Official Business

Both the Associates' Board of Governors and the Library's Committee of Management are meeting in June to transact accumulated business. We expect to have major news to publish in our next issue.

On Founder's Day, April 1, one of the largest crowds ever to assemble heard Prof. George Kish speak on scientific investigations that remain to be made in the kind of material we possess. We also honored Prof. Verner W. Crane, who goes on retirement furlough at the end of Summer Session. Mr. Crane has served on the Committee of Management for twenty-eight years, longer than anyone else. In recognition of his services, his fellow Committee members authorized the making of a charcoal portrait to hang in the director's office with the pictures of other eminent historians on the University faculty in the past.

Cook's Sample Cloth

When Captain James Cook's expedition returned (without the captain) from his third voyage around the world in 1780, it brought to England a large assortment of products from the South Seas. We have the various accounts of the voyage because it explored the northwest coast of America.

One Alexander Shaw of London became interested in the bolts of cloth from Cook's ship. From the published account of the voyage he extracted a description of cloth making in the South Sea islands (actually it was a bark pounded thin) and identified the place of manufacture and the use of 39 different samples. He printed his extract and list as a pamphlet in 1787 and bound with it swatches of the cloth, sometimes two to a page, sometimes four. He says he made up only a few such copies for his friends. In his enthusiasm he usually included more than one sample of certain varieties, and so his book ordinarily contains 45 to 60 swatches. This volume we had always lacked, until we found an extraordinary example which we felt we must obtain to complete our collection on Cook.

Shaw admitted on the last page of his essay that additional samples of cloth could be seen at his shop. When a copy fell into the hands of Thomas Pennant, noted English naturalist, he apparently hustled down to Shaw's shop, picked out all the samples he could find, and cut them to full page size. These he bound with the essay, interleaving the samples and producing a fat volume of 92 large swatches. Since more than half of them were outside the brief descriptive list supplied by Shaw, Pennant interviewed some of Cook's sailors and identified in full all the remaining pieces of cloth. He wrote on the blank interleaves where, when, and by whom each sample of cloth was used. The notes are a treasury of ethnological information.

This is the largest of the sample books known and is probably unique. Some of the cloth is as fine as lace or netting; other pieces are exquisitely colored in primitive designs. We would put the book on display if we dared cut into the binding and extract the cloth samples singly so as to show them all at once.

The Rain of Manuscripts

It has been an unusual season for manuscript collections, better than has been experienced for more than a decade. First we were able to add to two small groups we held and enlarge them into respectable collections. Thus, we have long held about a hundred letters and accounts of John Holker, Philadelphia merchant of French descent. During the Revolution he was authorized to supply the French fleet sent to American waters; after the war he speculated in western iron furnaces and western lands. The opportunity arose for us to add 250 letters, and now we have a significant Holker lot.

Similarly, at the auction sale of James McHenry's papers fourteen years ago we were able to pick only about a hundred items. His approximately two thousand letters were dispersed to the four winds. Last winter we aggressively reassembled 350 of those letters to give us a total of 400 pieces, the largest lot of McHenry items in any one place. He was Secretary of War in the last year of President Washington's administration and under President Adams. As frosting to this cake, James S. Schoff of New York City rewarded our efforts by presenting us with McHenry's 1778 diary which he had purchased at the old McHenry sale! It covers the exciting period of the Battle of Monmouth and the summer maneuvers.

Then from the direct descendant of Gen. Anthony Wayne we bought some 600 letters and accounts of the general's Post-Revolutionary career. It recounts his disastrous life in Georgia in the 1780's when he tried to become a rice planter, and his glorious career as commander-in-chief in the Old Northwest in the 1790's. His correspondence with his subordinate officers at the several forts, with the western governors and army suppliers, and with the secretaries of war affords a detailed
New Friend and an Old One

The famous voyage to the Northwest Coast of America by Capt. George Vancouver has been represented peculiarly on this campus. The General Library has an Italian translation; this Library has the French translation. Nobody had the plain old English first edition. The three volumes of text turn up every now and then (London 1798), but rarely does the atlas volume accompany them. When we found a complete set offered, we decided we ought to repair our deficiency.

At the same time, we were tempted by an old friend—Col. Tarleton's History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781 (London 1787). We have the book, but we were offered a copy filled with marginal notes (usually critical) by Sir Henry Clinton, Tarleton's commander-in-chief.

While we were meditating on buying one book or the other, Jim Shearer turned up with the blessed words: "Why don't you order both and send me the bill?" There's only one answer to that kind of question: we did, and they did, and he did.

Echoes

An old friend of the Library, Dr. Joseph Fields of Joliet, gave us several books and manuscripts recently. One was a superb letter from Lucy Knox to her husband, Gen. Henry Knox, in 1777. Even though she calls him "my dearest friend," she expresses her emotions more explicitly and intimately in other sentences. It is a heartfelt letter, indicating that the feelings of a soldier's wife in war time change not at all from age to age.

Two of the books remind us of an original quarrel. One is the proceedings of the Boston town meeting in November 1773 concerning the tea tax (they rejected it); the other is the Parliamentary act closing the port of Boston in 1774 (for dumping the cargo of tea). Minor decisions, perhaps, but they were the fuse that led to the powder keg.

War of 1812 Growth

Looking over our recent acquisitions, we find we have been able to add 57 titles on the War of 1812, 48 of them sermons. These latter items may appear odd and unimportant, but public opinion, especially in New England, was sharply divided over the wisdom of declaring war. Nothing reflects that division better than sermons, some of them regretting the war, others decriing it, and some supporting it.

Among the other items are a detail of the Battle of New Orleans (actually fought after the war ended but before news of the treaty reached here); a patriotic song ("Come, Freedom's Sons, and Join the Choir"); a pamphlet relative to the war riot in Baltimore (bought from our Philadelphia Alumni Fund); and the Affecting Narrative of Louisa Baker, who disguised herself as a man and served a hitch in the U. S. Marines, no kidding! She was not exactly a patriotic innocent, since she had just fled a bawdy house in Boston. Her word is reliable, her identity was never discovered. Fie on the Marines!

Then we obtained a satirical piece entitled The Adventures of Uncle Sam, in Search After His Lost Honor (Middletown, 1816). The unknown author used the extravagant pseudonym of Frederick Augustus Fidaddly. Besides being critical of the war, it happens to be the first book to designate the United States by the personal name of "Uncle Sam!"
The Indestructible Mr. Shaw
Two of the rarest books published in the Old West, which we have been seeking for years, suddenly came our way within a month of each other. They are as desirable as anything that might be named after Filson's Kentucky, 1784.

One bears the amusing title of A Narrative of the Life & Travels of John Robert Shaw, the Well-Digger, Lexington, 1807. It is full of action, as Shaw, a Revolutionary War veteran, modestly claims to have been “five different times a soldier, three times shipwrecked, twelve months a prisoner of war, and four times blown up.” When he landed in Kentucky in 1791, he took up the profession of well-digger, a strange occupation since he was allergic to water and too fond of the bottle. His adventures have a picturesque, eighteenth-century flavor à la Fielding or Smollett that entitle the book to be called the first work of literary worth published west of the Alleghenies. In addition, it is reputed to be the first illustrated book printed in the West.

It also turns out that our copy is only the second perfect one known, the other being at the University of Kentucky. The seven other known copies are incomplete, usually lacking plates or page 181, which contains an additional list of subscribers.

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The Indefatiguable Mr. Toulmin
The other book is by an energetic Englishman named Harry Toulmin (1766–1839) who became enamored of America and wrote A Description of Kentucky to encourage emigration. It was published in London with the date 1792 on it, although it carries an insertion dated early in 1793. Taking his own advice, the Rev. Mr. Toulmin immediately came to this country, met Jefferson and Madison, and journeyed on to Kentucky where he was elected president of Transylvania University. In 1804 he was appointed a judge in Mississippi Territory and spent the rest of his life as a force for law and order in the deep South. He edited the laws of Kentucky, Mississippi, and Alabama.

Toulmin calls himself an editor and he borrowed heavily from Imlay, Jefferson, Bartram, Morse, and others. The book is eminently practical, dealing with prices, expenses, products, communications, Indians, etc. The man’s enthusiasm was contagious.

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Exhibitions
In conjunction with the Mexican exhibition at the Art Museum and the campus symposium on Mexican art, we brought out our best early Mexican books. The exhibition was accompanied by an explanatory bulletin, colorfully printed, which was mailed to Associates.

By June we were ready for a new show, and in this month our thoughts lighted to love, to coin a phrase. We have long wanted to exhibit our early and extraordinary views of Niagara Falls, as much a marvel to early explorers as it is a sight for modern tourists. We call the exhibition “Honeymooners’ Delight” in hope of attracting more students inside the front doors.

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Antiques
The interior furnishings of the Clements Library are as tasteful as the architectural design of the building. The Main Room, panelled in English style, is furnished with late 17th century period pieces. The Rare Book Room is furnished in 18th century style. Since the Library is used by the University on certain important official occasions, we are anxious that the air of elegance be maintained in all “appointments.” Here we are thinking of English silver pieces or Venetian glass of the 17th and 18th centuries. We know that such items are no longer in decorating style, and when estates are settled sometimes a question arises about the disposal of certain pieces of silver and glass—exhibition pieces rather than useful items in a modern home. If any of our Associates find silver or glass “antiques” going begging, mention of this Library would be appreciated. However, the items should be authentic 17th or 18th century pieces, not of Empire or Victorian origin.

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Spare No Rod
John Witherspoon was a man of parts. Born and educated for the ministry in Scotland, he came to America to assume the presidency of the College of New Jersey (Princeton) in 1768. He was elected to the Continental Congress and signed the Declaration of Independence. Returning to the college after the war and serving for a time in the state legislature, he was also active in church affairs and wrote prodigiously. His collected works run to nine volumes.

At the beginning of the Revolution he had written for the Pennsylvania Magazine a series of articles on the education of children. After his death they were gathered and published in book form in 1797. Through the James Shearer Memorial Fund, we have managed to acquire one of the very scarce copies. Entitled A Series of Letters on Education, the essays deal with child training. His rules seem to reduce to two: the parents ought to establish absolute authority over the children, and then ought to teach primarily by example. This is the stern Calvinist and college proctor speaking, not Dr. Spock.

Secretary, Clements Library Associates
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan

......Count me as an Associate. Here is my contribution ($5 minimum) for 1959. As a bonus I shall receive a reproduction copy of the Columbus Letter (1493) in Latin and English. (over)
French Vicissitudes

When Gov. Vaudreuil surrendered all of Canada to the British forces in September 1760, he and his intendant and other officials promptly sailed for France. They were hardly welcomed in Paris, and the ministry did not intend to shoulder the whole responsibility for the loss of Canada. Looking for a scapegoat, the ministry opened an investigation into the corruption of the Canadian administration, charging that graft and peculation had so weakened the colony it could not effectively resist an enemy invasion.

At least nine Canadian officials were indicted and had to defend themselves with written Mémoires. The Library already owned the procurer-general’s findings, the defenses of Vaudreuil and Intendant Bigot, and the judgment rendered. We have now acquired the defenses of Town Major Péan (whose wife was Bigot’s mistress) and Lt. St. Blin. Vaudreuil got himself off, but the others suffered disgrace or confiscation. It’s not a pretty story, but the French Empire was hardly an efficient machine.

In this same French and Indian War, the Associates bought for the Library two other books, both published in 1755. One may be a propaganda piece designed to arouse the British and the English colonies to their danger. It is entitled A Letter from Quebec, signed by one La Roche, revealing French intentions to invade the English colonies. The other item is Charles Chauncy’s Two Letters to a Friend, describing Braddock’s defeat and Johnson’s victory at Lake George. He hopes the colonies will recover from the first blow and take heart from the second to overcome the French. Only one other copy is known.

The Coonskin Library

Shortly after the early pioneer Ohio settlement in what is now Athens County had organized itself into the township of Ames, the inhabitants, recognizing the beneficial effects a library would have on the community “as a source of rational entertainment and instruction,” formed in 1804 the Western Library Association.

But it was by their unique solution of the ubiquitous fund-raising problem that the new library got its quaint nickname, for the young men of the community collected coonskins and the pelts of other animals which could be trapped locally and shipped them off for sale in the East. This accounted for a considerable portion of the original endowment, although not all of it.

Recently the Clements Library acquired by a less devious means one of the titles found in the 51 original purchases of that library, the Minor Encyclopedia by the Rev. Thaddeus M. Harris (Boston, 1803). Its four volumes encompass a wide range of information and no doubt contributed considerably to the enlightenment of many members of that early settlement. They could hardly avoid buying the book, because Mr. Harris was consulted on the first purchases for the Western Library.

Man-Midwife

In 1799 there appeared in London a Scottish surgeon named William Smellie. He was a friend of Tobias Smollett, another alumnus of the University of Glasgow and physician who moved to London in the same year but soon became better known as an author. Dr. Smellie attended some further medical lectures and even studied midwifery in Paris.

When he returned to London, the to-be-famous Dr. William Hunter had lodgings with him.

Dr. Smellie began to teach midwifery in his home in 1741. He did not escape pamphlet attack, but one of his students answered it. In the 1750s he published three major works in his field and contributed exact knowledge to childbirth. On his retirement in 1759 he returned to Scotland and died in 1768. His own wife had no offspring.

Dr. Smellie’s manuals enjoyed great popularity, particularly his “anatomical tables,” or illustrations, which even illiterate midwives could understand and follow. It is not surprising that a demand for his work should have grown up in America, but it was not until 1786 that a Boston printer, John Norman, made an abridgment of Smellie’s work and engraved thirty-nine plates from his illustrations to accompany it. This was advertised as a new edition, which it certainly was, under the title of An Abridgment of the Practice of Midwifery, and a Set of Anatomical Tables with Explanations. Collected from the Works of the Celebrated W. Smellie, M. D. It is reputed to be the first illustrated medical book to be published in this country, and we now have it.

Evidently it sold well, for that smart entrepreneur-printer in Worcester, Isaiah Thomas, published a new version of Smellie’s work edited by Dr. Alexander Hamilton in 1799. A Philadelphia edition appeared in 1797. These three editions make clear that there were reputable sources for the knowledge acquired by backwoods midwives of the early nineteenth century however they may have picked up their information. Similarly, our first medical schools had available a text and explanatory illustrations.

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