Associates’ Board Meeting

At its meeting on June 16 the Board of Governors of the Clements Library Associates took care of routine business and then proceeded to make ten purchases for the Library. They bought three maps, one manuscript, and six rare books, totalling $3700. Added to previous gifts, the total now spent on acquisitions since organization of the Associates in 1947 amounts to $67,246!

The items purchased are described in other columns of this Quarto.

Membership in the Associates has dipped slightly to 488. Ways and means of recruiting new members were discussed. It was hoped that for one thing individual members would suggest to interested friends that they identify themselves with the group. A conference with the Alumni Development Council is in prospect.

Another topic of discussion of interest to members will be announced at a later date. Decisions were made, but implementation is desired before the project warrants publicity. Members will be fully informed probably in the fall.

Mr. Harold O. Hunt ’05, of Minneapolis, asked to be excused from serving another term on the Board. A faithful participant, a generous donor, and a devoted alumnus, “Doggy” Hunt has been a delight to all his colleagues. They reluctantly acceded to his request and tendered him a unanimous vote of regret and appreciation for his services.

O——

Tobacco, Yes; Va., No

For a long time we have had a copy of The Case of the Planters of Tobacco in Virginia (London 1733). It is a plea by the Virginia growers to obtain exemption from a law requiring that their tobacco be sold only in England, where the price was easily controlled by English merchants. The latter kept what they wanted for the English market and sold the excess to other countries at a comfortable profit.

There is a British answer to this pamphlet entitled Observations on the Case of the Planters of Virginia (London 1733). A copy exists in the New York Public Library, but nowhere else we know of. When another copy came up, our Associates readily purchased it. As might be expected, the British merchants naturally favored the monopoly they enjoyed on Virginia tobacco.

Their case was a weak one: that they deserved a monopoly because of the long term credits they had to extend to the planters which must be protected by receipt of the entire crop.

The result of such a policy was lost on the obtuse British government. This monopoly made rebels out of the Virginia planters, an aristocratic group that normally might have identified themselves with British authority. It turned out to be quite a price to pay just to accommodate the tobacco importers at home.

Pa. and N.Y. Delineated

Three maps figured in the purchases just made by the Associates. The rarest was William Scull’s Map of the Province of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia 1770). It was the most accurate map of the province of its day and was used as a base for all of the succeeding maps of the province and state. Many forts are shown for the first time and, of course, the new Mason-Dixon line. Scull served later in the Continental Army and as one of the cartographers under Robert Erskine, Geographer of the United States. Five other copies of this map are known in this country.

Another was a copy of the first state of the famous Ratzen or Ratzer map of New York City (London 1767). What makes it noteworthy, however, is that it belonged to someone in 1776, probably British, who pencilled on the map the portion of the city that burned in September 1776 as the Americans were retreating from the city. The starting point of the fire is indicated, and the owner has written in other details about incendiarism. Four other copies of the map are known, and only one of them was similarly used to show the limits of the fire that destroyed a quarter of the city.

Simeon De Witt’s State Map of New York (New York c. 1794) is a detailed map of western New York showing the political boundaries, the drainage features, roads, and names of large land owners at the time. On this sec-
THE CLEMENTS LIBRARY ASSOCIATES

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In the second state of the map one additional town has been added. Like Scull, De Witt served under Erskine and succeeded him as Geographer of the United States. He later became surveyor general of New York and is responsible for many of the classical place names that flowered in the state.

American Oaks

European interest in America took some unusual turns. The French government directed a famous botanist, André Michaux, to make a study of American trees with a view to introducing valuable ones into France. He came to the United States in 1785 and stayed eleven years, traveling extensively and also establishing a nursery in New Jersey and a plantation in South Carolina. After his return to France he assembled all his notes and specimens on oak trees. Thirty-six plates illustrating leaves were made by the famous Redouté. Varieties and uses were described.

In folio form the Histoire des Chênes de l'Amérique was published at Paris in 1801. It seemed to the Associates a fitting item of Americana for this Library.

Lilly Endowment Fellows

Holders of Clements Library-Lilly Endowment fellowships for the summer of 1961 are Dr. Milton M. Klein, chairman of the history department of Long Island University (Brooklyn), and Dr. Lawrence S. Kaplan, of the history department of Kent State University (Kent, Ohio).

Prof. Klein is investigating colonial New York politics. Prof. Kaplan will study American diplomacy in the War of 1812. We look forward to our association with both men this summer.

Too Late the Concession

After receiving news of Burgoyne's surrender in October 1777, the North ministry realized that France might well ally herself with the American colonies. Nevertheless, Parliament took a long Christmas recess, and it was February 1778 before the ministry got around to doing anything. Lord North then called for repeal of the duty on tea and the coercive acts against Massachusetts which had triggered the war. These were called "acts of conciliation" and might have had considerable pacific effect in 1775. Copies were sent at once to America, and Tory Governor Tryon of New York ordered them printed and distributed in April 1778, as soon as he received them. It was his hope that they would arouse peace sentiment by discouraging the patriots and encouraging the Tories.

The Continental Congress was somewhat uneasy about the possible effect of the leaflets and drew up a reply to the acts. It then asked all the newspapers in the colonies to publish both the conciliatory acts and Congress' answer. The resulting publicity had the effect of neutralizing this too-late gesture from the hated ministry. Thus the Tory effort came to nothing. The second part of Lord North's campaign was to send a commission to America to concede a kind of home rule under the British Crown. By the time it arrived the American attitude had hardened against anything short of independence.

As an example of an attempt at peace by a tired ministry the New York printing of the acts of conciliation (James Rivington, 1778) represents a significant alteration in official attitude. Five other copies are known, all on the East coast. It belongs in a Library emphasizing the American Revolution, and our Associates acted to acquire this sixth copy.

Major Rogers

The Journals of Major Robert Rogers (London 1765) have been reprinted by Corinth Books, New York, with an introduction by Howard H. Peckham. This is the account that tells of services in the French and Indian War, his organizing of the Rangers, and his receipt of the surrender of Detroit in 1760. In paperback form the new edition costs only a dollar and a half.
The title page tells most of the story of this acquisition by the Associates. But the background is New York politics at its worst. One result of the Glorious Revolution in England in 1688 was that the royal governor of New York was ousted by one Jacob Leisler, who took control in dictatorial fashion. When the new constitutional monarch sent over a new governor, Leisler foolishly resisted and was hanged in 1691. Nicholas Bayard was one of the councilors who opposed Leisler, was imprisoned by him, and released by the new governor. Briefly he was a hero. Later political opponents accused him of helping Gov. Fletcher protect pirates and of encouraging sedition. As an outgrowth of Captain Kidd’s execution, Bayard was put on trial and sentenced to death. A new governor reopened the case and found he had been “railroaded” to his fate. Queen Anne released him and reinstated him in his property and appointments. The Account is extremely scarce.

Gift Book

Associates have received The Battle of New Orleans as the 1961 gift book. It has three appeals: first of all it is a British officer’s account, never before published, of what produced that terrible British defeat in 1815; secondly, it is taken from the original manuscript in our Library; and thirdly, it was edited by a Tulane University scholar, Hugh F. Rankin, who was here last summer on a Clements Library-Lilly Endowment fellowship. A contribution to the history of the War of 1812 was made by this fortunate concert of circumstances.

We are indebted to the publishers, The Hauser Press, for risking an investment in the publication and then allowing us a special price on the quantity we purchased for the Associates.

Founder’s Day

An unusually large group of Associates and friends—more than 180—gathered in the Library on March 28 to observe the centennial of Mr. Clements’ birth, hear a paper on early American medicine, view gifts to the Library in the past year, and enjoy a social hour.

Dr. Darrell A. Campbell, local surgeon and instructor in the Medical School, spoke on the practice of medicine in George Washington’s time. The status of medical knowledge at that time endorsed bleeding as a treatment for most diseases; unfortunately in Washington’s case it weakened the patient when he needed all his strength. The audience was reminded that the attractions of life in “the good old days” were seriously diminished by the limitations of medical knowledge in that period.

Mrs. Clements, who was in California at the time, sent her usual bowl of roses for the memorial occasion.

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

... Count me as an Associate. Here is my contribution ($5 minimum) for 1961. As a bonus I shall receive a reproduction copy of the Columbus Letter (1493) in Latin and English.
Marine Anti-Britannic Society

Right after the Revolution ended, the patriots of Charleston were concerned about the men who had served at sea. They organized in September 1783 a society to raise money to establish a hospital for sailor veterans and their descendants. It was also a social club that would meet every Saturday night. No one who had ever shown any Tory sympathy was eligible for membership. Transactions, except money raising activities, were to be secret, and indigent members would be buried at society expense.

This curious patriotic, social, and insurance club published its Rules of the Marine Anti-Britannic Society at Charleston in 1784. A list of 255 members is appended. We have been unable to find another copy and we wonder how long the society endured. We have a copy because the Associates purchased it for us.

Poor Mr. Gordon

When Spain ceded East Florida to England in 1763, most of the Spanish residents hurried to sell their lands and get out. The number of purchasers was severely limited, however, so that many lands remained unsold at the time the owners wanted to leave. They devised a plan of “giving” title to John Gordon, a Charleston merchant trading to Florida; he would sell the lands later as he could and remit to the Spanish owners.

The British government took over all the public buildings, public lands, and all other properties it could seize. Discovering what some of the Spaniards had done, the English claimed title to the lands Gordon was holding as well as several thousand acres he said he had acquired from the Indians. The English position was that the Spaniards were mere transients who had never held good title from the Indians. (The same might be said of the English settlers farther north.) Further, with paternalistic concern the British argued that Indians could not transfer lands to private buyers without the consent of the ruling power; otherwise, the Indians might be defrauded by unscrupulous whites. In brief, the British were setting their own rules for recognizing ownership of land in Florida.

John Gordon sued, and then encountered the wonders of English legal delay. In 1772 he published The Case of Mr. John Gordon, With Respect to the Title to Certain Lands in East Florida (London). No official hearts were moved. His case was carried on until his death in 1778, when the Crown secured all his lands. Every effort was made to forget about this arbitrariness, with the result that Mr. G’s Case is incredibly scarce. There is a copy in the John Carter Brown Library, but no other that we could find. Another turned up abroad, and the Associates decided we should have it, praise be.

Turn Back the Clock

The bitterness of feeling among Canadian merchants toward the United States at the time of the War of 1812 is revealed in a curious case prepared in 1814. A committee of those merchants gathered up a series of printed complaints and submitted them with covering manuscript material to Lord Liverpool, the prime minister. The complaints went back to 1785, with the merchants blaming Great Britain for making too many concessions to the United States in the treaty of peace. (Apparently they forgot that Britain lost and was hardly in a position to dictate terms.) Again, they thought the United States had triumphed a second time in the Jay treaty of 1794—the treaty that was barely approved by a critical U. S. Senate.

The merchants asked that in this war a new boundary line between Canada and the United States should be drawn, preferably along through central Ohio on the Treaty of Greenville Indian boundary line, thus returning Detroit and the upper lakes to Canada. Further, the Canadians should have as free access to Indian tribes domiciled in the United States as to foreign nations. There was no quid pro quo. U. S. ships should be excluded from Canadian ports, from the Newfoundland fishing banks, and from the West Indies. Then there was some incident in 1807 for which the Mackinac Company demanded compensation. Finally, Passamaquoddy Bay must be entirely under British control.

Lord Liverpool must have been embarrassed by the extravagant demands. Certainly none of them found its way into the Treaty of Ghent of December 1814. After all, Britain didn’t win that war either. But the arrogance and hopes of the merchants are astonishing.