Board of Governors

The Associates' Board of Governors met at the Library on June 14. They reviewed the funds available to the Library so as to understand its financial support. Membership has stayed close to five hundred the past four years. Renville Wheat of Detroit was re-elected chairman, and James Watkins, also of Detroit, vice chairman. Dr. Lawrence Reynolds, Mrs. Benjamin Warren, and James Shearer II were elected to serve with the two officers as an executive committee.

Ideas for membership promotion were discussed. Some prospective purchases of the Library were shown, and the Board agreed to buy Herrera's Historia (see another column). The next meeting is set for November 2.

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Manuscript Maps

A stellar addition to the Division of Maps and Prints was made with the purchase of a collection of sixty-five colored, manuscript maps of the St. Lawrence Valley executed by British Army engineers in 1761-1769.

After the British captured Canada, General Amherst wanted some graphic idea of what he had won in the way of settlements and topography. The principal French settlements lay along the St. Lawrence between Montreal and Quebec—at least it was the area of thickest continuous settlement. Through Gen. James Murray he asked that some engineers be detailed to traverse the river and make a series of maps delineating the region. Our old cartographic friend, John Montresor, did the principal work.

There are several views of Montreal to show how the British took it, and then successive segments of the river on a scale large enough to show each farm, parish, and town. The statistical information that was collected about population is added to each map. When the engineers came to the Richelieu River, they turned upstream (southward) and followed it down to Lake Champlain. Then they resumed their survey of the St. Lawrence and passed through Three Rivers and on to Quebec. Three of the maps detail the three stages of the battle for Quebec in 1759. Here again the engineers followed up a tributary, the Chaudiere, that flows out of Maine. The sixty-five maps are a sequence that could be laid out on a huge floor to form one enormous map. Each map measures approximately 20 by 28 inches, so that when laid side by side they would extend more than 150 feet in length!

Such an acquisition increases our holding of manuscript maps by ten percent and provides a body of cartographic material in which historical and geographical research can be done. Expensive as the purchase was, it is preferable to adding maps one at a time.

Herrera At Last

When Mr. Clements published his book about the Library in 1929 he expressed a longing for a first edition of the Historia General de los Hechos de los Castellanos, by Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, published at Madrid in eight parts during the years 1601-1615. Now we are happy to say we have acquired it, even though it has grown scarcer in the intervening years.

Herrera was appointed official historian of Castile and the Indies by Philip II of Spain, a position which he continued to occupy during the two succeeding reigns. As official historian Herrera was given access to documents and unpublished manuscripts which were unavailable to other writers. For example, he drew heavily on Bartolomé de las Casas' manuscript of Historia de las Indias, which was not published until 1875-76. Many of his other manuscript sources have long since disappeared.

Almost all critics agree that Herrera belongs in the first rank of early Spanish writers and that his most significant work is the Historia, which relates in strict chronological order the history of the Spanish American colonies from 1492 to 1554. Many have felt that Herrera’s strict adherence to the chronology of events was detrimental to his literary style; nevertheless the work is notable for its abundance of detail and its unprejudiced treatment of the Spanish conquests in the New World. It is in the Historia that the first officially sanctioned account of Columbus’ voyages appears, and the work also provides the most complete and accurate information on the conquest of Mexico. It is, according to many critics, an indispensable source to
any student of American aboriginal people.

Our copy is bound in five volumes in original vellum. It contains all of the fourteen maps as well as the separate ninth part, called the Descripción de las Indias Occidentales. The title pages of each part are lavishly illustrated with portraits of the Conquistadores and with scenes representing Spanish triumphs in the New World.

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**Fair Weather Friend**

Hugh Gaine, prominent colonial printer and bookseller, strove to be impartial during the early days of the American Revolution, but as first one side and then the other gained ascendency in New York, his loyalties perforce followed his livelihood. Though he was in no sense a polemicist, excerpts from his writings reflect political pressures. For example, the “Continental Army” became the “rebels” when the British occupied New York. At any rate, Gaine entered the fray as a Whig, then swung cautious sympathies to the British, and finished the war with pro-American gestures.

He was clearly on the right side in 1774 when he began the publication of Gaine’s Universal Register, or, American and British Kalendar. Recently, we secured a fine copy of the first issue to complement a previous holding for the following year. In 1774, there is no equivocation in his prefatory remarks “To the Inhabitants of America.” He declares: “At this time, when all America is united in one great political compact, for their common security, it is certainly necessary that we should be furnish’d with as intimate a knowledge as can be obtained of every province.”

And among the miscellaneous pieces in this compendium is found the “American Bill of Rights” extracted from the proceedings of the Continental Congress in which the colonists demand treatment as true Englishmen and not merely as colonists. He follows this with a reprinting of the stronger stuff of the anti-importation resolves proclaimed by the Association of the Continental Congress.

However, at this early time of decision, the printer, like the framers of these declarations, is still an Englishman within, and not without, the realm.

For, aside from the pieces just mentioned and a “List of Delegates in the Late Congress,” the handbook unconsciously designates America as a British colony. There are genealogies of the royal family and of the nobility, lists of English officials including the staff of the army in North America, official rosters of the royal provincial governments, and a register of goods subject to duties in America.

The publication continued annually for twenty years; it is interesting to note that the issues beginning with 1786 have a new subtitle; it is no longer the “British Kalendar,” but the “Columbian Kalendar.”

Gaine does carry out his promise of describing the provinces, even to including abbreviated catalogs of the various colleges. The academic mind today might speculate whether there was any connection between the size of the faculty at Rhode Island College, now Brown University: twelve “fellows,” and the amount of the tuition: twelve dollars per year!

Besides its general informational nature, our little book incorporates many of the characteristic features of an almanac: the calendar and eclipses, tide tables, a list of fairs in the province of New York, tables of interest and currency values, roads and postal rates. But there are no recipes and husbandry hints for the anxious farmer; this guide is for the sophisticated reader seeking specific information.

Often the owners of almanacs or registers used them for personal records and account books, and interleaved copies were sold for that purpose. Though the first edition is important for primacy and content, it lacks the tantalizing interest of our issue for 1776. On one of its blank leaves appear some manuscript notes inscribed by an unknown citizen and dated Dec. 1776: “I sent to Broth. Wm.’s house for the use of the officers: 1 square mahogany table, 5 straw bottom chairs, 1 round wooden chair, 1 high back chair, 1 maple table, 1 looking glass, 1 basket with 6 wine glasses, 1 iron andirons, 1 writing desk, 2 leather bottom chairs, 1 servants bed. [To General Clinton: 1 pr. brass andirons.” Incidentally, the printed matter, though similar in most respects to its predecessor, contains none of the political proclamations so boldly presented in 1774. Obviously, our ambivalent manuals could please a purchaser from either side.

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**DUES**

Notices are going out in October for renewal of memberships in the Clements Library Associates. We hope all our readers will continue in this bibliofellowship. If you know an interested friend, by all means send us his or her name, and we shall forward an invitation.

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**The Far East**

The Summer Session theme of Asian cultures did not permit a library of Americana to exhibit much. However, we were not barren. We had some early accounts of travelers into the Far East and some early maps of the Orient. Then we had some charming color prints by Japanese showing Admiral Perry’s reception and the first Yankee traders. A Japanese who visited America in the nineteenth century kept a sketch book of the sights that appealed to him, and we own it. We also have a few Philippine manuscripts.
Arouse, Sir Billy!

Sir William Howe's inactivity during the first months of 1778, while he amused himself in captured Philadelphia, was as irritating to the British government and American Loyalists as it has been inexplicable to historians ever since. The commander-in-chief literally took time out and ceased making war. Not only did he love to drink and gamble and attend the theater; he had found an agreeable mistress in an officer's agreeable wife. This was one of the least kept secrets of the war. It is not to be wondered at that a literary Congressman, Francis Hopkinson, should poke fun at an enemy general with a song that included such lines as:

Sir William, he, as snug as a flea
Lay all this time a-storin;
Nor dreamed of harm, as he lay warm
In bed with Mrs. Loring.

However, even the Loyalists tried to arouse the lazy Howe with stinging barbs. One anonymous poem that has become famous continued this stanza:

Awake, arouse, Sir Billy,
There's forage in the plain.
Leave your little filly
And open the campaign.

Howe had already resigned his command. He could hardly have survived taunts of this kind. Once a general has been held up to ridicule, it is almost impossible for him to inspire confidence again. Once more an example of the pen parring the sword.

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Tears of the Indians

It is one of the ironies of history that the most powerful piece of anti-Spanish propaganda to appear in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was written by a Spanish citizen. The author, Bartolomé de las Casas, born in Seville in 1474, was a Dominican friar who had spent a considerable part of his life in the West Indies. Though the purpose of his writings was not to bring his native country into disrepute, such was their effect throughout Europe.

Las Casas was admitted to the Dominican order in 1510 in Haiti, being the first priest ordained in the Spanish-American colonies. As a resident of Cuba from 1511 to 1516 he was the witness of a number of shocking cruelties to the natives on the part of the Spanish conquerors, including a massacre which he was powerless to prevent. Again during an eight-year residence at a Dominican monastery in Santo Domingo, and during visits to Mexico, Peru, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, he both saw and heard of similar persecutions. Las Casas returned to Spain at least once, and possibly twice, on behalf of the oppressed natives. In 1516 his visit resulted in Cardinal Jiménez designating him the "protector of the Indians" and appointing a commis-

ADAMS LECTURE

The Randolph G. Adams Memorial Lecture, which usually occurs in October, is scheduled for November 12 this year. Invitations will be mailed. The speaker is Prof. Clinton H. Rossiter, distinguished author of Cornell University. His topic is "Hommage to John Adams." Keep the date open, please.

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Digging Back

A constant temptation in this Library is to spread the acquisitions over too broad a period of time. Rarities are offered dealing with the Civil War, with the rise of industrialism, with the Spanish-American War, with the Progressive movement, with World War I and World War II, and with the New Deal. Many such titles are going into the General Library, where they belong.

Our field is still early American. To become a great research library we need depth rather than breadth. A collection of "high spots" along a wide front has its attractions, but its research use is limited for every scholar. He would find only a few titles relevant to his subject because of the immense miscellany. It was rather Mr. Clements' purpose to create a grand pool of resources within a limited time period. He was conservationist enough to want to save the obscure so as to bring it to the attention of researchers. Hence, in these last four years we
have renewed the Library's search for older books and adhered closely to the terminal date of 1890. The older books simply grow scarcer, and we must fill our gaps when we can. A little statistical digging brought to light a satisfying figure. In the four-year period from 1949 to 1953, the Library acquired 94 books printed before 1700. In the last four years, 1953 to 1957, the Library added 94 books before 1700. Some of them were books that Mr. Clements or Dr. Adams never had an opportunity to buy. Some of them were much higher priced in the 1920's than they are today, owing to fashions in collecting. Some were titles that were bid on and lost. We feel fortunate to make such a showing, and we hope to continue this pace or accelerate it. Such early acquisitions strengthen our foundation; or, in our favorite tortured metaphor, "undergird the overview."

Gone With the Wind

William Faulkner and Erskine Caldwell did not originate the literary school of southern degradation. A Virginia poet of 1795 paints a melancholy picture of corruption, laziness, and decay in a three-page poem about his mother's plantation, called Richland. He entitled it The Disasters of Richland and then proceeds to enumerate them. The roof leaked, the broken windows were boarded up, the porches were falling in, fences were down, and the garden has gone to weeds. The land lies ruined, overrun by the domestic animals that consume everything and even scar the saplings.

The negroes plunder all the trees
And eat green fruit to sick'na and
grape 'em,
While not a morsel's left to ripen.
The Overseer, with strike and
jarrings,
Keeps all the family a warring.
After a thin harvest, the wheat is
poured into a roofless barn, corn
is eaten by the cows, tobacco is not
even gathered in because it's so
cheap.
The people who attend the mill
Are quarreling with the miller
still,
Dispute accounts, and make a
pother,
Which almost serves to kill my
mother.
Who with her cares and debts perplex'd,
So oft is cross'd, so often vex'd,
So often melancholy sits,
'Tis wonderful she keeps her wits.
Just add a little incess, and the
setting is complete for another Tobacco Road.

Ha, ha! Not Ho, ho!
The enlightenment of the eighteenth century is seen at its beginning in Benjamin Colman's remarkable sermon on The Government and Improvement of Mirth According to the Laws of Christianity (Boston 1707). The book consists of three sermons delivered two years earlier. They helped destroy the somberness of seventeenth century sermonizing.

To the astonishment of many New Englanders, the Rev. Mr. Colman proceeds to defend mirth (he means joyfulness) as a Christian's right. He quotes scripture to indicate that Paul expected the new converts to find joy in their salvation. He argues from nature that man would not have such a faculty within himself if God did not intend it to be used.

Of course, there are dangers from excess. "Carnal and vicious merriment is to be condemned and avoided." It may be "the death of Charity"; it "hoots modesty and fear away"; "sensual lusts are made up of levity." He is sure of the benefits, however, for mirth refreshes the spirit, preserves health, encourages friendship, and promotes cheerful worship. The whole attitude is that a dismal, mournful pi-

The Extremes

We have been asked about the largest and smallest books in the Library. Not counting our atlases, the tallest is one of the volumes in the set known as Vol de Humboldt et Bonpland, published in Paris from 1805 to 1834. This volume in the set of natural history is Baron von Humboldt's Vues des Cordillères et les Monuments des Peuples Indigènes de l'Amérique (Paris 1810), a book of text and plates. It measures 23 inches high by 16½ inches wide.

The smallest is the anonymous Life and Services of Gen. Pierce (Baltimore 1854), printed as a novel campaign biography when Pierce was running for President. It measures an inch and a half high by three-quarters of an inch wide and has sixteen pages. It was a gift to the Library.

How do we shelve these books? The big one is laid on its side in the newspaper range. The tiny one is enclosed in a special slipcase made four inches high so that it would not get pushed behind other books and lost.

The Year's Plays

Seven plays were added last year to our collection of dramas printed in America before 1830. Two of them represent old familiar plots: Cinderella (New York 1808) and George Colman's Blue Beard (New York 1809). Old themes seem to survive better on the stage than in novels.