Amberina

More than a hundred friends of Mrs. A. E. White and of the Library responded to our invitation to honor her on May 11. She had just presented to the University the Elsie S. and Albert E. White Amberina Glass Collection, along with a lighted case for its display. This unusually colorful art glass was first manufactured by the New England Glass Co. in 1883; it is scarce and very valuable today. The collection gives a spot of color in our Main Room and offers something of interest, besides books, to the casual visitor.

Mr. George O. Bird, glass expert from the Henry Ford Museum, spoke on the development of American glass. Like printing, it was more than a craft and possesses historical and cultural overtones. Tea was served while the guests had an opportunity to inspect the collection.

This event followed by six weeks the observance of Founder’s Day, April 1, when Prof. Russell Bidlack spoke on “The Ann Arbor of Mr. Clements’ Boyhood.” His delightful retrospect was so warmly received that it has been duplicated for the many persons in the audience who requested copies.

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Watkins Gift

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Watkins (he is the retired Secretary of the University) have presented to the Library a number of books and manuscripts from Mrs. Watkins’ family in Connecticut and New York. We were allowed to sort and keep what we wished. We have found seventeen books of particular interest dating from 1768 to 1847 and covering a variety of Americana. They include two song books, a church controversy, two novels, four Connecticut government broadsides, two speeches, etc.

The manuscripts consist of a dozen items ranging from the War of 1812 to a few letters of 1850. We are indebted to the Watkins for their thoughtfulness.

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Military and Religious Brawls

Two of the books from the Watkins gift are of especial interest, one on the French and Indian War and one on an ecclesiastical dispute in Connecticut. The first one, A Narrative of the Travels of Isaac Walden...Written by Himself (New London, 1773) is filled with twelve pages of unbelievable hardships, almost one to each printed line.

After his discharge, he slowly made his way back to civilization and home in Norwich. He fell in with a teamster who hired him to help cart army supplies from Albany to Schenectady. Before he knew it, he found himself with the Red coats subduing Indians up in arms with Pontiac.

Most unexpectedly, as the book comes to a peaceful conclusion, it becomes linked with the other title. After his military career was over, Walden ended his long search for the true faith by joining a pacifistic sect, the Rogerenes.

This non-conformist group, followers of the wealthy John Rogers (1648-1721 of Connecticut), were also known as Rogerene Baptists and Rogerene Quakers. Literal interpreters of the Bible, they believed in no special Sabbath day, nonmedical care of the sick, separation of church and state, and were opposed to an educated ministry, “vain youths brought up at college.”

Their chief center was at New London, Connecticut and they especially delighted in tormenting the minister of the established Congregational Church, the Rev. Mather Byles, subject of our second book. Defiantly, they kept their hats on in church and the women ostentatiously began to knit and sew during portions of the service. Public disapproval and punishment did not deter them, and hounding Byles was a seven-day cause. The final tactic of lining up smiling and silent sentries from the parsonage to the meeting house certainly ruined his seventh day. While the bell tolled and the congregation waited, Byles did not venture forth until the reluctant civil authorities cleared the way.

Suddenly after several years of enduring this and other thorns, the Reverend decided to accept a fortuitous call to another church in Boston and of all discourteous things, an Episcopalian one. At a church meeting the departing minister was
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grilled. The bewildered and dismayed questioners brushed aside his complaint about the dissip- dents as a “mere cobweb” and harped on the lure of the higher salary. After all, they reminded him, you knew what the living conditions were when you were ordained here, and surely you must have expected an increase in the size of your family and expenses. The badgered minister claimed inexperience: “I was but a young spark of 22 years old, and did not consider of these things.”

Most of this is in the dialogue taken down by a church member signing himself A. Z., who went incognito, justified by Zaccheus’ example when he climbed up the sycamore tree. We follow the examination in A Debate between the Rev. Mr. Byles, Late Pastor of the First Church in New-London, and the Brethren of that Church, published in 1768.

Difficult Decade
The Library is indebted to Edward Eberstadt and Sons, New York rare book dealers, for the gift of 44 pamphlets printed in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Although a few were duplicates, which we can trade, the others were welcome additions. Many were government documents, but on topics of interest to us. They cover Jefferson’s administration and the growing troubles with Great Britain.

“I Did Not Hesitate”
No one was more adamant than George III in refusing to recognize the independence of the United States. When the prime minister, Lord North, wanted to toss in the sponge and stop the war, the king kept him at it. When the colonial secretary and other cabinet min- isters began to resign, he recoiled from recognizing the opposition. No wonder he earned the adjective “stubborn.”

But the day came, in the spring of 1782, when he had to appoint Lord Shelburne as prime minister and allow him to pro- ceed with negotiations for a treaty, although he still insisted on a settlement short of inde- pendence. But the British ne- gotiators encountered equally stubborn Americans, who de- manded recognition of inde- pendence as a first step. By November 1782 a preliminary treaty was drafted, to be submitted to Parliament for approval. It was accompanied by “His Majesty’s most gracious speech to both Houses,” of De- cember 5. If not written by the king with clenched teeth, it was drafted by Shelburne for him. In it he said:

“I lost no time in giving the necessary orders to prohibit further prosecution of offensive war... I have pointed all my views and measures to an entire and cordial reconciliation with those colonies... Finding it indispensable to the attainment of this object, I did not hesitate to go to the full length of the powers vested in me, and offered, not true, to de- clare them Free and Indepen- dent States.”

It was a good job of self-white- washing and a vital concession. It was the word long awaited by the Americans as a kind of pub- lic confession. The king’s speech was brought across the Atlantic to the West Indies by Captain Rodney, son of the admiral there. Then the captain of the brigantine Peggy carried the news in nineteen days to New York, where a “gentleman from New-Jersey” brought it to Phila- delphia on February 13.

Mr. Eleazer Oswald promptly printed the speech in broadside form. The Library has just acquired a copy of the extremely rare broadside, by which many Amer- icans learned that their old ad- versary had capitulated.

His Heart’s Delight
To the nineteenth-century nov- elist, the virtue of a young maiden was never questioned, al- though always in danger. More- over, American writers often
tended to depict European society as the arena in which such purity might receive its severest test. The resulting work was usually outrageous melodrama.

One such novelist is Sarah Sayward Barrell Keating Wood, Maine's earliest writer of imaginative literature. Only nineteen in 1778, when she married Richard Keating, a clerk to her grandfather in his position as representative in the Massachusetts General Court, she was forced to support herself and three small children when her husband died suddenly in 1783. Becoming an authoress, Mrs. Keating published four novels and contributed to the Massachusetts Magazine and other periodicals.

Her first novel, Julia and the Illuminated Baron (Portsmouth, 1800), is a rare book, and the Clements is pleased to have recently acquired a copy. The work is almost a perfect example of the Gothic romance. Use of the French Illuminati Society—which sprang up after the Revolution and advocated the eradication of religious and moral principles—adds the appropriate fantastic touch. The story concerns the efforts of a virtuous European maid, Julia, to thwart the evil designs of a miscreant baron who ascribed whole-heartedly to the liberal Illuminati tenets. Hence, the play on the word "illuminated" in the title.

Her three other novels continued in this vein with ever more improbable plots, meandering narrative, and over-extended coincidence. Whatever her technical shortcomings, however, Mrs. Keating was at least aware of the dominant trend in literature during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Her books are similar in subject to Samuel Richardson's; and when that master of the sentimental analysis, Sir Walter Scott, appeared, Mrs. Keating is reputed to have destroyed much of her manuscript material in self-disparagement.

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Moving Woes

On February 24, 1784, John Adams was appointed our first Minister to the Court of St. James; while he made preparations for his new post, it fell to his wife to settle a great deal of the household affairs. In a letter of June 18, 1784, Mrs. Abigail Adams acknowledged the offer of their good friend Cotton Tufts to administer the Adams estate in their absence. Aside from having power of attorney to act in their behalf, he was to look after a number of particulars which she outlined in this letter. The servants were to have use of certain portions of the house in return for keeping the animals out of the yard, the gardens were to be attended, and rents collected. A separate fund was to be used for the education of the two sons who were at a boarding school. This very fine letter came to us as a gift from Mr. W. E. Treadway of Topeka, Kansas.

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Westward Land, Ho!

The Clements Library has acquired a group of 29 pamphlets on a subject of overwhelming interest in American history—public lands. Most of the pamphlets concern the interests of particular land companies, but universal problems of Indians, settlers, politics, speculators, lawsuits, and wars are so pervasive as to form a fascinating historical movement.

By 1700 Americans were beginning to push out from the eastern seaboard in great numbers, often lured by the promotional efforts of giant land companies. Yet the history of these huge agencies, some of which held five millions or more of wilderness acres, often read like Gulliver pinned by the Lilliputians.

The first, and frequently the least, barrier to the company was the acquisition of land from the Indians. Experienced agents and well-managed treaties cleared that path satisfactorily. However, gaining sanction from ruling governments: successively British, provincial, state, and finally the federal government of the newly formed United States, was quite another series of problems. Compounding the problems were the turbulencies of wars, the formation of a new government under the Articles of Confederation, and ultimately the Constitution, each bringing changes in land dealings.

Pre-revolutionary companies for the most part gave up when their British agreements were phased out, even though the years following 1763 were times of land fever uninterrupted by the crisis of the Revolution. Every one was infected: political leaders such as Morris and Patrick Henry; Washington and other generals of the Revolution; merchants such as John Jacob Astor and Peter Smith; capitalists and speculators in England, France, Holland. Companies sprang up by the score, shares were sold, and quick profits were anticipated.

After the Revolution, new companies shifted lobbying from state legislatures to the national Congress, and became ensnared in the slow mills of the fledgling political system. By 1810, the original members of the postrevolutionary companies had died off, though estate claims were to
be settled on into the next century. A note of final desperation was sounded, for example, in a *Memorial* presented to Congress in 1864 by John Shee, “sole survivor” of the committee to negotiate the affairs of the Illinois and Wabash Land Companies. Again and again it was a losing war for the companies, and for two extra-legal reasons: settlers’ rights, based on a kind of labor theory of land value, supported by popular demagogues; and the rule of conquest. A contract with a loser, especially if that loser be an Indian, is not worth very much.

Yet, despite their difficulties, and despite their admitted self-seeking enterprise, the land companies did forward settlement through their promotional schemes and their field agencies. They precipitated land policies such as that in the Ordinance of 1787. They promoted canals and roads so their settlers could find a way to the west. In many ways they were vital enzymes in the heady brew of an age of ferment and growth.

This new collection of 30 items augments considerably our present holdings now indexed by over 50 references in our card catalogues, not including pertinent maps and manuscripts. Of these, 22 are publications directly relating to eleven different land companies or with allusions to them by rival companies. (Since many are anonymous, the sponsor is sometimes difficult to detect). The remaining 8 illustrate other phases of the question of public land: border disputes and land reports.

Several of the companies had not been represented in our library previously. Imprint dates show eighteen from the 18th century and twelve from the 19th century.

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**Badia’s Guerra**

Italian Americana is pretty scarce. In the period of American discovery and exploration, Italian navigators like Columbus sailed under other flags. In the period of settlement, very few Italians migrated to the New World. Yet they were not uninterested in what was going on here. In 1763 Marc Antonio Badia published his *Compendio della Guerra nata per confini in America*, or *A Compendium of the War Originating over Boundaries in America*. In other words, a history of what we call The French and Indian War.

Both France and England had allies in Europe who were much interested in the extent of their empires in America. From a distinctively European point of view, the expansion of France into the Ohio Valley, the loss of Forts to England, the surrender of Quebec, and even the English seizure of Cuba are discussed. Badia could see the eclipse of France by a rising England, which would change the course of European diplomacy.

No English translation has been found, and only a few copies of the Italian have been located.

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**Commodore Morris**

To the very fine American naval collections already housed in the manuscript division such as our Hubert S. Smith Naval Collection, the Papers of Thomas J. Chew, and David Porter, the library has recently added some 65 letters of Charles Morris. Charles Morris (1784–1856) entered the United States Navy in 1799, served under Preble in the Tripolitan War—taking part in the famous Philadelphia episode—was an officer on the *Constitution* during its engagement with the *Guérrière*—in which he was severely wounded—and captained the *John Adams* in subsequent actions in the War of 1812. The present conjunction of the Morris letters and those of Purser Thomas J. Chew is very fortunate; we already had in our Chew Papers a great deal of correspondence between both Chew and Morris and their respective wives.

Following the War of 1812, Morris commanded fleets in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic. Later he served as a Naval Commissioner and a supervisor of the naval academy at Annapolis. Among the significant items in the new collection is a circular from the Secretary of Navy to all captains. Dated in January of 1813, it gives an interesting glimpse of the Navy’s estimates of British strategy for the coming season.

Another group of letters pertains to a presentation of an urn to the Marquis de Lafayette by the men of the *Brandywine*. The *Brandywine* under the command of Morris carried Lafayette back to France in 1825 after his visit to the United States.

Perhaps the most significant item in this new acquisition is a twenty-page letter from Secretary of State John Quincy Adams to the Secretary of the Navy, Smith Thompson, May 20, 1819. The letter outlines instructions to be given to Captain Oliver Hazard Perry for a diplomatic mission to Venezuela and Argentina. Adams detailed the breakdown of communications between these South American countries and the United States and the delicate situation of the U.S. as a neutral in the dispute between Spain and the South Americans over independence. Perry’s task was to reopen channels wrecked by high-handed activities.