ACCOUNT OF MAGELLAN VOYAGE PURCHASED BY OUR ASSOCIATES

The Clements Library Associates startled the book-collecting world by purchasing at auction the finest, most valuable book in the Streeter collection of Americana. It is the account of Magellan’s voyage around the world written by one of the eighteen survivors, Antonio Pigafetta, and published at Paris in 1525. The price paid was $56,000! This is the single most expensive book ever added to the Library.

Associates may well ask why this book is worth so much. First of all, this is the only report ever published by a participant in the first circumnavigation of the globe. Magellan started out in 1519 with five ships and nearly 300 men. The cruise took three years, during which Magellan himself was killed in the Philippines and many other crewmen lost. Only one ship and 18 men completed the voyage and returned to Spain. Pigafetta was an Italian nobleman who wrote his narrative in Italian, the manuscript of which is in a Milan library. He or a friend (the point is disputed) translated it into French for a French patron to whom it was sent. The latter had it printed in Paris. It contains much on the Indians of South America.

There are seven known copies of the book today. Three are in Europe, four in the United States. Six of these copies were in libraries, and only Mr. Streeter’s copy was available to be purchased. Now it too has passed into a library, and no copies are available at any price.

The next to the last copy in private hands sold ten years ago for $26,500. This means that the price has doubled in ten years. Almost every rare book has doubled in price in the last decade, and some have tripled. The annual report of the Huntington Library, just received, remarks on the fact that “sheer scarcity has resulted in price increases over a span of fifteen years from 100 to 500 per cent.” Further, the morning after the Streeter sale, the Associates could have sold the book at a 30 per cent mark-up.

Fourthly, this purchase represents exactly the kind of source book which the Clements Library was founded to acquire, for the benefit of American scholarship. It is certain that Mr. Clements would have eagerly purchased this Magellan book if he had ever had a chance in his lifetime to acquire it.

Finally, the publicity value to the Library and to the University has been a dividend of the purchase. The New York Times carried two articles mentioning the prize carried off by the Clements Library Associates, and the Providence Bulletin published a long story. The University News Office put out a news release to all state papers, and The Detroit News carried a feature article. The Antiquarian Bookman carried the news to the book trade. Word-of-mouth gossip among collectors and librarians served to identify the Library as an institution that is vigorously pursuing its goals.

What use will be made of the book? Several inquiries were received about reprinting it. At this moment, it appears that a facsimile reprint, with a translation into English and a historical introduction, will be issued. Obviously, however, our source books cannot be purchased on the basis of what we may be able to forecast about current scholarly demands. There is no way of knowing what investigations are being pursued and will be undertaken immediately by research workers. The Library must buy when opportunity offers, and often “supply” will stimulate “demand,” as this instance has demonstrated.

The Board of Governors is pleased with its success in capturing the nugget and congratulates the membership on such a notable acquisition. The book is a particularly fine copy, with wide margins and a beautiful French binding of morocco.
THE CLEMENTS LIBRARY ASSOCIATES

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About that Second Auction

The Magellan book was not the only item bought at the first Streeter sale in late October. Seven other books, of much less cost and later date, were obtained. In all, the Associates spent slightly over $60,000 from the funds they have raised for the seven Streeter auctions coming in the next three years.

Their success at the first sale naturally gives them concern about the second sale, to take place in April 1967. The Board of Governors reminds Associates that contributions for this auction, either made directly or designated through the Sesquicentennial Campaign, are welcome. An income tax year is ending, and another is beginning.

The Board also wants it known that the Library has taken steps to raise more money itself. In conjunction with University Microfilms, Inc. it has cooperated in the facsimile reproduction of 100 rare books selected to illustrate with source materials the settlement of the U.S. continent. The series is called the March of America. The set retails at $500 ($450 to libraries) from which the Library receives a royalty. It is being advertised now. It will enrich the libraries of small colleges and junior colleges which can never afford the originals even if they could be found. Accumulated and advance royalty will be made available to the Library before the April Streeter auction.

Board Meeting

The Board of Governors met on November 4 and elected officers. Chairman Wheat asked to relinquish his office, which he has held for fifteen years. He urged the election of James S. Schoff, who has been serving as vice chairman. The nomination prevailed, and Mr. Schoff is the new chairman. Mr. Wheat was kept in harness, however, by the Board’s election of him as vice chairman. The minutes contain a tribute to Mr. Wheat for his long devotion to Library interests.

The Board was disappointed to learn that James K. Watkins felt obligated to decline reappointment to the Board and expressed its appreciation for his loyal interest and long service. A new appointee by the Regents was welcomed to her first meet-

ing: Mrs. David Upton, an alumna and former Ann Arbor resident, from St. Joseph.

In view of the purchases made at the first Streeter sale, the Board did not make any additional acquisitions at this meeting. Contributions are being conserved for the second Streeter auction next April. It was agreed that the Executive Committee should meet in April, and probably the full Board at Commencement time at the end of that month.

In the evening Associates and friends gathered to hear a lecture by Clifford K. Shipton, director of the American Antiquarian Society, on “The Educated Colonial.” His paper will be published in the Michigan Quarterly Review.

Half Horse--Half Alligator

“...And isn’t scar’d at trifles.
For well he knew what aim we take,
With our Kentucky rifles.
So he led us down to Cypress swamp;
The ground was low and mucky;
There stood John Bull in martial pomp,
And here was old Kentucky,
The Hunters of Kentucky.”

When Joseph S. Winter wrote to his brother, Elisha I. Winter, the day after the Battle of New Orleans he didn’t phrase his account quite in the words of the song “The Hunters of Kentucky,” but he gave an extremely full and glowing description nonetheless. Unfortunately we don’t have anything which records the reaction of his brother, who was a Federalist congressman in Washington, D.C.
Malcolm Log Books

Two years ago we reported the purchase of a group of letters found in England belonging to Admiral Sir Pultney Malcolm, a high British naval figure who participated in the Chesapeake Bay and New Orleans campaigns of the War of 1812. At a recent sale, the Library acquired the log books from Malcolm’s flag ships covering the same period as his correspondence noted above.

Ordinarily, log books are rather dull reading, providing little more than the position of the ships and information about the wind and tides. Malcolm’s log books of H.M.S. Tartarus, Newcasttle, and Royal Oak tell a good deal more. Comprising some 244 folio pages and including two watercolor drawings, two pen and ink drawings, one pencil drawing, five charts, two plans, and four maps with full accounts of troop movements and battle actions, this work is a remarkably fine addition to our holdings.

One important sample of the completeness of Malcolm’s entries is his description of the siege of Fort McHenry which Francis Scott Key has immortalized. “. . . Fort McHenry, Batteries, & Gun Boats fired on our ships as they approached. About 9 O’Clock the Meteor, Aetna, Terror, Volcano and Devastation Bombs [a type of ship] anchored in shore of the frigates and commenced Bombarding the Fort. The Erebus Rocket Ship was anchored nearer the Fort than any of the Bombs and fired a number of Rockets. From this anchorage the Enemy Forces were observed encamped on a height to the left of the town. The Erebus had to shift her birth as well as some of the Bombs to be out of range of the Enemy’s Fort and Batteries who at intervals opened a very heavy fire. The Boats of the Fleet were assembled alongside the Frigates & Bombs prepared with scaling ladders to co-operate with the Army should they make an attack on the Enemy’s Lines and Town. The Bombs continued Bombarding the Fort during the Night . . .”

Does that last line sound a little familiar?

First Seminole War

In the spring of 1818 Andrew Jackson, commander of the Southern Division of the U.S. Army, marched into Florida and seized the Spanish forts of St. Marks and Pensacola. Jackson succeeding General Gaines in December of 1817 had been ordered to prevent the incursions of Seminole Indians along the Georgia border, pursuing them into Florida, if necessary. His action met with the public disdain of congressional committees and most of President Monroe’s cabinet. Particularly embarrassing was his execution of two British traders, Alexander Arbuthnot and Robert Ambrister, who he claimed were foreign agents bent on inciting uprisings.

Four letters recently purchased by the Library written by Andrew Jackson to Secretary of War John C. Calhoun reveal how closely Jackson kept the War Department informed of his activities, however. Particularly clear are his reports concerning Arbuthnot and Ambrister. While he may have acted with some haste and dispatch, it appears that the government could have restrained him at almost any juncture had it really chosen to do so.

Nicholas Pocock

After the defeat of the British ship Java by the U.S.S. Constitution in December 1812, the British artist Nicholas Pocock depicted this action in four paintings. He also made the plates from which engravings were run off and sold in London. Two years ago the Library was able to acquire a set of the four engravings.

Now to our surprise and glee, Associate Eli Lilly of Indianapolis has presented to us the original oil paintings of two of the scenes. We supposed that the originals were long since gone, and it was not clear whether Pocock had ever done anything more than the engravings themselves. The paintings are larger than the prints and contain more detail. They are impressive additions to our source material on the War of 1812.

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

. . . Count me as an Associate. Here is my contribution ($10 minimum) for 1967. As a bonus I shall receive a copy of the reprint of Bartram’s Travels in Pensilvania and Canada (1751).
Van Deunter Collection

The Library has been fortunate last year in obtaining additional material related to the War of 1812, a war not often in our thoughts nor well known by most of us. The March Quarto told of the splendid collection of letters of Jacob Brown, General of the Army, and of the group of British letters about the war. Now, Col. Christopher Van Deventer, one of our Chicago Associates, has given us a number of letters of his grandfather, Major Christopher Van Deventer, which are most appropriate to add to our items not only of the war but also of the score of years which followed. In the collection are letters to or from many of the generals of the time such as Armstrong, Winder, Lewis, Macomb, Dearborn and Scott. Names of politicians which appear are Clay, Calhoun, Cass, Van Buren.

Major Van Deventer was graduated from West Point in 1808 and had a varied experience in the ill-fated battle at Stony Creek in which he—along with Generals Winder and Chandler—was captured and sent to Quebec from which place several of his letters were written. He escaped but was recaptured close to safety across the border in Maine. Located in Washington after the war, he held positions in the Federal service which brought him a wide acquaintance in both military and political circles.

The Van Deventer letters supplement the ones received earlier.

To Entertain a President

Since the Library served as the place for a University convocation to welcome President and Mrs. Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines during their visit in September, Associates may be interested to know what is involved at the site in preparation to receive a foreign head of state.

Aside from the preparations made by the University for the occasion (academic parade, awarding an honorary degree, luncheon, invited guests, press and television coverage, etc.), various protective measures came into the picture. The U.S. Department of State assigns an official to supervise the visit, and he examines in advance the places where the visitor will be and the routes to them. He also alerts the Secret Service, the FBI, state police, and local police. We were then visited by the latter officials to determine how many guards would be needed and what precautions would be taken. The Governor of Michigan being on hand, he too was to be protected.

As President Marcos’s visit was scheduled for the noon hour, we were told to lock up the Library in the morning and exclude all readers. We did, but electricians flowed around us attaching cables for TV cameras, lights, and amplifiers. Library furniture was moved to accommodate 200 folding chairs. Later in the morning the Detroit Bomb Squad arrived to “sweep” the building for any possible bombs. Guards were stationed around the building, inside and out, and various interior doors were locked. Even the staff was given identification ribbons.

As guests arrived, they handed over their invitations to doormen and were checked off on a typed list. This was done by two staff members, supported by a state policeman and a federal agent. The chief problem was that no one knew exactly who was coming from Washington with President Marcos. However, in the official party was a Philippine security officer who identified for us the ambassadors (to and from the Philippines), several generals, and aides. They and their ladies occupied three rows reserved for them.

The academic procession from President Hatcher’s house next door marched in last, surrounded by Secret Service men, and then the doors were closed and the guard continued. A couple hundred students had gathered out in front. Two officers sat on our balcony commanding a view of the whole room, and two were in the Rare Book Room.

At the conclusion of the ceremonies, the persons in caps and gowns proceeded to the Rare Book Room for disrobing (helped by other staff members). As they emerged, security agents formed around them, and they led the exit from the Library. Cars awaited to drive them to luncheon. Except for the noise of the cameras and the ill manners of some of the news reporters, everything moved smoothly. The Library could then be put back into its accustomed order.