Adams Lecture

To an appreciative audience—and the largest in five years—Prof. Edmund S. Morgan of Yale University spoke engagingly of "The Trouble With Books" at the seventh annual Randolph G. Adams Lecture on November 20 at the Library.

The "trouble," of course, is that books exist to be read, and sometimes they stir men to heretical and radical ideas and as well to brilliant achievements. In that sense, libraries are dangerous, and the only safe remedy to maintain orthodoxy and the status quo is to lock their doors. Dr. Morgan cited examples of books in the Yale Library and in the Clements Library that aroused readers to new concepts of human freedom. If libraries are "the nurseries of heresy and independence of thought," they also preserve "the freedom that dissolves orthodoxies and inspires solutions to the ever changing challenges of the future."

It was a delightful and memorable occasion. More than 185 guests enjoyed the evening.

CLA: Eleventh Year

During the fiscal year 1957–58 the Board of Governors of the Associates authorized purchases of rare books in November 1957 amounting to $2,039, and in June 1958 amounting to $1,850, a total of $4,249. Altogether fifteen titles were acquired with an average value of nearly $300, meaning that they were significant as well as scarce, books of distinction that gave added luster to the Library. Added to previous expenditures, the grand total of assistance to the Library now amounts to $40,905.

In January 1958 a list of Associates was published as a supplement to the current Quarto. In the spring the gift book to members was the story of Benedict Arnold's treason, including a reproduction of the climactic code letter in which Arnold offered to surrender West Point to the British for a sum. The Adams lecturer in this year was Prof. Clinton Rossiter of Cornell University, speaking on John Adams.

The Board authorized the Director of the Library to speak in Denver where Board member Morrison Shafroth acted as host. From the success of this visit, the Director was urged to arrange speaking dates in the Far West in July of 1958, in conjunction with a conference trip to San Francisco. Board member William A. C. Roethke and other Associates or alumni in the West were asked to provide occasions at which the work of the Library could be described.

Membership promotion was always a subject of concern for the Board, and a new folder prepared by Associate W. A. P. John was authorized for printing. The Library Director has discussed with University radio officials the possibility of issuing a phonograph record of excerpts from significant letters in the manuscript division under some such title as "Voices of the American Revolution." The record would be offered for sale to Associates, alumni, and the general public through the Library. He was encouraged to prepare a suitable manuscript and arrange for the speaking parts.

At the close of the year membership stood at 508, a figure that was becoming fairly stable, but not a limit.

Pictures

Associates who have seen the magnificent American Heritage Book of the Revolution may have noticed a general acknowledgement to the Clements Library and a specific credit of five pictures from this institution. If you are wondering why we did not furnish more of the illustrations, it is only because the editors, working in New York City, turned to local libraries first as a convenience. A quick survey of the numerous illustrations revealed that outside of the unique paintings that were reproduced, the editors could have found more than sixty of their pictures in the Clements Library.
Recent Board Action

When the Associates' Board of Governors met in October, they made some important allocations of their funds. The Library had bid heavily on Howe manuscripts at a London auction, and the Board undertook to pay for two of the most expensive items: Admiral Howe's reply in manuscript (never published) to public criticism of his conduct in America from 1776 to 1778, when he neither pacified nor subdued the Americans. The finished essay and an early draft in another hand invite publication, of course, and a faculty member is examining them.

The other item is the famous letter from Admiral Howe to George Washington in July 1776, which the latter refused because Howe would not address him as "General." The story behind this letter and its previously unknown contents will comprise the next gift book to the Associates.

An important and extremely rare book attracted the Board. After the British government suspended the charter of Massachusetts Bay in 1684, it combined the New England colonies under one government (without a representative assembly) and appointed Edmund Andros as governor. Five years later the British king was driven from the throne, and in Massachusetts the Puritans revolted against Gov. Andros. A booklet appeared justifying the revolt; another was published defending Gov. Andros. The Library owns both of them. Then Rawson and Sewell refuted the latter pamphlet by writing The Revolution in New England Justified (Boston 1691). It is this spirited work the Board bought. A seventeenth-century American imprint, it is a basic source.

What were the models for the fine houses and furniture found in America? Generally they were English. The best furniture designers of the eighteenth century were Sheraton, Chippendale, and Hepplewhite. Their designs were endlessly copied by furniture makers in America. Sheraton's book was acquired by the Library last year. The Associates now bought Chippendale's Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Directory (London 1754) with its numerous drawings. It influenced American taste for nearly fifty years and introduced an Oriental motif in the carving of furniture.

Finally, the Board allowed the Library the sum of one thousand dollars to be used at a forthcoming auction sale of Americana in New York. The results of this generosity will be reported in the next Quarto.

The Cook Voyages

Capt. James Cook led three expeditions of scientific and economic discovery into the Pacific. The first was a voyage around the world, ordered by the Admiralty at the request of the Royal Society; it lasted from 1768 to 1771. The official account of the trip was written by Dr. John Hawkesworth, and Captain Cook was instructed to impound all diaries kept by officers. Nevertheless, other accounts of the voyage did get published, ahead of Hawkesworth.

The second voyage, from 1772 to 1775, scoured the south Pacific and mapped the area accurately. Cook himself wrote the official account of this journey, but a number of unauthorized narratives appeared.

The third voyage was undertaken to explore the north Pacific and the northwest coast of America. The ships left in 1776 and returned in 1780. Cook discovered the Hawaiian Islands and was killed there. Captain King, using Cook's journal, wrote the official account, but at least three other officers also published their narratives. In addition, there were translations, a description of Cook's death at the hands of the natives was written, the artist published his drawings, and other persons commented on the voyages, etc. So altogether the literature of Cook's voyages includes a large number of titles. It should, because the voyages were important scientifically and for the ethnological information and the sample products brought back to England. Alexander Shaw's essay on fabrics, with sample swatches, was one result, as described in our last Quarto. Now the Library has acquired five more titles for our Cook holdings:
David Samwell’s Narrative of the Death of Captain James Cook (London 1786) is the surgeon’s account, with details that were suppressed in the official journal.

He also comments on the introduction of VD in the Hawaiian Islands by the sailors.

John Webber’s Views in the South Seas (London 1808) contains text and 16 colored plates by Cook’s draughtsman on the third voyage. Included is a view of one of the ships caught in the ice off Alaska.

John Marra’s Journal of The Resolution’s Voyage in 1772–5 (London 1775) is an account of the second voyage by a gunner’s mate which preceded the official account. Laid to rest at last was the lingering belief in a great undiscovered southern continent.

Supplément au Voyage de M. de Bougainville (Neuchatel 1775) is, despite the title, a bootlegged French edition of the English botanists’ account of the first Cook voyage. The author of this truly scarce item is not known.

Samuel Engel’s Anmerkungen über den Theil von Cap. Cooks Reise-Relation (1780) is the first edition of Engel’s commentary on what Cook has to say about Bering Straits. It was later translated into French and English.

If you want to become fascinated by Captain Cook, read The Return of Lono, a recent historical novel by O. A. Bushnell.

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Le Detroit

There are five known variants of the famous De L’Isle map, Carte du Canada ou de la Nouvelle France published in Paris in 1709. This map, one of the finest and most famous to show the French North American empire, is the first printed map to show the small settlement founded only two years earlier by Cadillac on the narrow straits which connect Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair.

Of the five variants of this map, the Clements Library has been lacking only one—the first. Now, through the generosity of James Shearer II, a member of the Board of Governors of the Associates, for a second time the doctoral dissertation of the late Randolph G. Adams, former Director of the Library, has been reprinted. It was first published by Trinity College (now Duke University) in 1922. Barnes and Noble, Inc., issued a second edition in 1939 with minor corrections by Dr. Adams. It has long been out of print, and the same company arranged to bring out a third edition this summer. The new volume carries a commentary by Prof. Merrill Jensen of the University of Wisconsin. Rarely does a graduate student’s dissertation carry sufficient weight to merit republication and enjoy continuing life. Entitled Political Ideas of the American Revolution, it was the first book devoted solely to that subject and it discusses the various proposals for a peaceful relationship between the colonial and the British governments.

we have been able to purchase a copy of this very rare first issue. The only other known copy in North America is at Yale University. The map itself is an outstanding example of 18th-century French cartography. Both its geographical accuracy and its artistic excellence make it outstanding.

Brink of War in 1795

In 1795, Joseph Dana, pastor of the South Church in Ipswich, marked a general day of thanking with a sermon extolling the virtues and good fortune of America. Just as the Israelites were favored in ancient times, so were the Americans now singled out for Divine benefaction.

In this small pamphlet, recently acquired, he marshalls evidence to back up his patriotic convictions. He finds America the poor man’s country because industry and prudence receive greater rewards here than in older countries. Children of the poor are educated at public expense. Liberties and rights are protected. But most important of all, Providence has interposed to repel invasions.

For, in that time as now, the international situation was alarming. Especially did the weak new country fear involvement in the continuous wars of Great Britain and France.

In familiar words, he says: “We have been at the very brink of war. To keep up commerce with contending nations, and not be involved with any of them, is difficult at all times. To fulfil our treaties of amity and commerce with France, when we had none with Britain, to do more for the one than for the other … and yet maintain a neutrality … To quiet the jealousies of both; was peculiarly difficult … But it was again the happy lot of America that we had a WASHINGTON.”

Our skillful statesmen, he felt, had wisely charted a neutral course.

Secretary, Clements Library Associates
The 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)
Langsdorff

In spite of the claim of the Soviet reference work, Bolshaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia, that Georg Heinrich von Langsdorff was a “Russian” botanist, the Clements Library has recently acquired a copy of his Bemerkungen auf einer Reise um die Welt, published at Frankfurt on the Main in 1812, as a significant addition to its collection of Americana. Langsdorff, a corresponding member of the Royal Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg although not yet 50 years old, convinced the Russian diplomatic envoy and the officers of Russia’s first expedition around the world, that he should be taken as a scientist, even though another man already filled the position. The expedition left Copenhagen in the fall of 1803 and Langsdorff remained for four years on his travels. It is concerning these travels that he wrote his Observations on a Trip Around the World, which was published in an English translation some years after the first German edition mentioned above.

Born in Swabia in 1774, Langsdorff studied medicine at Gottingen, and after taking his degree the pursuit of professional duties led him to Portugal in the company of the Prince of Waldeck, who was engaged in military affairs there. In Portugal his interest in natural history was nurtured by the variety and novelty of flora, and he returned to Germany a few years later as an acknowledged expert in the field of botany. It was not surprising then that Langsdorff should apply to the Russian academy which had honored him with a corresponding membership, to be named as an official member of the party which would make the first world circling trip under Russian authority. When he was informed that the position was filled, he applied directly to the

Advice for the New Year

The first of this year pay all your debts and make a final settlement, run no more into debt, sell and buy for cash ever after, so shall you avoid the costs of attending the courts of justice and keep the sheriffs, constables and duns from preying upon industry... If this precept be observed, and practiced universally, it will render society happy in the most eminent degree.

—Pittsburgh Almanack, 1815

Gazetteer

When Lewis Beck, a young New York physician, moved to St. Louis in 1819, it was with the intention of practicing medicine. Finding no opening to his liking, he conceived instead the idea of collecting materials for a gazetteer. The finished product was published at Albany in 1823 as Gazetteer of the States of Illinois and Missouri.

This rare book, one of the first American books to describe the early Illinois settlements and the adjoining region in Missouri, has recently been added to our collections. It is based largely on Beck’s own travels through those states, though he also consulted earlier descriptive works to check against his own observations. The Gazetteer contains a map of the two states, several small plans, and a large plan of St. Louis, the most important city in the area, for Chicago in those days was in Beck’s words, “a village in Pike county, situated on Lake Michigan, at the mouth of Chicago creek. It contains 12 or 15 houses, and about 60 or 70 inhabitants.” Clearly, it was never going to amount to much; Vandalia was the coming metropolis.