Circa 1456

We don't have a guide at the Clements Library, although we could use one daily. Each of our staff has trained himself to talk to visitors who want to be talked to. We usually say a few words about Mr. Clements and the history of the collections, and then we point out some of the great rarities of which we are especially proud. Often, we display some of the unique historical manuscripts for which the Library is, we think, famous. The first piece we show our guests is a Spanish manuscript signed by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1493. It is written on fine, clean vellum, and we place it on the table without any protective covering (all of our other frequently exhibited manuscripts are enclosed in cellulose acetate envelopes) because it is almost indestructible. Four out of five times, this vellum manuscript starts a series of questions about paper, and why very old papers have lasted so well and seem likely to last forever. Of course, that gives us a chance to explain why and how old all-rag papers stand up under the years. It also gives us an excellent opportunity to show off one of our recent gifts from an Associate. Dr. Otto O. Fisher of Detroit understands very well the importance of the history of printing to Americana. He also knows how we like to illustrate our remarks on printers and printing with great specimens of the art. Therefore, he has given us a leaf from the "Gutenberg Bible" [circa 1456], the first printed Bible and one of the earliest books printed in the Western world from movable metal types. Dr. Fisher's gift is peculiarly appropriate for the Library, since it comprises Psalms 65-67. You will remember, perhaps, that the eighth verse of Psalm 65 refers to "They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens." America, perhaps?

1549-1949

The year 1949 has marked the four hundredth anniversary of the Book of Common Prayer of the Protestant Episcopal Church. In February, we had two meetings of clergymen at the Library, for whom we arranged special exhibitions. The more important of these was "The Use of the Book of Common Prayer in America," tracing the history of that Use from early colonial days through the founding of the Episcopal Church in the United States. Steering discreetly away from claims of priority, we began our exhibition with Thomas Harriot's *Virginia*, London, 1588, which tells of the first Anglican Church services at Roanoke Island, in 1585, and Richard Hakluyt's *Voyages*, London, 1589, in which is recounted Sir Francis Drake's similar services in California, in 1579. We have to be careful about claiming which was the first true use of the Anglican liturgy in the United States. The point is that a most distinguished California historian aver that the Rev. Walter Fletcher, Drake's chaplain, was a Puritan and would not have used the Book of Common Prayer.

We were also able to exhibit the early attempts to print an Episcopal prayer book in this country in those of the Rev. Samuel Seabury of Connecticut and the Rev. William White of Pennsylvania. We even displayed the original "black-letter" Act of Parliament, whereby that body enabled the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to consecrate an American bishop.

We also took this occasion to rearrange our collection of the American editions of the prayer book to the satisfaction of our Book Division. From the standpoint of the cataloguers, that makes the whole quadricentennial worthwhile. Associate Paul M. Spurlin, professor of French in our Department of Romance Languages, viewed our collection with a critical eye and noted we had no edition in Latin. He had one in his private library, an edition printed in London in 1791. He gave it to the Library with the remark that while it was an edition without standing in the Church of England, and simply an exercise in translation, still, if someone wondered (and probably someone did) how the liturgy would look and sound in Latin— he found out.

1774-1788

The Continental Congress, from Adams (Andrew) to Zubly (John J.) was as interesting a group of men as could be found in North America during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. There were almost 450 of them, from 1774-1788, and among them were men of great nobility, scoundrels, strong men and "weak sisters." They quarrelled and agreed among themselves, in session and out, formed committees which hampered and aided their own armies and navies, passed bills and rescinded them, legislated rapidly and efficiently, procrastinated, muddled, recessed—in short, acted as every Congress has. Yet, they won freedom for their "body politic." For this they deserve the honor which Americans give them.

One of the honors paid to celebrities is the collecting of their auto-
graphs. Specimens from the pens of the Members of the Continental Congress have been searched after for many years, and so well established is the traffic in them that dealers in American autographs commonly use the initials “M.O.C.” to identify such objects. Complete sets of Members of the Continental Congress are extremely difficult to achieve, for among them are all of the fifty-five signers of the Declaration of Independence and some other gentlemen whose manuscripts are just about as scarce as those of Thomas Lynch, Jr., and B. Gwinnett. This last year, our very good friend and Associate, Dr Joseph E. Fields of Joliet, president of the National Society of Autograph Collectors, gave us a collection of manuscript materials by 107 M. O. C.’s. We have examples of handwriting by a large number of them scattered through our collections, but Dr Fields’ gift brought us many a M.O.C. not hitherto represented in the Library. Some of the examples are highly interesting, but we find none as pertinent at this moment as the example from Levi Lincoln of Massachusetts, to his son at college, in which he says, “Be attentive to your health, your reputation, and your studies, a neglect of either will be the cause of unavailing regret.”

MDCCXC

Titles of books have presumably always been a subject for jest. Do you remember the reader who wanted The Red Boat by an author whose initials were O.K.? We were reminded of this state of titles last week when three of us confused ourselves thoroughly over the authorship of Meat Out of the Eater (an odd title to begin with). We finally found that Michael Wigglesworth had used it first and John Cotton had borrowed the title about forty years later. Somehow, that started a chain of thoughts on how much simpler a librarian’s life would be if books were uniformly titled, as Malthus On Population, Hammer On Nails, Rattler On Herpetology, etc. At that very moment, we came across a slim, small volume which had already afforded us much pleasure. It is A Catalogue of the Books belonging to the Medical Library in The Pennsylvania Hospital . . . Philadelphia, 1790.

One of this Library’s delights is our collection of catalogues of old and respected libraries (we recently tripled the shelves in our Bibliographical Room to take care of them), and we have a large number. Our copy came to us as the result of a note attached to a check from Dr Norman C. Bender of Buffalo, when he became an Associate. Dr Bender incursively hinted that he might be able to help us with some of the same, if there was something we wanted very much and could not afford. Such a state is more frequent than we like to admit and it was especially acute when we were offered the Pennsylvania Hospital Catalogue . . . In our anguish, we appealed to our friend in Buffalo; he failed us not. It was a very real pleasure to show Dr Bender “his” book, when he was here recently. We pointed out the titles of some of the books which were available to his earlier brethren in Philadelphia. Perhaps, after he returned to Buffalo, he secured the Pennsylvania Hospital’s copy of John Millar’s Observations on the Asthma and on the Hooping Cough, as a handy volume to take with him on his rounds.

Circa 1826

We have a question to ask. But we don’t have $64 in prize money (if we had that much, we’d buy another book). Associate Lawrence S. Thompson of Lexington, Kentucky, has given us a sermon (in Spanish) by Pedro Gutiérrez de Cos, Bishop of Puerto Rico, probably printed in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1826. The text of the leaflet is of less interest to us than its printing history, although for a pastoral sermon there is a startling amount of political matter. Associate Thompson tells us that this little pamphlet is the second non-serial Puerto Rican imprint. He has found one earlier specimen, a sermon by Fray Manuel Maria de San Lucar apparently published in 1819, a copy of which is in the library of the Hispanic Society, New York. However, there are said to be other earlier pieces in addition to the one identified. Does any other Associate have information about early non-serial Puerto Rican imprints?

1833

On April 1, 1949, The Associates who attended the Founder’s Day celebration heard an address by fellow-Associate Herbert G. Watkins, Secretary of the University. They also received a four-page leaflet about William L. Clements and his first election as Regent of the University written by George A. Marston and James Shearer II. Among the books exhibited was a copy of Amos Blanchard’s The American Biography . . . Wheeling, 1833. It is one of about sixty volumes given the Library by the Shearer family (Miss Marie L. Shearer, Mrs Charles L. Willard, James Shearer II, and Col. Alfred M. Shearer). All of the books once belonged to Mr Clements’ Bay City friend James Shearer.

Blanchard’s book was chosen for exhibition because it is the first important attempt to compile a list of famous Americans. Nowadays, we are so accustomed to using such tools as the Dictionary of American Biography that we forget the great work had antecedents. What we miss most in the sober pages of the DAB are the wings of poetic fancy on which Mr Blanchard was wont to float. We liked especially these lines, in which Amos told the world “How superior American heroes are:

Now meet the fathers of this western clime:
Nor names more noble grace’d the rolls of fame:
When Spartan Bravness braved the wrecks of time,
Or Rome’s bold virtues charm’d the heroic flame.

* O. Khayyam
The world is older every day and the people in it seem to be forming hard shells against the spoken word. We feel this way because we have just listened to the new phonograph records of certain moving speeches broadcast during the last war. Perhaps the radio feeds us too many voices too often. At any rate, newspapers or journals today seldom carry encomiums such as the one we found recently in a pamphlet given the Library by a member of the Associates' Executive Committee, Dr Lawrence Reynolds of Detroit.

The objects of the meeting were briefly and appropriately stated by the President, when the meeting was addressed by Col. Wharton, one of the Texian Commissioners, in a speech of thrilling power and eloquence, in which he depicted in bold and glowing language the wrongs, the injuries, the sufferings, and the noble struggle of the patriotic people of Texas, and in a strain of sublime and touching pathos, appealed to the feelings, and invoked the pecuniary assistance of the citizens of New-York, in behalf of his suffering countrymen, whom he declared might be exterminated, but could never be conquered.

[Of course, sentences that long are not often published nowadays, either.]

The speech was said to have been received “with thunders of applause,” so we thought we might read it and try to catch some faint echo—after 113 years. Probably Texans (or Texians, as they were then called) have always been orators, for Wharton's was a good, rich, rolling speech, full of fire and thunder and fighting words. Why! we almost rose in a body to march for Texas, when we read

Finally, gentlemen, I know that you will say to the people of Texas, once your fellow-citizens, forget not the deeds of your fathers! March boldly on in your glorious career, conquering, and to conquer." But if after all that your chivalry and perseverance can accomplish, we find that you are overpowered by superior numbers, sooner than your dearest rights shall be profaned and prostituted—sooner than your heroic citizens shall be humbly misrepresented, and their wives and daughters polluted by a brutal soldiery, in this land of your nativity, 'ten thousand swords will leap from their scabbards.'

Dr Reynolds' gift, Texas, Address of the Honorable Wm. H. Wharton ... also, Address of the Honorable Stephen F. Austin ... New York, 1896, is an appreciated addition to our Texas and west-of-the-Mississippi books. The Austin Address was exhibited in the Library when Associate Everett D. Graff loaned us a selection of his Texas books in 1946, but the Wharton speech was not represented. [By the way, the bulletin Fifty Texas Rarities is itself a rarity. We haven't had a copy for two years!]

1860

The study of languages is (and probably will remain) one of those curious pursuits attractive to both the academic and non-academic mind. The most brilliant linguist we ever knew held no earned college or university degree. He was a bibliographer, the late and great Wilberforce Eames. Dr Eames would have been as interested as we were delighted to see a recent gift from one of our Associates, the Gilcrease Foundation, Tulsa, Oklahoma. It is the Epistle of John printed in Sequoyah's Cherokee language. A few years ago, we were all reading Marion L. Starkey's The Cherokee Nation excitedly, ruefully, and a little angrily. One of the most stirring episodes in the book is the tale of how the language, invented by Sequoyah, a formerly illiterate half-breed Cherokee Indian, was adopted by his people. A page printed in Sequoyah's language was used as one of the illustrations, so we felt a very strong desire to own at least a small bit of Cherokee printing. But such things are not found readily, at least not as easily as a pound of tea. Then, of a sudden, our Associate in Tulsa, hearing of our plight, sent us this fragment of Cherokee printing (the Bible was issued thus in small parts, probably as the various books were translated). In addition to being a most welcome gift from an Associate, our specimen of Cherokee printing is heart-warming evidence that cooperation between libraries is possible.

1874

There must have been a happy moment for librarians, when there were no United States government documents. It was probably a very short moment, and librarians of the time certainly did not know how fortunate they were. Currently, the University of Michigan receives only a small fraction of the annual output—yet that "small fraction" is about 30,000 pieces! You can see, then, why librarians are sometimes discouraged and often appalled at the sight of a government document. On the other hand, Associate Henry E. Candler of Detroit gave us a CD not long ago which we were delighted to receive. It doesn't look like much and, textually, it isn't much. It is simply the laws and statutes passed in the first session of the 33rd Congress, printed at Washington in 1874. However, the copy given us belonged to someone who moved in "high circles." On the last few pages of text and on the blank leaves at the end of the volume, there are nineteen signatures of members of Congress and officials of the Government. Two of the signers were presidents, Ulysses S. Grant and James A. Garfield, and among the others are James G. Blaine and Hamilton Fish.

Nineteenth Century

The liber amicorum of the fifteenth century had its legitimate descendant in the autograph album of the nineteenth century. However, the pithy sayings of an owner's intimate friends eventually gave way to the stereotyped phrases of the famous greats who were probably bored to exasperation by the demands of their admirers. One of our Associates, Mrs Wilson W. Mills of Detroit, has given the Library a peculiarly interesting variant of the old nineteenth century autograph album. Her example was compiled by William H. Brearley of Detroit, who gathered signed photographs of celebrities instead of the usual simple declara-
tives of “love and affection.” The album passed from Mr Brearley to Mrs Mills’ father, Governor Hazen S. Pingree, and finally to Mrs Mills.

It is quite true that the sentiments written in autograph albums are often fascinating for more than one reason, yet we think that this Brearley-Pingree-Mills album of photographs tops them all. Mr Brearley assiduously tracked the celebrities of his day to their homes and attacked them squarely between the whiskers. How could one resist the flattery of a request for a signed photograph? Abraham Lincoln couldn’t, nor could Presidents Grant, Cleveland, Arthur, and McKinley, any more than opera and stage stars Adelina Patti, Maggie Mitchell, or Edwin Booth. Mark Twain, “Josh” Billings, Susan B. Anthony, Wilkie Collins, G. T. Beauregard, Charles Darwin, Victor Hugo, Brigham Young, Sarah Bernhardt, and a host of others were equally vulnerable. Most of the men are photographed at quarter length; it is the women, in their layers upon layers of finery, who were photographed full length. Some of the poses seem almost grotesque; yet, they are probably no more strained and curious than that modern phenomenon of photographic distortion, the fashion photograph.

1949

The mail came in, just after we wrote the date above—and a good thing it did, too. One of the letters from an Associate carries the following sentence: “I find the literature which you are distributing very interesting and very instructive, and I am hoping that I may sometime be in position to make a substantial contribution to your most worthwhile enterprise.” This is the kind of letter which comes to us from Associates; we are delighted that so many of you feel that way. Often, such feelings are expressed concretely, in the manner of Associate George W. Carter of Detroit, Mr Carter notified us that he had subscribed to the first year of Nation’s Heritage, the stunning new bi-monthly magazine published by Malcolm S. Forbes. When we took our first look at the initial number, the Director wrote to Mr Carter wistfully that it seemed a pity such a splendid volume could not have a wider circulation among students than is allowed by the regulations of the Library. Mr Carter responded at once with a second subscription for an “expendable” set which may be exhibited and used outside of the Library. The fourth number of the magazine is just out, incidentally, and the high standards set by the first issue are still being met. The series of photographs of the American scene at the end of the nineteenth century is especially noteworthy.

V.P., V.D.

One of the important collections which came to the Library as a gift this year is the unusual series of manuscripts and autograph letters formed by Associate Clinton H. Haskell of Chicago. Mr Haskell spent a good many years gathering his 340 choice specimens and, because he secured them slowly and carefully, the collection “hangs together” beautifully. Included is a series of letters by various members of the family of George Washington, and by contemporaries of the first President who carried the name Washington. In the same group there are letters and documents by some of Washington’s intimate associates, such as Thomas Jefferson, Gabriel Lewis, Robert Morris, and others. There is also a splendid series of about ninety letters by William T. Sherman from 1861 to 1891, nearly all of them being on military matters. It would be very difficult to deny the importance of the Clinton H. Haskell Collection as a gift to the Library. But equally impressive is the manner in which the collection came to us. Librarians, dealers, and collectors frequently expound in public on the value of cooperation between one another, but privately they act as librarians, dealers and collectors have usually acted—with a careful eye to the interest of self. In the matter of the Clinton H. Haskell Collection, the manuscripts were given to the Library at the suggestion of Associate Forest H. Sweet of Battle Creek, a dealer in American autographs who believes in cooperation between dealers, collectors and librarians as firmly as we do. Giving a large collection to a library involves a good deal of physical labor, such as the compiling of lists, checking, sorting, and arranging materials, not to mention packing and shipping. We librarians are often amazed at the patience of collectors and dealers; particularly so in the present instance, for we know that both Mr Haskell and Mr Sweet spent many hours preparing the collection for delivery to the Library. We are, therefore, grateful to both of these Associates on several counts—for the gift of the collection, for their cooperation, and for the physical labor involved.

It is difficult to decide which of the two letters in the Clinton H. Haskell Collection is the most attractive of the entire collection. One is our first letter by George Washington from Valley Forge in 1778; the other is a three-page letter from Atlanta, Georgia, by William T. Sherman. Probably the Sherman letter is more eye-catching than the Washington. The townspeople of Lancaster, Ohio, raised $1700 for the purchase of a horse for Sherman; the letter we have in mind, written on September 29, 1864, describes Sherman’s horses and the qualities he wants in a new horse.

I have with me one very valuable horse “Duke” presented me at Louisville that suits my style of riding exactly, and I also have some six others of various kinds that do very well for the March and for the knocks about among our Lines, trains of wagons & camps &. The horse to be suited to me should be a free, bold walker, trotter, and canter. Especially, the former. He should take at a leap anything in reason, such as a fence, gully, or log. Should he be well bitted to the curb, and not afraid of anything. Thus far I have had but four such, three of which are dead and one was killed under me, the fourth I still have in fair order . . .