Prospects

At this writing the catalogue of the third Streeter sale in October has not been received. It is going to be devoted to the areas of the Old Northwest, the Ohio Valley, and the Mississippi Valley, but we do not know the specific books that will be offered and consequently cannot guess how many we shall want or already have.

We suspect that there will be many scarce items, based on the first two sales, that we lack. The Associates have a small balance of cash on hand and a few pledges. The Library will throw in its reserves, even though we may have to pass up other offerings later. Since our fiscal year runs from July to July, the fourth Streeter auction, in April 1968, will fall in this same year. We anticipate we may be flat broke then.

Associates will be solicited in

The Commodore

"I have seen the papers, and they are ours," announced the Director with a decided note of triumph in his voice. He was, of course, referring to the Library’s acquisition of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry’s letters and documents, numbering over four hundred and fifty items. This collection, the only sizeable hoard of Perry materials known, represents a stunning addition to our growing holdings relating to the War of 1812 and early American naval affairs.

The major feature of the papers, naturally, are Perry’s letters written about the time of his victory over the British squadron on Lake Erie. Among these are several communications from General William Henry Harrison. In addition, the lists of prisoners, the reports of the American fleet, and affidavits recounting the course of the battle complete the picture.

The affidavits stemmed from the controversy between Oliver Hazard Perry and his second-in-command, Jesse Duncan Elliott. Elliott had withheld his ship from battle until Perry’s ship, the Lawrence had been reduced to a smoldering wreck. Without pause, Perry transferred his command in the middle of the battle to Elliott’s vessel and brought it into action.

Perry never publicly remonstrated his subordinate, but in later years the issue of Elliott’s role in the action became one of the classic furors in American naval annals. It culminated in a literary duel in the 1840’s, involving no less a personage than James Fenimore Cooper on behalf of Elliott. The biographer for Perry in this affair was Alexander Sliddell Mackenzie, a fellow naval officer. Mackenzie appears to be the only biographer to have had access to the Perry papers over the years. Managing the effort on behalf of Oliver H. Perry, who had died in 1819, was his brother, Matthew Calbraith Perry, who was to become equally famous for opening American trade with Japan.

The contents of the Perry collection span his whole career, beginning with his midshipman service aboard his father’s frigate, U.S.S. General Greene, in the West Indies Squadron. Captain Christopher Raymond Perry had served in the Revolutionary War navy and in 1799 aided the efforts of General Toussaint Louverture in Santo Domingo.

After the War of 1812 Oliver Hazard Perry saw duty in the

Highlights

Before the year is out, Associates will receive the Library’s Annual Report for 1966–67 in reprint form. A remarkable year it was, too. For the time being, here are a few highlights from it: 986 titles were added to the
collections of the Library, of which 142 were gifts.
Ten books were published during the year acknowledging use of the Library.
Research visits to the Library increased 25 percent, reaching a total of 1244.
4400 pieces of early sheet music were added, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Corning of Flint.
Membership in the Associates increased to 556.

The December Quarto will report on our luck at the third sale and our financial condition.

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it was a controversial document, a new political plan, fraught with dangers as well as virtues. Pamphlets appeared praising and denouncing it. We acquired one of each.

*Observations on the Proposed Constitution* (New York 1788) was aimed at showing it “to be a complete system of aristocracy and tyranny, and destructive of the rights and liberties of the people.” It took a bit of doing to squeeze that meaning out of a plan that was designed for just the opposite purposes, and fortunately the anonymous tract did not make many disciples. This copy belonged to Chancellor Kent of New York.

*The Government of Nature Delineated* (Carlisle 1788) possibly may have been a reply to the New York pamphlet, because it is a parody of aristocratic political thought. It pretends to abhor democracy and declares that the document avoids it. The humor is a little heavy, but it makes fun of some of the opposition.

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**Desirables**

Sometimes our reasons for wanting a book are not the obvious one: the value of its contents. It may be something subtle and only related. For instance, in *Gospel Musick* (London 1644) by Nathaniel Holmes we got three things. First was an essay vigorously defending congregational singing as part of the church service, a relatively new idea that smacked of worldliness in the minds of some clergymen. Then in the back of the booklet Richard Mather’s preface to the Bay Psalm Book of 1640 was reprinted for the first time. As the latter is a book we never expect to own, we prize this excerpt. Finally, we obtained an early seventeenth-century imprint relating to America, a book dated in a period in which we are always anxious to extend our holdings.

*Gospel Order Revised* (New York 1700), perhaps by Timothy Woodbridge, is more than a religious tract. The author was replying to Increase Mather’s *The Order of the Gospel* (Boston 1700) which the Library already owned. Mather had complained of innovations in a new fourth church in Boston which he asserted indicated a decline in discipline. Woodbridge denied this old charge against liberalism. The book is also a product of William Bradford, the first printer in New York.
To Have and To Hold

The most important campaign of King George’s War, 1744-48, was the siege and capture of Louisbourg, on Cape Breton Island, in 1745 by New England militia. The impregnable French fort guarded the mouth of the St. Lawrence River and was called the Gibraltar of North America.

Partly by luck, partly by ingenuity and persistence, the Yankees took the place. Various participants then wrote accounts of the achievement (many of which we have), and others wrote about its value to English plans and purposes against France. Judge Robert Auchmuty of Boston published *The Importance of Cape Breton* (London 1745), which we got at the Streeter sale. Unfortunately, his views did not prevail, and at the peace treaty Britain foolishly handed Louisbourg back to the French. Besides antagonizing New England, it only had to be taken again at great cost in the next war.

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An Unrequited Dove

Henry Strachey served as Secretary to the Howe Commission in the summer of 1776 when it was trying to restore peace between Britain and the colonies. In a group of letters recently acquired at a Sotheby sale was a letter by Strachey to Undersecretary for the Colonies, Christian D’Oyly. Despairing of peace prospects, Strachey wrote:

“The present Situation of Affairs here, is simply this—Every sort of Communication that might possibly produce an Opening to Peace; Treaty, or even Discussion, is industriously avoided by the American Leaders; and every Word put forth in Print by their Authority, seems calculated to provoke War, and to reprobate all Conciliation, unless you would condescend to treat of an Alliance with them on the footing of free independent States . . .”

Other letters in this group of Strachey items included two lengthy missives from his wife of a social and family nature and also a contemporary copy of the document appointing the Howe brothers as peace commissioners.

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Swapping, Library Style

The decades preceding the Civil War were like the rapids above Niagara Falls. Ominous currents gathered force. Reform movements were striving valiantly, but were to prove too little and too late to stem the rush toward the maelstrom.

Firsthand accounts of such stirring events, and participants’ reports of tempestuous meetings in which anti-slavery, temperance, female suffrage, and education were hotly debated have come to the library in a rewarding exchange of contemporary newspapers with the General Library. For publications of this period, we swapped some of our post-Civil War papers which were beyond our span but which filled in their sets. We sent out 187 volumes divided among 12 titles.

The papers transferred to us arrived in two shipments. The first and smaller one of 26 titles of around 250 scattered issues helped to fill gaps in our files.

The second and larger ship-

ment of 56 titles of over 260 volumes will fill out runs of newspapers already cataloged and add new titles. A large portion of the papers emanated from Washington, D.C. in the years 1816 through 1858; New York was well represented and, as usual, New England presses were busy. In addition, there were a few samples from the Midwest and the South. Included are church periodicals demonstrating deep concern with current questions.

In another move to refine our collection, post-Civil War newspapers which duplicated files already on campus were sold to the Hayes Memorial Library in Fremont, Ohio, which is soon to open a new wing and is eager to enlarge its resources relating to the administration of President Hayes and his era. Nineteen titles were represented by 341 volumes.

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Alpha and Omega

The beginning and the end of the American Revolution are epitomized in two accounts from the last Streeter sale. One is *A Narrative of the Excursions and Ravages of the King’s Troops . . . on the 19th of April, 1775* (Worcester 1775). This is the official version, issued by the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, of what happened that fateful day at Lexington and Concord. It was printed by Isaiah Thomas, who had just fled from Boston and set up shop in Worcester—the first book printed there. A basic

Secretary, Clements Library Associates
The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

... Count me as an Associate. Here is my contribution ($10 minimum) for 1967. As a bonus I shall receive a copy of the journal, *Wayside Sketches.*

(over, too)
source that apparently Mr. Clements was never able to procure, we are doubly glad to have it.

Six years later, but perhaps before the defeat at Yorktown, some Tory writing under the name of Cassandra, offered a peace plan that would keep America in the empire, but provide an appointed viceroy here. While we are doubly glad to have its justly renowned value as historical documents, pamphlets appeared—some warning the public to beware of worthless warrants, others attacking or defending the speculators and the legislators. The Library has been adding these items to its collection as they come along; recently we were able to buy two.

Eventually, the wronged speculators appealed to the Supreme Court, charging that the Georgia legislature had broken a contract. In 1810 the Court ruled in favor of the second group of companies, declaring the legislature had no right to cancel the Yazoo sales.

The original group of 1789 promoters thus lost out completely but not without a struggle. Both of our new acquisitions emanate from them. The Virginia Yazoo Company still attempting to recoup its losses issued arguments in Remarks, Occasioned by the View Taken of the Claims of 1789, (Washington, 1803) submitted by William Cowan, the agent.

The other piece is a rare legal document from the South Carolina Yazoo Company: Alexander Moultrie et al versus State of Georgia et al. In equity, complainants brief, probably printed in 1798 in Philadelphia where the federal court was then sitting.

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Welcome

The Library is pleased to extend greetings to Associate Professor Gordon S. Wood, formerly of Harvard University. Prof. Wood will teach Colonial American History at Michigan and will be joined next year by Associate Professor John Shy who is currently at Princeton University.