedness and shame that is coming upon the Church of England, who liveth in oppression and cruelty.”

Simpson’s preaching was met with whippings, stoneings and imprisonment. After the Restoration he became less fanatical, gradually blending into the more temperate Quaker meetings. In 1670 he sailed for Barbados, accompanied by another Quaker preacher, John Burneycat. A year later he died there from a fever.

Recently the Clements acquired a fascinating pamphlet dealing with the life and work of William Simpson. Published in 1671, it contains the account of his death written by William Fortescue, a member of the Barbados Quaker community. Appended to this is Simpson’s own famous tract, “Going Naked a Signe.”
New Publications

In 1974 The Library inaugurated its Bicentennial Studies program, made possible by a grant from the Lilly Endowment and the National Endowment for the Humanities. This month the fourth publication in the series appeared. Sources of Independence, under the general editorship of Howard H. Peckham, is an anthology of material from the library's manuscript collection focusing on the American Revolution. The material offers a previously unpublished body of evidence on the causes, nature and consequences of that conflict. A wide variety of manuscripts are represented—letters, journals, essays, pamphlets and apologies—all written between 1765 and 1785 by men on both sides, deeply involved in the struggle.

Volume I begins with John Shy's presentation of the private correspondence between Viscount Barrington, the British secretary at war and General Thomas Gage, commander-in-chief of all British troops in North America. Leland Bellot, the biographer of William Knox, has edited a perceptive essay, "What is Fit to Be Done with America?" which was written by the British undersecretary in 1763.

Sir Henry Clinton's pamphlet attack on Sir Peter Parker, blaming him for the British defeat at Charleston, has been edited by William B. Willcox. This volume ends with the "Journal of the Brunswick Corps in America under General von Riedesel." Edited and translated by V. C. Hubbs, this anonymous account is a fascinating record of a German mercenary soldiering along the St. Lawrence River.

Volume II contains three interesting sets of correspondence. In the first, edited by Hugh Rankin, a young British officer, Major Patrick Ferguson, describes his skirmishes with the enemy and with his own superiors. The letters written between American generals Anthony Wayne and Nathanael Greene, edited by Robert G. Mitchell, tell of conflicts between military and civilian leaders and battles fought with too few men and supplies. Arlene Shy edited the letters of John Hancock's father-in-law, Edmund Quincy, an intelligent, deeply religious man, who saw his own family painfully divided between loyalist and patriot causes. The volume concludes with the proceedings of the controversial trial of loyalist Captain Lippincott for his summary execution of a patriot prisoner, edited by L. Kinvin Wroth.

Director John C. Dann has contributed to a publication sponsored by the Manuscript Society, Autographs and Manuscripts: A Collector's Manual, edited by Edmund Berkeley, Jr. His essay is entitled "American Colonial and Revolutionary Autographs."

Vocal Companion

The Complete Vocal Instructor by Henri-Noel Gilles (Baltimore, 1828) is one of the Clements Library's most recent acquisitions. We are aware of the existence of only one other copy of this work, which appears to be one of the first treatises on the subject of melody and composition published in the United States.

Gilles, born in Paris in 1778, was an oboist, guitarist, music teacher and composer. He studied at the Paris Conservatory, which awarded him a prize in 1799, and from 1803 to 1814 was associated with the Italian Opera at Paris. He arrived in New York about 1815, and settled in or around Baltimore about 1818. Little is known of his activities after that date; his death is thought to have occurred in 1834.

Gilles, who based his Vocal Instructor on the principles of composition and vocal instruction which he had learned at the Paris Conservatory, specifically attributed his discussion of the principles of melody to Antonin Reicha, whose Traité de Mélodie (1814) Gilles claimed to be "the first treatise on melody, distinct from harmony . . . that has ever been composed."

The Vocal Instructor presents the methods of the Italian lyric style of singing, and was published three years after Spanish-born Manuel Garcia established America's first Italian opera company. The purchase of The Vocal Instructor was made through the Director's Fund.

An Invitation

Many Of You, although loyal supporters of the library, have probably never had a personal tour. The staff cordially extends an invitation to all of you to make an appointment and let us show off the collections and the building.

Special accommodations on weekends can be made for out-of-town Associates. Friends and guests are most welcome. To make arrangements, please call 313-426-8142.
A Melancholy Narrative

Eighteenth-century Englishmen had a lusty appetite for sensational stories, which was kept well satisfied by an inventive popular press. Cheap broadsides and pamphlets, the equivalent of modern tabloids, thrived on accounts of murders, rapes and criminal trials. Of all the disasters reported, shipwrecks were a particular favorite.

One story, “The Melancholy Narrative of the Distressful Voyage and Miraculous Deliverance of Captain David Harrison” was widely circulated in 1766. It had all the right ingredients for instant success in London bookstalls.

Captain David Harrison out of New York on the sloop Peggy, weighed anchor at the West Indian Island of Fayal on the 5th of October, 1760, with a cargo of wine and brandy. By Christmas the ship was in desperate straits. The starving crew had been driven to eat the ship’s cat. As Captain Harrison recounted, “My vessel had been for some time leaky, I myself was emaciated with sickness, and had but one sail in the world to direct her . . . the men were either too weak, or too much intoxicated to pay a necessary attention to pump . . . [the storm] blew black December and we had not an inch of candle, nor a morsel of slush to make any.

“On the 13th of January following, being still tossed about at the direction of the sea and wind, my mate, at the head of all the people, came to me in the cabin, half drunk indeed, but with looks so full of horror, as partly indicated the nature of their dreadful purpose, and informed me, ‘that they could hold out no longer, that their tobacco was entirely exhausted; that they had eaten up all the leather belonging to the pump, and even the buttons off their jackets, that now they had no chance in nature but to cast lots, and to sacrifice one of themselves for the preservation of the rest.’

“As I had long expected some violence to myself, from the excesses of their intoxication, I had, for some time, taken to my arms, to prevent a surprize. But, alas! this was an idle precaution, as I was by no means able to repel force by force. . . . I told them they might pursue their own course, but that I would on no account either give orders for the death of the person on whom the lot might fall, nor partake, by any means, of so shocking a repast . . .

“So saying they left me, and went into the steerage, but in a few minutes came back, informing me, that they had each taken a chance for their lives, and that the lot had fallen on a negro, who was part of my cargo. . . . They therefore dragged him into the steerage, where, in less than two minutes, they shot him through the head. They suffered him to lye a very little time before they ripped him open, intending to fry his entrails for supper, there being a large fire made for the purpose. . . .

“In this manner matters went on, till the 28th or 29th of January . . . the mate came to me again at the head of the people, saying, that the negro had for some days been entirely eaten up, and as no vessel had yet appeared, to give us the most distant glimmer of relief, there was a necessity for casting lots again . . .

“There were seven of us now left; and the lots were drawn in the same manner as the tickets are drawn for a lottery at Guildhall. The lot, indeed, did not fall on me, but it fell on one David Flatt, a foremastman, the only man in the ship on whom I could place any certain dependance. The shock of the decision was great; and the preparations for execution were dreadful. The fire already blazed in the steerage, and every thing was prepared for sacrificing the wretched victim immediately . . .

“The unhappy victim then begged a small time to prepare himself for death; to which his companions very cheerfully agreed, and even seemed at first unwilling to insist upon his forfeit life . . . A few draughts of wine, however, soon suppressed these dawning of humanity; nevertheless, to shew their regard, they consented to let him live till eleven the next morning, in hopes that the Divine goodness would, in the mean time, raise up some other source of relief. . . .

“About eight o’clock the next morning, as I was ruminating in my cabin . . . a sail to the leeward appeared. She seemed to stand for us in as fair a direction as we could possibly wish. . . . After continuing for a considerable time, eagerly observing the progress of the vessel, and undergoing the most tumultuous agitation that could be created by so trying a suspense, we had at last, the happiness to see a boat drop astern and row towards us full manned.”

Should you doubt the veracity of the foregoing tale, there is an affidavit by Captain Harrison, sworn before the Lord Mayor of London attesting to its truth. The library recently acquired a 1766 edition of this “Melancholy Narrative” with the Director’s Fund.