Board of Governors

At the meeting of the Associates' Board of Governors on November 6, the chairman, Renville Wheat, announced a gift to the Library through the Associates of $5000 from the executors of the estate of Mrs. Louise Tuller Miller of Detroit. Prompt use was made of the contribution in purchasing two lots of manuscripts: correspondence of Commodore David Porter, and a group of War of 1812 letters from British officers who participated in actions against Baltimore, Washington, and New Orleans. Both collections are noted elsewhere in this Quarto.

In addition, the Board purchased six pamphlets dealing with a group of Moravians who were in England in 1749 and wanted their civil rights determined before migrating to Pennsylvania. Governor William Penn's last speech to the Pennsylvania Assembly, 1701, before his return to England was also acquired. Two periodicals were taken: The Scourge, a London serial of 1780 that was highly critical of the government and its handling of the war in America, and the St. James's Chronicle, a London newspaper, for the years 1763-1765, the time of Pontiac's uprising, the proclamation of a western boundary line, the Bradstreet and Bouquet expeditions, new taxes, and the Stamp Act. Almost every issue contains some American news.

In their annual Assembly that night, the Associates heard Prof. Bradford Perkins of the history department speak on the peace negotiations of 1814. The new exhibition observed the sesqui-centennial of the War of 1812. Members have now received a special bulletin explaining the exhibition and describing briefly all the Library's resources on the War of 1812. Such a detailed booklet was made possible by financial help from the Michigan Daughters of 1812, which was gratefully acknowledged. It is entitled What So Proudly We Hail'd and was written by Albert T. Klyberg of the Library staff.

Attention, Collectors!

Publicity on the coming sesqui-centennial observance of the University in 1967 has probably made our readers aware of this 150th birthday celebration. As part of the festivities the Clements Library would like to have an exhibition honoring collectors among our Associates. The Board of Governors has endorsed this proposal.

First of all, we need to identify collectors in our Associates by asking them—here and now—to step forward and tell us what kinds of books or manuscripts they collect. Then we will ask them if they will lend us one—or possibly two—of their possessions for three months during 1967. The items will be kept in locked cases here and will be insured. A descriptive bulletin will be published as a guide to the exhibition. Rarely have we had an exhibition that was not of our own material, but we feel that our Associates can contribute to a startling and varied display that will attract considerable attention.

We cannot ask that you send us your very best or favorite piece (unless you would like to), but we should like to show off one of your finest acquisitions. Unity in such an exhibition may be impossible to achieve, but in this project variety is a virtue. We urge our Associate collectors to participate. Please let the Library know of your willingness and your field of interest. We will then correspond directly concerning exactly what may be borrowed, the timing in 1967, etc.

Pilgrim's Progress

Although I went to Europe in September to do research on a particular topic, I found time to call on several book dealers in behalf of the Clements Library. I was fortunate to meet dealers in London, Edinburgh, Paris, Geneva, Lucerne, Amsterdam, and The Hague.

They had one common lament: the scarcity of Americana. This must be understood as comparative scarcity; that is, there is much less Americana to be found than there was thirty years ago. It does not mean that their cupboards are bare. They are reduced to buying from collectors, or the heirs of collectors, from auction sales even in New York, and from one another. They no longer find caches of Americana in out-of-the-way
places at bargain prices. One consequence is that they do a good deal of trading among themselves, as mentioned, before offering a book to consumer (library or collector). Their stocks usually contain modern books as well as old.

I felt reasonably gratified to pick up 28 books, two maps, and one small group of manuscripts from dealers. In addition, I arranged for bids at a Sotheby auction in London which occurred after I left the city and netted us a collection of War of 1812 manuscripts, a manuscript map, and three books. I trust that I made the wants of the Clements Library clearer to these dealers so that we may in the future be offered occasional items before they are cataloged. One call in regard to a collection of privately owned manuscripts was not productive, but another one may bear fruit.

I was not able to visit the English antiquarian dealers scattered in small towns around the country. Such a tour might have been rewarding. I did go, of course, to Henry Stevens, Son & Stiles in Farnham, still the biggest dealers in Americana in Europe. The subject has always been their speciality and they are not abandoning it, although they are stocking more nineteenth-century titles than they used to.

I worked principally in the British Museum Library and the Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) and became convinced that such large libraries, despite their riches, suffer disadvantages. There is no doubt that small libraries can give more attention to their holdings, and I can assert that by contrast the Clements Library is superbly cataloged.

H.H.P.

An Open-Ended Birthday

Institutions, unlike humans, usually observe birthday anniversaries only at twenty-five-year intervals. This Library celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1948 with speeches and a dinner. It is now in its 42nd year and beginning to think about what it should do to celebrate in 1973. However, the Library was brought into the observance of Jim Shearer's 80th birthday last month.

Jim, who has been especially generous to the Library, turned the tables and decided that to celebrate his youth he would give a present to the Library. In fact, he made two gifts. One was a book that made us all wonder why we hadn't had it on our shelves before: the Mémoire of the Duc De Lauzon (Paris 1822). The Duc was a dashing young cavalry officer who fought for us during the Revolution. He died in 1793, but his autobiography did not get printed until thirty years later. Since the Library has always picked up memoirs of this kind, it was astonishing to find we did not have it.

The second gift was The Reign of Terror in Kansas (Boston 1856). The view point of the publisher is obvious from the subtitle: "As encouraged by President Pierce, and carried out by the southern slave power." Eyewitnesses reported the outrages against free-state settlers who were trying to make sure that Kansas entered the Union as a nonslaveholding state. Jim has been particularly interested in the West, and this is contemporary first-hand material of considerable scarcity.

Jim could not attend the Board of Governors meeting on November 6, but his colleagues could not let his birthday gifts go unnoticed. To honor him and help him celebrate, the Governors dug into their pockets and purchased for the Library in his name Noah Webster's anonymous Letter to General Hamilton (New York 1800). Hamilton was opposing President Adams' stand in favor of a strong navy and recommended that instead the standing army should be increased. This argument broke into the presidential campaign. Webster, an Adams man, wanted nothing so much as to shut Hamilton up. The booklet is suitably labeled concerning its auspicious origin.
Barrie, Cockburn, and Malcolm Letters
Like Madison's and Jefferson's "botanical" excursion up the Hudson in 1791, the Director's "research" foray up the Thames this fall accrued benefits to the Library which were not entirely foreseen. One really unexpected find was the sale at Sotheby's of nearly one hundred British naval letters concerning the Chesapeake operations in the War of 1812.

Perhaps one of the most determined and destructive efforts made by the British in the war was their marauding activities in the Chesapeake Bay in 1814. Designed to chastize the Americans for burning Canadian towns along the Niagara frontier and also as a stroke at the nerve center of the nation's administration, the Chesapeake operations resulted in the destruction of the city of Washington and the attempt to seize Baltimore. In addition to these famous actions, there were many lesser known, but no less rapacious attacks on other coastal settlements and roadsteads.

These significant letters of Captain Robert Barrie, Admiral Cockburn, and Admiral Malcolm provide insight to both the planning and the execution of the raids. Other letters concern the capture of St. Mary's in Florida, the peace negotiations, the exchange of prisoners and runaway slaves, and the Battle of New Orleans. The Associates made the purchase of these items by means of the Mrs. Louise T. Miller Fund.

David Porter Collection
The early days of the republic produced a rather remarkable set of young naval officers whose brash and buoyant demeanor seemed to embody a certain national sauciness. Clearly not the least of these tough little sea-hawks was David Porter (1780-1843).

A midshipman in 1798, he took part in the undeclared naval war with France. As lieutenant and later commander of the Enterprise, he crossed swords with the pirates at Tripoli. In the War of 1812, sailing the Essex into Pacific waters he took a dozen prizes before being outgunned in the harbor of Valparaiso, Chile. After the war he tried his hand at farming, failed miserably, and returned to the sea. As commander-in-chief of the West India Squadron he successfully set about clearing the Carribean of pirates.

Because of his unabashed zeal in affronting Puerto Rican authorities, he was brought back to stand trial in 1825. He resigned his commission in a huff and accepted a command offered by the Mexican revolutionary government. After a stormy interlude he returned to the United States and was appointed Consul to Algiers by Andrew Jackson in 1830. From Algiers he went to Turkey, becoming Minister there in 1839 and serving that post until his death in 1843.

The Library was fortunate in acquiring one hundred and nineteen Porter items at auction this fall. These letters, purchased by the Associates through the use of the Mrs. Louise T. Miller Fund, relate to important segments of Porter's career such as his command of the New Orleans Station in 1807, his capture aboard the Essex in Valparaiso Harbor, his service in the War of 1812 on the Potomac, his friendship with the Chilean revolutionary Carrera brothers, his role as commander of the West India Squadron, and his short career in the Mexican Navy.
More Maps

In the final two months of 1964 map acquisitions tripled over those of the preceding ten. All told the map division made eight purchases since October, part of them in the wake of Mr. Peckham’s return from Europe.

Lieut. John Ross’ Course of the River Mississippi from the Balise to Fort Chartres (1772) is a long map of particular interest for his notes scattered along the river’s course marking such spots as “Good land . . . very good land” and “Where the 22 Regt. was drove back by the Tunicas 1764.”

Similarly, Thornton and Morden’s New Map of the Chief Rivers, Bayes, Creeks, Harbours, and Settlements in South Carolina (1695) shows not only roads, bays and soundings, but also the location of more than 200 individual settlers and planters. It is possible to pin down Ashleys and Lunds as well as lesser knowns of interest to those seeking precise details.

A real “sleeper” was a large manuscript map of northern Lake Champlain, 26 by 56 inches, entitled “Plan of Isle aux Noix” and done in 1780 by a military engineer named Hunter. It shows the barracks, magazines, block-houses, and “rebek battery” of that position. It turned up buried in the back of a Sotheby catalog, and Mr. Peckham entered a successful bid. The British stole south in 1780 and reoccupied Fort Ticonderoga.

A second seventeenth-century addition was the colorful J. Van Keulen map of the West Indies showing the east coast of North America and part of South America. Then we obtained Matthew Settler’s Plan von Neu-Ebenezer (about 1747) which is really three maps in one. Part one is a colored township map of the Moravian town of New Ebenezer on the Savannah River in Georgia, embellished with figures of livestock. A second map on the same folio sheet gives a general view of the southeast coast of the United States. The third section depicts a mill on a branch of the Savannah River with an explanatory key.

The Call to be Saved

In the year 1739 George Whitefield, then only 25 years old, had been a deacon of the Church of England for three years and had already completed his first missionary journey to America. His popularity as a preacher was attested by the fact that his printed sermons were in great demand in England, many of them going through as many as three editions in one year. He was also the principal catalyst in the “Great Awakening” in America.

In that same year, a London publisher, C. Whitefield, printed at least twenty of his individual sermons. These were gathered together in one volume which has recently been given to the Library by Anne and Sidney Hamer of Washington, D.C. Mr. Hamer is an Associate and an esteemed book dealer. One of the sermons included is The Heinous Sin of Drunkenness, which Whitefield preached aboard the Whitaker en route to Georgia in 1738.

Social Notes

The Library has been utilized recently for several social occasions, besides the Assembly of the Associates. In September a tea was held here to honor Col. and Mrs. Thomas Spalding of Washington, D.C. An alumnus and steadfast friend of libraries at the University, Col. Spalding has for forty years donated interest-

Always An England

Now and then, we discover that our collections do not have a copy of a basic title. Recently we obtained such a “classic”: The Present State of His Majesties Isles and Territories in America by Richard Blome (London, 1687). This substantial volume ranges as far north as Newfoundland in describing the country and opportunity for settlement but major attention is paid to the separate islands of the West Indies. Essentially a promotion piece, it was popular in its day with foreign translations.

Engraved maps, seven in number, depict Jamaica, Bermuda, Barbados, New England and New York, Carolina, the Middle Atlantic states, and the Northwest part of America.

At the end are astronomical charts which incorporate “A table by which, at any time of the day or night here in England, you may know what hour it is in any of these islands.”