CLA: Fifteenth Year

The Clements Library Associates ended their fifteenth year of activity on September 30. Membership has remained stable at approximately 500. Expenditures for the year on acquisitions for the Library amounted to $8947, bringing total expenditures at the end of fifteen years to $78,979! Purchases included books, manuscripts, and prints.

The tenth and final Randolph G. Adams Memorial Lecture, sponsored by the Associates, was delivered by Louis B. Wright, director of the Folger Shakespeare Library. The annual gift book for members was A Bibliography of Randolph G. Adams, with an Introductory Memoir. Four issues of The Quarto were issued for members.

To succeed the lecture series, the Board of Governors established in honor of Dr. Adams the Directors Fund, an endowment fund of which the interest only will be spent on acquisitions. By the end of the year, more than $4000 had been contributed to the capital sum.

The Board of Governors met in November 1961 and June 1962 in pursuance of its duties. Plans were laid for an assembly of the membership this fall, an event which has taken place and is reviewed in another column.

CLA Assembly

The Clements Library Associates held a special assembly at the Library on October 26 to help open a major exhibition on "Arbiters of Taste for Early America." Renville Wheat, chairman of the Associates' Board of Governors, presided and made some announcements to the members and guests.

Gerald G. Gibson, curator of the decorative arts at the Henry Ford Museum, spoke on the major watersheds of taste in the colonies and the early republic. His slides enlarged the compass of the exhibition, which concerns itself with architecture, landscaping, furniture, fashions, music, dancing, and pictures. Refreshments and a social hour followed.

A bulletin descriptive of the exhibition was passed out and later mailed to all Associates and to a number of libraries. Other copies are available to our friends. The show remains on view through January.

At the meeting of the Board of Governors preceding the assembly, three new members appointed by the Board of Regents were welcomed: Carl W. Bonbright of Flint, Robert P. Briggs of Jackson, and Stuart S. Wall of Toledo. The opportunity to purchase a special lot of manuscript letters from Gen. Sir Henry Clinton to the Duke of Gloucester during the Revolution was seized and a special appeal to the membership for donations was authorized. A circular letter explanatory of the circumstances has gone out to members. In addition four rare books were purchased; they are discussed in other columns of this issue. Officers of the board were re-elected.

Benjamin Lay

The first four antislavery statements to be published in this country are as follows: George Keith's Exhortation (New York 1698), known in three copies, one of which is in England; Samuel Sewall's Selling of Joseph (Boston 1700), known in one copy; Ralph Sandiford's Brief Examination (Philadelphia 1729), known in five copies; and Benjamin Lay's All Slave-Keepers Apostates (Philadelphia 1737), now known in seven copies.

Lay was a contradiction, a bellicerent Quaker. He felt that slavery was immoral and that no good Christian could justify keeping slaves. His indictment of his fellow Quakers was not happily received, but eventually his view prevailed in the sect. His somewhat rambling argument is not a model of coherence, and it was printed and presumably edited by young Benjamin Franklin. This gives it a second appeal. For a third, it reprints Sewall's rare pamphlet named above.

Since the Library has a very respectable early antislavery collection, but beginning later in the eighteenth century, the opportunity to get a copy of Lay's
and to leave us an account of it. Mrs. Rowlandson was seized when Lancaster was attacked during King Philip's War, 1676. Following her ransom after twelve weeks as a prisoner, she wrote a vivid and stirring narrative of her adventure couched in the thunderous Elizabethan tones of the Old Testament, with which she was most familiar.

The book was printed in Boston in 1682, and no copies of this first edition survive. It was corrected, amended, and reprinted the same year in Cambridge, and four copies are known. Then it was reprinted in London, also in 1682, and of this edition a dozen copies are extant. It has been a “must” book for the Library, and frankly the Director never expected to find a copy for sale. Suddenly one turned up in England, was sold to an American dealer, and the Library moved quickly to speak for it. The Associates' Board of Governors was easily convinced to purchase it. The title begins: A True History of the Captivity & Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson ... Some thirty editions of the book are known.

Mary Rowlandson

One of the earliest and most famous victims of Indian captivity was Mary Rowlandson, wife of the Rev. Joseph Rowlandson, minister at Lancaster, Massachusetts. She was the first English woman to survive Indian capture and to leave us an account of it. Mrs. Rowlandson was seized when Lancaster was attacked during King Philip's War, 1676. Following her ransom after twelve weeks as a prisoner, she wrote a vivid and stirring narrative of her adventure couched in the thunderous Elizabethan tones of the Old Testament, with which she was most familiar.

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One letter of May 21, 1783, is to Gov. Benjamin Harrison of Virginia. The other is dated January 16, 1783, to Joseph Clay, with notes of Clay's reply. Both have to do with problems incident to winding up the war. Individual Greene letters, we find, command ever higher prices. We are fortunate to have Mrs. Drew's donation.

The Shakers

One result of the Director's trip east in October was that the Library obtained a group of twenty Shaker items. These books and pamphlets are additions to about twenty-six others on hand.

The Shaker sect stemmed from the preaching of Ann Lee, an English housewife who came to America in 1774. She had developed the conviction that in Christ's second coming he would assume a female form, and—you've guessed it—she was He. Although illiterate she preached persuasively and claimed the ability to perform miracles. She was married to a blacksmith but insisted that her followers live celibately. The first Shaker community—the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing—was established near Albany, New York. Other communities grew up in New England, Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. The people lived simply, devoutly, and self-sufficiently, farming and making things to sell, especially furniture. They represent the Utopian effort to establish a heaven on earth, and to a large extent and for a long period of time they were successful, although their celibacy doomed them unless they could make new converts constantly. The last Shaker community expired in this century.

The Library would be glad to hear from any reader who has or knows of any Shaker books.

Germans in Georgia

Settlement of Georgia, being under a board of philanthropic trustees interested in relieving English debtors, proceeded in organized fashion from 1732 on. Books in the Library trace migrations and establishment of the various groups who came. Concerning one group we have lacked a contemporary account.

In 1731-32, about 30,000 Lutheran inhabitants of Salzburg were driven out of their homes by the Catholic Bishop of Salzburg. Most of them resettled in other German provinces, but a group of 78 led by the Rev. Mr. Bolzius was sent by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge to Georgia, where they settled in 1733 on the Savannah River at a place they called Ebenezer. Many more joined them, so that by 1741 there were twelve hundred Salzburgers living in Georgia, preserving their religion and their language.

The English account of this migration is contained in An Extract of the Journals of Mr. Commissary von Reck, Who Conducted the First Transport of Salzburgers to Georgia (London 1734). We are happy to say that we have added this rare book to our Georgia literature. Subsequent accounts of the Salzburgers were published but only in German.

Christmas Reading, 17th Century

The Rev. Samuel Willard (1649-1707) was an important man in Massachusetts, in some ways superior intellectually to his colleague the Rev. Cotton Mather. Although he was conservative in his theology, he was a vigorous opponent of the judges' methods in the witchcraft trials and he did not require a public confession by those who wanted to join his church—Old South Church, Boston. For six years beginning in 1700 he was vice president of Harvard and actually ran the college.

The Library owns ten of his sermons and has acquired two more which are also early U. S. imprints. A Brief Discourse of Justification (Boston 1686) restates the Calvinist position that salvation cannot be earned by man but is God's gift; once granted to man, he must pursue righteousness in order to erase his old offenses and to satisfy God's requirements. Scarcer is Spiritual Desertions Discovered and Remedied (Boston 1699), which is actually a sermon on bad luck. Yet since accident was not recognized by the Calvinist—the least action by man or nature was divinely controlled—some explanation of hard times or misfortune had to be offered. Willard speaks of it as God hiding His face from His children; He does it to shake our self-confidence and self-righteousness and to test the enduring quality of our faith.

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

... Count me as an Associate. Here is my contribution ($5 minimum) for 1963. As a bonus I shall receive a reproduction copy of the Columbus Letter (1499) in Latin and English. (over)
Knowing God’s intentions was never beyond a good Calvinist teacher. He offered his congregation the comforts not of a hospital but of a gymnasium; there could be no relaxation, only more strenuous efforts. The Old Testament Jewish idea of “the suffering servant” prevailed, and however harsh it seems to us, it bred a spiritually tough people.

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G. G., not Gigi

Perhaps you have never heard of Lord George Germain. If you have, probably you don’t care for him. He was colonial secretary in the British cabinet during the American Revolution, and we have his correspondence. A colorful character with a checkered career, he does not strike one as prime material for a biography, except as he virtually directed the war for England and by his poor judgment contributed to our victory.

But our friend Alan Valentine, scholar and former university president, has produced a fascinating biography of the man entitled simply Lord George Germain. Because he comprehends British politics in the eighteenth century and penetrates the motives and reactions of Germain, he creates a three-dimensional person in a style of writing that is a delight to read. He used our Germain papers, of course, in two visits here that we remember with pleasure, and he has had access to other sources in England. The book is published by Oxford University Press.

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More McHenry Mss.

When the papers of James McHenry, secretary of war 1796-1800, were scattered at auction sale, we acquired about 400 of them, probably the largest group held by one institution. Since then we have tried to add to this lot by purchase of single items that had never been published.

We are happy to report that ten McHenry letters have been purchased this fall in the period 1796 to 1802. One of them is the 78-page draft of his defense against charges of improper disbursements while secretary of war. This is an expensive way to build a collection, of course.

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Number 4 Man

In the early voyages around the world the first man, of course, to make it was Magellan—or rather his Spanish ship in 1522. The next circumnavigator was Drake, who completed his voyage in 1580. The third man was another Englishman, Cavendish, who finished in 1588. The fourth was a Dutchman, Olivier van Noort (1558–1627)—who might have been voted least likely to succeed.

He was an innkeeper in Rotterdam who had made a few trade voyages—where and when unknown. Anyway, he was put in command of four ships in 1598 which his country could barely afford to provide. One ship and 44 men under Noort completed the voyage in 1601. It brought no rich cargo to compensate its backers. Years later it was learned that one of Noort’s ships had been sold to a sultan in the Moluccas for a small fortune in cloves, which upon being received in Holland in 1630 paid off the investors almost in full.

An Extract or Short Account of the voyage was published in 1601 and exists today in but one copy. The full Description of the voyage appeared in 1602 and was reprinted several times thereafter. Noort’s Journal was not printed until 1669 in Amsterdam. We have the second title and have just acquired the third.

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Dobbs v. Middleton

Elephantine readers of The Quarto will recall, of course, No. 36 (Nov. 1956), in which was mentioned the literature on the disputed search for a northwest passage around North America to the Orient. The Hudson’s Bay Company was particularly interested in the route, and so were several individuals in England. Arthur Dobbs commissioned Captain Middleton to try the passage in 1743. When he failed, Dobbs accused him of treachery and misrepresentation. They engaged in a pamphlet battle. Then in 1746 Henry Ellis joined an expedition setting out for the same purpose, sponsored in part by Dobbs. It failed too.

At that time, 1956, the Library was proud to announce that it owned nine of the thirteen pamphlets concerned with this navigational impossibility. Later it acquired two more, but discovered an additional title. Now we can report that we have obtained two more; both by Captain Middleton: Forgery Detected (London 1745) and A Reply to Mr. Dobbs’ Answer (London 1745). The latter is a title again entirely new to us, so the score now stands 15 out of 15.

Send information about membership to
Supplement to The Quarto, No. 59


Asterisk (*) indicates Michigan Alumni

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