Leonardo the Magnificent

We’ll never be the same again. When the Michigan Union proposed to hold a Creative Arts Festival one week in late April, we agreed to have an exhibition of early American music. Then the Union learned of the availability of a traveling exhibition sponsored by International Business Machines. It needed a good deal of floor space, and we agreed to display it in our Main Room.

The show was made up of modern models of Leonardo da Vinci’s inventions. He was a prolific genius, interested in various applications of power and mechanics. Moreover, these were working models, two of them using water power and others having cranks and levers. They were fascinating devices, but fairly noisy in operation. For two weeks we had 100 to 150 students a day coming in to our once hushed and staid quarters to inspect the products of this remarkable brain. It was hard to get used to the quiet after the exhibition moved on.

Magazines

Although among printed materials we emphasize books, magazines are valuable sources for contemporary events and attitudes. They present a problem that we find in newspapers: getting long or complete runs of them. A broken run is a continuing problem and a constant challenge.

The best single test of a nation’s culture remains what it has always been since the days of Gutenberg—its attitude toward books.

—Allan Nevins

Recently we have made a fortunate acquisition. We picked up additional issues for three periodicals we had in fair quantity. In addition, we bought complete runs of ten New York and New England magazines in the first quarter of the nineteenth century!

Admittedly these are short run journals. They were launched with great enthusiasm and high hopes, probably with enough money to carry on for about a year. The real struggle came with renewal of subscriptions, and the second year was grim. Frequently the editor or publisher gave up at the end of the second year, or struggled wearily into the third year before simply running out of money. As business enterprises these little magazines were failures; yet they say something about the fertility of the times and the level of culture. The prices likewise indicate their scarcity. Magazines, like newspapers, were easily thrown away.

Fireside Chat

Speaking of magazines (as we were above), we received a few years ago from Miss Marie Shearer of Ann Arbor the first year’s run of The Evening Fire-

side. It was published in Philadelphia during 1805 by Joseph Rakestraw.

“It forms no part of the plan of this projected paper,” the editor announced, “to enter minutely into political or personal controversies; nor does it aim to support any set of men or principles . . . The writer is a man of retired habits of life, and for such, and for the young who may not have the leisure or inclination to enter into the spirit of the political disputes of the day, has he formed his plan of periodical communication.” He champions “the still small voice of candor and moderation,” eschews the “minute detail of battles and atrocities,” and declares that “the principal topics are expected to be science, morals, and sentiment.”

Sounds frightfully dull, doesn’t it? Well, it was. Yet the weekly continued to appear for two years. Along toward the end of the second year, in November 1806, the editor obtained from George Rogers Clark a letter just received from his brother, Capt. William Clark. It was written from St. Louis in September and summarized the long expedition from which he had just returned with Meriwether Lewis. Published “to gratify the impatient wishes of his countrymen,” the letter was a genuine journalistic scoop. If it did not save the faltering Fireside, it did something else 150 years later: it made the second volume of this weekly excessively rare and expensive!
Don't we know pretty much everything that happened in that period? Why should scholars be interested in reworking this filed? These are legitimate questions, and we have answered them as best we could in brief form. The visitor admits that a number of interesting things happened in the latter part of the eighteenth century, but what he is seeking is some reason for their particular significance. We have found the best statement of our position in the opening pages of a famous American history textbook. There is no reference to our Library, of course, but the authors, Professors Samuel Eliot Morison of Harvard and Henry Steele Commager of Columbia and Amherst, make this declaration on the first page of The Growth of the American Republic:

"The generation that came to maturity between the Peace of Paris (1763) and the inauguration of President Washington had to solve more serious and original political problems than any later generation of Americans. It was then that the great beacons of American principles, such as the Declaration of Independence, the Virginia Bill of Rights, and the Federal Constitution, were lighted; it was then that institutions of permanent and profound import in the history of America and of liberty were crystallized. The period was not only revolutionary and destructive, but creative and constructive; moreover the British connection was not the most important thing that was destroyed, nor was national independence the most important thing that was created. A new federal empire was erected on the ruins of the old empire, American ideals proclaimed, and the American character defined, if not created."

"This period from 1763 to 1789 has a singular unity, from which the rush of events and the din of arms can easily distract our attention. We must not let the high-strung debates that preceded the American Revolution, or the vivid events of the War for Independence, hide from us the real meaning of these years... the stirring of a political problem older than recorded history: the balancing of liberty with order. That underlay all the tumult and the shouting. And this ancient question between liberty and order resolves itself into two: the horizontal or federal problem of distributing power between one central and many regional governments; and the vertical or democratic one of how far the masses of mankind shall be entrusted with control. These two problems are the warp and woof of American history; and the web that they wove between 1763 and 1789 set a pattern that even the complexities of the industrial and machine age have not yet obliterated."

See what we mean? These words remind us of the admonition given foreign students at the University by the French consul in Detroit a few years ago. He warned them not to be deceived by the relatively short history of the United States, its fundamental youthfulness. These Americans, he emphasized, have had a long experience with self-government; they were solving their political problems when France was an absolute monarchy, when England was ruled by an aristocracy, and when Germany and Italy had not even begun to achieve national unity.

We might point out specifically that it was in the Ordinance of 1787 that the new United States solved the problem of empire which England...
and France had failed to do. The thirteen original states had a vast empire at their back doors, but chose not to develop the West as colonies but to share authority and responsibility with the new settlements by providing steps by which they could organize themselves and enter the Union as states fully equal to the original states. Bold vision combined with tremendous achievement, growing out of the ferment of exciting new political ideas debated in the free atmosphere of the late eighteenth century.

Ms. Map Guide

Over 150 copies of the Guide to the Manuscript Maps in the William L. Clements Library, compiled by Christian Brun, have already been distributed. This is a heartening response to our announcement in the last Quarto and to our circularization by mail of libraries. Twenty additional copies have been sent to various historical and geographical journals for review. After those reviews appear, we expect further orders. This kind of advertising of the resources of the Library is publicity of the best kind.

Those Associates interested in acquiring a copy may order one directly from the Library for $3.50. The regular price is $4.00.

A Far Miss

We have our bad days, too. Money is important to the growth of this Library, yet we are blue when at the end of a book auction we have acquired little and have only money left in our hands.

Recently an auction catalog from Sotheby's in London excited our interest. It contained several early books of American interest which had not appeared for sale in many years. We selected four seventeenth-century imprints that we wanted to try for, and then appealed to the executive committee of the Associates Board of Governors. They allowed us to draw on the Walting Fund up to about $2700. This sum was spread over the four items with the greatest care and that intrepid insight of genius we boast of! We lost them all! The four books brought a total of just under $700.

Well, as we say, there we were, left with our $2700 in hand and no purchases. We not only felt deflated and hollow, but discouraged by the high prices. Prices of the past are no guide to the current market. The older, acknowledged leaders in the field of Americana are moving into the upper atmosphere of price level. One must be prepared to play in the big league to secure them. Anyone want to wipe our perspiring brow?

Two Library Users

Two books have just been published based in part on research in the Clements Library. Both are biographies. One is Robert Rogers of the Rangers, by John R. Cuneo, a Connecticut lawyer who has been dogging Major Rogers' footsteps for years and knows more about him than anyone else. He has kindly inscribed the book to the memory of Dr. Randolph G. Adams, the Library's former director, who set him on his quest.

The other is George Croghan, Wilderness Diplomat, by Nicho-

las B. Wainwright, librarian of the Historical Society of Pennsyl-

vania. It is an account of the Pennsylvania frontiersman who handled Indian relations for the colony and later for the Crown until the American Revolution. It was published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg.

---

Soldier at Ten, and Indian Captive

When young Lent Munson of Connecticut died of fever in the West Indies in 1796 as a prisoner of the French, the news reached his family early in January, 1797. They promptly ordered a memorial service, and the sermon by the Rev. Alexander Griswold was duly published. Prefaced to it is a second pamphlet that recounts the life of Lent Munson.

He was born in 1768 and at the age of ten (!) entered the Continental Army as a musician, probably a drummer or fifer. He served incredibly until the end of the war. In 1788, this veteran, then twenty years old, joined the American Army as a musician and was sent out to Fort Harmar (Marietta, Ohio). In 1790 he was moved down the river to Fort Washington (Cincinnati). Liking the military life, Sergeant Munson re-enlisted for a second three-year term. In October, 1793 he was with a party that was attacked by Indians, and Munson was carried off a prisoner, but reported killed. He was taken to an Ottawa village, presumably on the Maumee River and adopted into the tribe. After eight months

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)
of laborious captivity he escaped northeastward to Detroit. The British commandant shipped him to Niagara, and he made his way across New York to his home. He then studied navigation, shipped out to Europe, and then undertook his fatal voyage to St. Croix.

His adventures make the slim book not only of Revolutionary War interest, but an Indian captivity not in the several bibliographies where it should appear.

---

Postal Map

The recent rise in postal rates has once again brought our postal service into critical public notice. Considering its function which makes it more meaningful to each of us in our day-by-day activities than any other governmental office, it deserves, perhaps, a different fate. The jet-age, mid-twentieth century America is a demanding taskmaster for the message bearer to serve.

America of the early 1800's was just as critical a customer. There was, of course, a different set of circumstances and problems. To appreciate this we only have to look at a large, detailed, rare map (only two known copies) which we have just recently acquired. This is the Abraham Bradley, Map of the United States, exhibiting the post-roads, connexions & distances of the post-offices, stage roads, counties & principal rivers (Philadelphia 1804). This map, which served as the official Post Office map of its day, shows, not the complex road and train system of today, but an almost thorough lack of roads and a population ever moving out into a greater and greater area of wilderness. Here we see the stage roads which parallel the eastern seaboard and link the major towns and cities. West of the Appalachians we see other routes indicated: trails, a few rough major roads chopped through mainly by the military, and a few short improved ones connecting several close lying communities. Also, there are the rivers which, in great part, these roads and trails served to connect and which were in fact the actual highways of the interior.

Not satisfied at providing as complete as possible a picture of the America that was then concentrated exclusively east of the Mississippi, Bradley has added an inset. On this he shows the then known North American continent. While busily coping with the difficulties of the postal routes of 1804, the Department could spend a moment viewing the trackless expanse of the new Louisiana Purchase that lay over the Mississippi toward the Western coast.

---

A. Lincoln, 150 Years After

This year is being observed as the sesquicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth in 1809. To participate the Library turned to its Lincoln collection which was the gift of A. H. Greenly in 1942. Although the collection, amounting to about 1200 books, has been called a good working collection for the scholar, we were able to cull some remarkable rarities for an exhibition now in the cases.

We turned up first printings of five of his early speeches and an inscribed copy of the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates (Columbus, 1860). Incidentally, we have all seven editions of these debates. Then we flushed out our copy of the Chester County Times (West Chester, Pa.) for Feb. 11, 1860, which contains a biographical sketch of Lincoln based on an autobiography furnished by Lincoln to Jesse Fell and by him sent to the editor. Only three copies of this issue of the Times are known. It is valuable for its "firstness" and also for the fact that the first campaign biographies, issued in the summer of 1860 immediately following Lincoln's nomination, were expanded from it.

We have several of the campaign biographies on display, including the first one which misspelled his first name. Two song books of the campaign are also shown, one being unique. Since the Republicans were a new party, they had their enthusiasts, usually denominated as "Wide Awakes." Of course, they had their own special song book. We have a copy of the leaflet bearing Lincoln's amnesty proclamation to the Confederates in 1863, and the pamphlet proceedings of the ceremonies dedicating the new national cemetery at Gettysburg. This latter is dominated by the long speech of Edward Everett. Lincoln's immortal "remarks" fill less than a page at the end and are only a few lines longer than the benediction. The final printed item is a German pamphlet published in Berlin in 1865, the memorial address delivered there by Henry P. Tappan, ex-president of The University of Michigan!