The Apoplectic General

When Col. Charles Stedman published his History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American War (London, 1794), he pulled no punches. An American Loyalist who served with the British throughout the war, he admired the commanders but little. In his account of the southern campaign he favored Cornwallis and Rawdon over Sir Henry Clinton. This was still a sore matter with Clinton, and his blood pressure reached the boil ing point when he read Stedman’s two volumes. Pen in hand, he filled the margins with contradictory statements and exclamations, then sent the copy to a friend. Rushing out to buy another copy, he annotated that to protect his military reputation.

George Parker Winship wrote that he had seen four copies of Stedman annotated by Clinton. While this anxiety was making a market for the book, it was hard on Clinton’s purse. He could never hope to correct all the copies. So he organized his criticisms and published a pamphlet in reply called Observations on Mr. Stedman’s History of the American War (London, 1794). Stedman had been a provincial officer, but he was retired on half pay. Clinton’s slighting reference to him as “Mr.” could not have escaped his attention.

Curiously enough Clinton did not himself keep one of his annotated copies of Stedman. Consequently, none came with his papers to the Library. We were overjoyed when one came on the market last fall, and the Associates Executive Committee picked it up for us. There is some reason to believe it may have been the first copy Clinton vented his spleen on. It contains some comments not included in his essay.

A happy coincidence should be mentioned here. Just as the purchase was being made, Dr. Arthur B. McGraw, a Detroit Associate, presented the Library with a plain copy of Stedman. Since we already had such a copy, he generously allowed it to be traded in on the much more expensive annotated copy. That was an intelligent and liberal contribution, and Dr. McGraw has our gratitude.

Holiday Sale

The sale of W. J. Holliday’s library of Western Americana in New York last month was a high spot of this season’s auctions. High prices were realized, and we were relieved that most of the titles were later in date than the period we emphasize. We bid on a few of the earlier items, lost some, and secured some. Our acquisitions are three eighteenth century travel accounts, the first gazetteer of Indiana (1826), and Kelley’s Geographical Sketch of Oregon (1850) with the first map of Oregon.

They [Congress] are, it must be confessed, a strange set of beings, and often do what is beyond my comprehension to account for, and more frequently leave undone things which appear to me indispensably necessary to be done; but I cannot find that there is in them as a body that malevolent disposition which the conduct of individuals among them often indicates.”—Colonel Charles Pettit to Major General Nathanael Greene, 1780 July 28.

New Services

As a means of making known the contents of this Library in particular fields, we have started issuing checklists of our holdings in subject areas corresponding to the teaching departments on campus. In this way the professors in those departments are made acquainted with materials relevant to their interests which they might not expect to find in the Clements Library or even at the university. We hope, of course, that they will be stimulated to undertake some research as a result, and that the list will be suggestive to graduate students who are looking for topics for their doctoral dissertations.

Three lists have been issued in mimeographed form. They are on Astronomy, Philosophy, and Classical Authors. Among our early geographies are a number of astronomical works, besides pamphlets on comets, etc., issued in this country. In the field of American philosophy we have numerous titles from each of the five fields of thought recognized before about 1820. Our classical authors are represented chiefly in translation for their first American editions. Let us quickly add, in this day of absurd references to Steinbeck, Fitzgerald, and Eliot as “classics,” that we refer to the ancient Greek and Roman writers.

A checklist in the field of geology is being prepared and will be followed by lists for botany and zoology. Obviously, we shall not issue checklists for the departments of history, economics, geography, or political science simply because we have too much material in those fields. Rather, we are trying to make known our holdings to those departments that would not normally expect to find anything here in their fields.
The Brave Volunteer

By Julia A. Moore
"The Sweet Singer of Michigan"

At the time of the rebellion
Between the north and south,
Many a noble volunteer
Kent county did send out.

Among them was Chylle Davis,
He hailed from Oakfield town,
He enlisted in the service,
His native land to shield.

This brave and noble volunteer,
He left his home and friends,
For he dearly loved his country,
He went from Michigan.

Not thinking when he went down south,
The Federal ranks to fill,
That he would lay in prisons,
Belle Isle to Andersonville.

In prison cells lamenting,
For seventeen months he lay,
Thinking of the dear ones
At home so far away.

He lay in prison suffering,
No friend to hear him moan,
A living, walking skeleton,
He was when he came home.

He was discharged in Kansas,
The place called Fort Leavenworth,
And he did return to Oakfield,
The place he first went forth.

How joyful were his parents
When they saw their then lost one;
The God of heaven was merciful
To let return their son.

(We thought you'd like it, in this day of modern obscure poetry, with its symbolism and irregular forms.)

Associates Purchase

The Associates' Executive Committee met in March to consider a new group of purchases for the Library. They seized the opportunity to obtain a book of exploration and the pamphlets it provoked. Captain John Meares visited the northwest coast of America and established England's claim to Oregon in 1788. His ships were seized by the Spaniards, and Britain had to negotiate for their release, at the same time winning recognition by Spain of England's prior rights to the area north of California. Meares' book is called Voyages made in the years 1788 to 1789 (London, 1790).

Upon its publication the volume was attacked by Captain George Dixon, another naval officer, who disputed some of Meares' facts because he (Dixon) had been along that coast himself, although farther north. His snorting appeared in pamphlet form. Meares huffed and puffed and replied to Dixon in another pamphlet. Dixon came back with a rebuttal in 1791. These three pamphlets are exceedingly rare, being more valuable than the Voyages. We are glad to have the whole incident in the four titles.

Richard Mather revealed a controversy in the New England churches when he wrote A Disputation concerning church members and their children (London, 1659). An assembly of divines in Boston, two years earlier, discussed church membership for children. They decided that baptized children, when grown, should fulfill their church covenant by joining the church. If they refused then baptism should be denied to their children. This solution of an old question aroused more strife than it pacified, and required a second meeting of elders in 1662 to evolve a "half way covenant" as a compromise. Anyway, the Library is now informed of the smouldering affair.

To our literature of Indian capricities, the Associates added five new titles, containing the stories of Mary Jenison, Jackson Johonnet, Mrs. Johnson, Oliver M. Spencer, and Zadock Steele. It was a nice sweep. To our reservoir of Revolutionary material we were able to add a legal case, the Arguments and judgments of the mayor's court of New York (New York, 1784), regarding the use of a brewery seized by Tories and operated during the war. The owner, a widow, sued the state for damages since it was paying damage claims to other patriots who had suffered trespass by the enemy. The court decided that use of the brewery was valid trespass in only part of the war, and therefore the widow should get only part of the damages she sought. We would like to add that the court then adjourned to the brewery for a round, but evidence is lacking; possibly they didn't like the brand and thought the Tories got a weak beverage.

We had boundary troubles in the 1790's, not only over Detroit and Mackinac, but over the lower Mississippi with the Spaniards. By Pinckney's treaty of 1795, we succeeded to the Spanish posts on the east side of the river, but there was delay in delivery. Senator Blount organized an expedition to use force, Spain stalled, Britain got involved, and Blount got expelled from the U.S. Senate. (It can happen.) The Spanish minister at Philadelphia issued a pamphlet to clarify his country's stand entitled Letters of Verus in 1797, which the Associates purchased.

Lastly the Library was enriched by the addition of four manuscript journals kept by members of the Bonsall family of Philadelphia. They were Quakers who developed a concern for the welfare of the Senecas in western New York. In 1803 and 1806 they visited the Seneca reservation to see how the Indians were developing as farmers and smiths. In 1829 they paid another visit, then proceeded into eastern Ohio to visit relatives and other Quaker friends. The journals are a mine of information about early settlements and Indian relations.
A Crooning Mather

When Cotton Mather wrote The Accomplished Singer (Boston, 1721), he was adding his noted opinion to a hot controversy over church music. The question was not one of whether there should be music in the Puritan churches—music, such as it was, was an accepted part of the services. This particular debate centered around the quality of the singing brought forth in a joyful noise unto the Lord.

In most of the churches, congregational singing consisted of repeating lines after a leader had "lined them out," a traditional practice dating back to early Protestantism when many church members were illiterate. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, it was evident to many that this manner of rote singing was resulting in less and less adherence to the established tunes, for each untutored worshipper tended to launch out for himself in concert with others equally ill contained.

To overcome this musical deficiency, the reformers urged a study of note reading in singing schools and the practical application of such knowledge to the services. The conservatives argued that such drilling in musical form would lead straight back to the uniform liturgy and worse, of the church from which they had broken; and furthermore those who had gained skill in singing "fa-sol-la" in such secular institutions as the tavern would be among the leaders in the new singing.

During the squabble, in at least one church, according to the records, both factions performed simultaneously. In another, upon hearing the radicals in the ascendency, the conservatives walked out of the services in wrath, righteous, no doubt.

Eventually, aided by various pamphlets and pronouncements such as Cotton Mather's, the new way triumphed, and the singing master became an important member of the community.

The Clements Library, through the Ely fund, recently acquired the Lemuel Welles copy of The Accomplished Singer, one of 11 known copies. This copy is particularly interesting because it has two title pages. Soon after the book was printed a revised title page with slightly altered wording was issued to paste over the original one. Happily, the instructions were not followed in this copy and the second title page with a half title is stitched before the original one, as may be seen in the illustration.

Mather bolsters his case first with familiar Biblical and Calvinist references, and then come to the point in the last three pages of his 24-page tract when he admonishes:

It would be very desirable, that people, (and especially our young people, who are most in the years of discipline) would more generally learn to sing and become able to sing by rule, and keep to the notes of the tunes . . . It has been found . . . their singing has degenerated, into an odd noise . . . We ought certainly to serve our God with our best, and regular singing must needs be better than the confused noise of a wilderness.

His more or less historical treatise does not contain technical instructions.

Third Adams Lecture

The Executive Committee of the Associates is pleased to announce that Dr. Julian P. Boyd, of Princeton University, will deliver the third Randolph G. Adams Memorial Lecture next October. The specific date is October 13, which we ask you to reserve now. It conflicts with no other major university event.

Dr. Boyd, an old friend of the late Dr. Adams, is a graduate of Duke University in the field of American history. From 1934 to 1940 he was librarian of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and then was appointed librarian of Princeton University. In 1950 Princeton began publishing the new definitive edition of the Thomas Jefferson writings, and Dr. Boyd was selected as editor. This tremendous project is still going on under his capable direction. Two years ago Dr. Boyd resigned from the library to become professor of history and continue his editorial responsibilities.

A recognized scholar, he has also edited The Susquehannah Company Papers and Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin. He is the author of Anglo-American Union and a book on the Declaration of Independence. Dr. Boyd is a member of several learned societies and an able speaker. Associates will enjoy hearing him and meeting him.
Colton Storm Leaves
Colton Storm, assistant director of the Clements Library for the past six years, has resigned to become Director of the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, effective June 1.

Mr. Storm came to the Library in 1942 as Curator of Maps. He became Curator of Manuscripts in 1945 and was drafted for administrative work by the Director in 1948. After Dr. Adams' death in 1951 he carried on responsibility for the Library for more than two years. For the first six years of the Associates' existence he served the Executive Committee as secretary. He is also president of The Manuscript Society, a national organization.

Mr. Storm's promotion returns him to a region with which he is familiar. He is a graduate of Oberlin College, and his wife was reared in Cleveland. The Western Reserve Historical Society maintains a distinguished library and a museum, besides carrying on other activities. They may be expected to flourish under Mr. Storm's practiced hand. He carries with him the earnest good wishes of the Committee of Management, the Associates' Executive Committee, and his colleagues at the Library.

Alumni Notes
The departure of Mr. Storm recalls other pending and past promotions of staff members to other institutions. John Weatherford, half-time cataloger in the Manuscript Division, leaves in June with a new degree in library science to become manuscripts librarian in the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society at Columbus. He has served us well, and we congratulate our neighbor on obtaining him.

His predecessor, John Parker, left in August 1953 to become curator of the Bell Collection of rare books in the University of Minnesota Library, where he has distinguished himself.

Mrs. Marian Carroll, former cataloger, is now chief of the reference division in the library of St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York.

Another staff member, Charles Sargent, who departed in 1952 is now curator of the Kansas historical collection in the University of Kansas Library. Mrs. Rosalie Spellman, former cataloger here, is cataloging at the library too. During the past year she has written the Home Study courses in Library Science for use in Kansas.

Two older "alumni" are Lloyd A. Brown, now director of the Peabody Library, Baltimore, and Douglas Bryant, now administrative assistant librarian at Harvard University Library.

Training of persons to administer manuscript and rare book collections is an inevitable function of this Library that is now taking on greater dimensions.

Associates who paid their dues last spring may wonder at not receiving notices this spring. You may not recall that the Executive Committee decided last year to collect dues from everyone at the same time once a year, to simplify bookkeeping. October is the month for payment, and notices will be sent out at that time.

Ethan Allen Two-Bagger
Two titles this Library have long lacked were the works of that old Revolutionaryist and deist, Ethan Allen. The Narrative (Philadelphia, 1779) of his British captivity during the war, and his Reason the only Oracle of Man (Bennington, 1784) are important pieces of Americana by any standard. The former, moreover, is extremely scarce and therefore high priced. When a copy suddenly turned up this winter, the Associates Executive Committee readily agreed to grab it. The availability coincided neatly with an inquiry we had put out.

To add to our good fortune the Bennington title turned up a few weeks later, and the Library seized it. Thus after years of famine, we suddenly feasted on the hard bitten old Vermonter who could philosophize as well as fight. He could even inspire poets. One of them lampooned him once with some lines that refer to our books but otherwise have little truth or beauty in them. They begin:

Lo Allen escaped from British jails,
His tushes broke by biting nails,
Appears in hyperborean skies
To tell the world the Bible lies.

Squads Right
When the Revolutionary War began we had only a scattering of men with previous military experience, and that often in the ill-disciplined militia. Military training as we see it today was almost unknown except among the small professional armies of Europe. Our conscientious officers, as soon as they were appointed, tried to read up on their duties, but very few books on discipline were available. Not until Baron von Steuben modified the Prussian method for the Americans and published his regulations in 1778 did a real system develop.

Meanwhile, Thomas Hanson, "adjutant to the 2d Battalion, and teacher of part of the American Militia," made his contribution in 1775. He compiled The Prussian Regulations in Actual Engagements, based on exhibitions they had made in 1769 and 1771, and illustrated them with thirty drawings. Then to find a printer he had first to obtain subscriptions to his book. Their names, printed at the front of the volume, read like a Who's Who of Revolutionary Leaders, from John Adams to George Washington. The book was printed at Philadelphia in 1775.

Yet it is unexpectedly rare. One copy is known, in the Boston Athenaeum. When a second copy in original boards, uncut, came up at auction this spring, we jumped. Yup, we caught it.