Streeter Sale Dates

Announcement by the Parke-Bernet Galleries of the coming Streeter auction sales revealed two new pieces of information. The Streeter collection of Americana numbers close to 5,000 pieces, and there will be seven sales (six months apart) instead of six. We still believe that the first three sales and then the last one will have the greatest appeal to this Library.

Of the initial three sales, the first occurs in October and the next two in 1967. Consequently the Associates' Board of Governors is avidly seeking contributions from any and all sources. The response has been encouraging, but the goal of $250,000 is a high one. Again, alumni who are going to be approached by the Sesquicentennial fund campaign are reminded that they may designate their gifts for the Clements Library. To our Associates who are not alumni, we ask that they begin to calculate their margin of income tax deduction for 1966 and consider additional gifts.

In the next Quarto we will report on our success at the first Streeter sale and the trend of prices. Meanwhile, you may read about it in your daily newspaper, or especially in The New York Times for October 26 and 27.

Cabinetmakers' Quartet

Furniture making in Great Britain reached a pinnacle in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Designers of great taste were applying their art to furniture and interior decoration, and they were popular, too. They utilized mahogany and made it the leading cabinet wood. The styles they introduced were copied in America and their leadership was acknowledged. Because of this influence, their design books are rightfully considered to be Americana.

None of these books was on the Michigan campus. We have undertaken to remedy this deficiency. There were four great designers whose names became attached to the styles they popularized. In order of appearance they are: Thomas Chippendale, George Hepplewhite, Thomas Sheraton, and Robert and James Adam. Over the past few years we have picked up the heavily illustrated books of the first three men. The elusive work was that of the Adam brothers, but we are happy to report that with the beginning of the new fiscal year we have just acquired it—at a price!

The Adam work is a bibliographical nightmare. It is made up of three thin volumes, the first two published in parts. The third volume was published posthumously in 1822, when a new title page for volume two was printed to go with unsold parts left over from the 1779 printing. Anyway, our three volumes are bound together in a size similar to the big Audubon's Birds.

Current Exhibition

Historians are forever searching for impartial observers of major events who will show insight and lack of bias in recounting their impressions. To a great extent foreign visitors and travelers have been accorded high regard as detached, candid observers of America. Yet, in some respects the impartiality of their views is severely restricted by their own cultural pre-conditioning. Often therefore their reactions provide almost as much insight into their own native society as the one which they set out to describe. Conscious and unconscious comparisons are made.

The Library's current exhibition, "John Bull Appraises Uncle Sam's Manners, 1790-1840," provides just such a two-way view. For example, Isaac Weld, son of a Dublin minister, maintained his aristocratic prejudices throughout his American tour, which he recorded in his Travels Through the States of North America (London 1799). At Williamsburg he noted that the capitol was crumbling to pieces, that William and Mary College was a grammar school rather than a college, that the church was out of repair, and that the hospital for the insane was not well regulated. He left America "without a sigh, and without entertaining the slightest wish to revisit it."

A generation later another critic, Mrs. Frances Trollope, combined anti-democratic sensitivities with social invective in
THE CLEMENTS LIBRARY
ASSOCIATES

Board of Governors
(Appointed by the Regents of the University)

Carl W. Bonbright, Flint
Roscoe O. Bonisteel, Ann Arbor
Robert P. Briggs, Jackson
William C. Finkenstaedt, Detroit
Hubert H. Frisinger, Toledo
William T. Gossett, Bloomfield Hills
Hoyt E. Hayes, Bay City
David W. Kendall, Detroit
James S. Schoff, New York
Vice Chairman
S. Spencer Scott, New York
Morrison Shafroth, Denver
James Shearer II, Chicago
James K. Watkins, Detroit
Renville Wheat, Detroit
Chairman
Howard H. Peckham, Director of the Library, Secretary

her Domestic Manners of the Americans (London 1832). Democracy in America was responsible for all manner of distasteful attributes including “fast eating, boastful talk, transient female beauty, inadequate domestic service, abuse of calomel as a remedy, copious and careless expectation, free and easy manners, and superficial culture.”

British political issues were reflected in William Cobbett's A Year's Residence in the United States (London 1819). Cobbett, the exiled radical, addressed his preface to “all those Englishmen who, having something left to be robbed of, and wishing to preserve it, are looking towards America as a place of refuge from the Boroughmongers and the Holy Alliance.”

Likewise, Morris Birkbeck’s Notes on a Journey in America (London 1818) and D. Griffith’s Two years Residence in the New Settlements of Ohio (London 1835) were addressed to agriculturally distressed farmers and workingmen respectively. Each reflected the severe economic dislocation at home in England as a sequence of the industrial revolution as well as the pioneer life and conditions in America.

A different type of reflection, the reform impulse, was presented by Frances Wright in her Views of Society and Manners in America (London 1821). In her early outlook, Fanny Wright saw America as a land of liberty and republican simplicity, a glowing contrast to the Old World. Her view was slightly altered, however, by the institution of slavery. “The sight of slavery is revolt[ing] everywhere, but to inhale the impure breath of its pestilence in the free winds of America is odious beyond all that imagination can conceive.”

Long Hot Summer

The summer of 1966 will be remembered as the season when the central campus looked its worst. One building coming down; two going up; another being remodeled. The lawns being trenched for installation of an underground sprinkling system. Very little rain and hot days. Visitors must have received a poor impression.

With fall looming before us, we begin to be in better condition. By spring of our Sesquicentennial Year many of the scars of progress will be gone. Even the hedge around our building will be replaced. Elsewhere in town, the prospect pleases: trees on Main Street, a new hotel rising on the site of the old Allen, additional motels, new apartment buildings, and a second high school. Plan to pay us a visit in 1967.

Texas Republic

One of the notable acquisitions of this summer was David Barnett Edward's The History of Texas; or, The Emigrant's, Farmer's, and Politician's Guide. The book, which is characterized in Streeter's Bibliography of Texas as “one of the essential Texas books” was published at Cincinnati in 1836. It includes a map in color. Edward, a native of Scotland, had been a teacher in Texas in the early 1830’s, but had apparently had a falling out with his employers.

The Edward History begins with a physical description of Texas, including a brief mention of the various towns and a discussion of the climate and agricultural products. There is a chapter on the several Indian tribes of the territory, with a brief history of white-Indian relations which reveals the author’s sympathies with the Indians.

One of the most valuable features of the Edward book is its inclusion of a number of contemporary documents which are hard to find elsewhere. For example, it reprints the Constitution of 1833 and the text of the Mexican colonization laws. The last part of the book is chiefly devoted to accounts of the rapidly deteriorating political situation between Mexico and the United States late in 1835.

The book is enlivened throughout with the author's own vehement opinions, including an attack on several Methodist cler-
Symposium on Rare Books

Current, and often vexing, issues in rare book libraries were presented at a recent symposium held at Syracuse University under the auspices of their Department of Library Science. Chairman J. Terry Bender, Curator of Special Collections, brought together an enthusiastic group to explore topics of mutual concern in the three day conference, July 27-29.

During the discussions, it became obvious there were major differences in the policies of the libraries represented, particularly in regard to collecting. To some, it seemed that indiscriminate or “blunderbuss” collecting was called for in general collections, especially newly formed ones. Mrs. Georgia Haugh, participating from the Clements Library, espoused selective acquisition in pursuing the design and purpose of integrating manuscripts with books, maps, and newspapers within the library. Policy should be determined from the innate integrity of the collections itself.

To strengthen them, additions should be made in the established fields and periods even though there does not appear to be an immediate use, she continued. To do otherwise puts on the librarian the dubious obligation of defining the nature and course of future scholarship. To rely upon current scholarly sociology alone seems a dangerous practice. The librarianship of rarities is one field in which a market research mentality toward scholarship is distinctly out of place.

Another point in her presentation touched upon an additional function, that of increasing availability by photo processes for qualified scholars. To add to these obligations the responsibility for making the materials generously convenient as well seems to shift the very premise upon which the library should function. The library should not be expected to spend its resources in producing multiple reproductions of its hardly won collections. The staff expects rather to render skillful assistance to today’s highly mobile scholar, who stands to gain from his own examination of the original documents and supporting materials. Spirited discussions, also, revolved around other topics: the rights of access, literary rights in manuscript collections, and length of time researchers might reasonably expect rights of priority. The computer, too, was accorded consideration but not top billing. Guardians of the printed word were not about to embrace the machine, much less to forward its take-over.

Speakers and panelists represented many types of rare book libraries and special collections: H. Richard Archer, Chaplin Library, Williams College; T. R. Schellenberg, University of Washington; Roland Baughman and Ken Lohf, Columbia University; Herbert Cahoon, Pierpont Morgan Library; George Healey, Cornell University; Frederick Goff, Library of Congress; Marcus McCorison, American Antiquarian Society; John Wyllie, American Anti-Quarian Society; John Wyllie and C. Waller Barrett, Virginia; Matt Lowman, Newberry Library; and from Syracuse, John S. Mayfield, David Maslyn, Warren Boes, Phyllis Platnick, and Stephen Mitchell.

Flood Fighters

When the cloudburst of July 12 struck Ann Arbor, the drain at our back door reversed itself and spouted up like a geyser. Water rose against our doors more than a foot and, of course, began seeping into the back hall. There was nothing to do but lock the front doors and gather the whole staff in the basement. There, barefooted, we proceeded to fight the flood.

With mops, cans, pails, and old newspapers we scooped and sopped up the spreading water. Puns were not lacking: “Every-
thing else pails into insignificance!” but no one complained that this wasn’t professional work. As soon as the rain stopped, two members went around to the back entrance and began bailing out the pond at the foot of the steps. Considering salaries, this was the most expensive flood crew the University had working, but after an hour and a half, we won. A plant worker appeared with a suction pump, and our custodian began mopping up the remaining puddles. By prompt and united action, no damage was done.

We were told that our difficulty is that the downspouts on the old physics building go into the same drain as ours do, and together they overload it. Next day (no connection) demolition work started on the physics building, so we hoped we were free of such flash floods. But a hard rain one night in August, after the physics building was down, again let water into our back hall. Plant department engineers are working on a new theory.

Mike Fink, Folk Hero

Cincinnati, city of culture, was able to support many publishing houses during the nineteenth century. These bustling firms supplied not only informational books but also lighter fare for leisure time reading. To fill this demand, during the 1840’s and 1850’s many English and American stories were brought forth in cheap paper “yellow backs” for 25 and 50 cents.

One of these acquired by us, not at the original price, is still intact in its eye-catching wrappers. Surprisingly, the pages are still unopened, even though the tale of Mike Fink was a popular one. Over 15,000 copies were distributed by one enterprising publisher, Uriah Pierson Jones.

Mike Fink, a keelboatman on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, lived from 1770 until 1823 or so. He became known for his tall tales, and by 1829 legends of his exploits began to appear in print.

The author of this version, Emerson Bennett, was an emigrant from the East who was quick to seize upon local material for his series of romances, written in the style of James Fenimore Cooper. This genre is generally considered a precursor of the “dime novel,” a debased form of later decades.

Figures from Annual Report

Readers will shortly receive a copy of the Library’s annual report for the fiscal year 1965–66. We summarize below a few statistics—which we caution you to remember are only one kind of measurement of the Library’s program.

518 books added, of which 101 were gifts and 69 were reference works and bibliographies. Nearly 3100 pieces of early sheet music accessioned.

Five new manuscript collections were obtained, besides some additions to existing collections. 34 maps and 239 issues of newspapers were added.

Research workers paid 1005 visits to the Library.

No staff changes, thank goodness.

Niagara Campaign

One of the unfortunate consequences of Andrew Jackson’s victory at New Orleans in 1815 was that it obscured some of the important military lessons of the War of 1812. In the after-glow of this astounding triumph of barricaded militia over British regulars, the earlier disasters of militia and the successes of American regulars were overlooked. Winfield Scott and Jacob Brown had demonstrated at the Battles of Chippewa and Lundy’s Lane on the Niagara frontier that well-trained, well-disciplined troops could be more than a match for the veterans who had humbled Napoleon.

The Library has just acquired an unpublished manuscript on the Niagara campaign. It is a collection of lectures prepared by David B. Douglass. Although the lectures were written about 30 years after the war, they are source materials because Douglass drew on his own experience as an officer in the 1814 campaign. They total nearly 45,000 words, and contain three maps of his.

Born in 1790, Douglass graduated from West Point in 1813, served in the war, and returned to the Military Academy in 1815 as an instructor in physics. Later he taught mathematics and engineering, served Kenyon College as president, and had a distinguished career as a civil engineer.