Renville Wheat

The sudden death of Renville Wheat on October 8 in his Grosse Pointe home has robbed the Associates and the Library of a devoted counselor. A nephew of Mr. Clements and an alumnus of the University, he was one of the organizers of the Associates in 1947. Four years later he became chairman of the Board of Governors, which position he held for fifteen years. In 1966 he asked to be relieved, although remaining a Board member.

His taste in source materials was sound, and his energy in membership drives and fund raising was prodigious. Generous himself, he inspired others to support this Library. Out of a long interest in Lake Superior he developed a hobby of collecting early maps about the Great Lakes, from the first rumors of “sweet water” somewhere in the interior of the continent to the accurate representation of the five lakes on maps of the middle nineteenth century. This collection of about 150 choice maps he bequeathed to the Library.

In 1952 he was appointed by the Board of Regents to the governing Committee of Management of the Library. Here he was of utmost help to the Director, always available for advice on purchases or policy. Successive appointment to four-year terms followed. His obituary in a Detroit newspaper, however, revealed that his attention to the University was but one expression of his wide-ranging interests and concerns. He spent himself freely in behalf of numerous organizations and activities.

The Committee of Management, meeting later in the month, decided to keep his collection of maps together and separately identified in the Division of Maps and Prints. Further, it agreed to devote the monies received as memorial gifts to Mr. Wheat to the enlargement of his map collection. Numerous friends have responded in this way to the suggestion by his family in lieu of flowers. The Associates’ Board of Governors, meeting for the first time without him, decided as their personal tribute to purchase a suitable cabinet of steel drawers in which to house the Wheat collection and so mark it with his name.

Renville Wheat built himself into this Library in the past two decades. Much of its program and its acquisitions reflect his personality. There is no danger of his being forgotten here. Even so, we are pleased to add a tangible collection of use to scholars that will bear his name.

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Board of Governors

The Board received a financial report which showed that in its special fund raising to take advantage of the Streeter auction sales the Associates have contributed so far $170,636, plus $20,146 in regular dues over the last three years, making a grand total of $190,776! The secretary, speaking as director of the Library, congratulated the Board on this remarkable achievement. Chairman James S. Schoff reminded the Board that the last two Streeter sales occur in 1969 and that the final sale in particular is likely to contain items of special interest to the Library. A final accounting will be rendered then.

Ways and means of attracting more members were discussed, with certain actions authorized. The Board acted on a tribute to Renville Wheat, as noted in another column about him. Suggestions for activities of the Associates in conjunction with the fiftieth anniversary of the Library in 1973 were invited.

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Committee of Management

At its October meeting, the Committee considered improvements in the building, which will become visible when they materialize. Ideas for celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Library in 1973 were entertained, as well as for the coming bicentennial of the American Revolution.

After some discussion the Committee recommended to the Board of Regents that Roscoe Bonisteel, Ann Arbor attorney and alumnus, a Governor of the Associates, and a collector, be...
THE CLEMENTS LIBRARY
ASSOCIATES
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
(Appointed by the Regents of the University)
Carl W. Bonbright, Flint
Rocco O. Bonisteel, Ann Arbor
Robert P. Briggs, Elk Rapids
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William T. Gossett, Bloomfield Hills
Hoyt E. Hayes, Bay City
David W. Kendall, Detroit
James S. Schuff, New York
Chairman
S. Spencer Scott, New York
Morison Shafroth, Denver
James Shearer II, Chicago
George H. Tweney, Seattle
Mrs. David F. Upton, St. Joseph
Lee D. van Antwerp, Glenview, Ill.
Howard H. Peckham, Director of the Library, Secretary

appointed to fill out the term of the late Renville Wheat on the Committee of Management.

Introducing

Members will notice the names of two new persons appointed to the Board of Governors. George H. Tweney is an engineer with Boeing Aircraft in Seattle, an alumnus, and a book collector and member of the Grolier Club. Dr. Lee D. van Antwerp is also an alumnus, retired from G. D. Searle & Co., and interested in New England’s beginnings. We look forward to working with these Associates more closely.

The Wheat Gift of Great Lakes Maps

In accordance with Mr. Wheat’s wish, the Clements Library has received the Renville Wheat Great Lakes Map Collection of 153 original maps. Mr. Wheat managed to bring together works spanning three hundred years of cartographical history, from Sebastian Munster's 1545 Novae Insulae XXVI Nova Tabula to Jas. Wyld, A Map of the Provinces of Upper Canada... (1846). In between there are names familiar to most of us: Mercator, Ortelius, Hondius, Jansson, Blaeu, Sanson, Jaillot, Coronelli, De L’Isle, Moll and D’Anville.

This is a magnificent collection that is as important to our Map Division as the Gage or Clinton papers are to the Manuscript Division. While many of the maps have become scarce, there are almost unknown states of famous works. An indication of Mr. Wheat’s choice of material can be seen in the regularity with which he noted “Not in Karpinski,” the bibliographic bible of Great Lakes map collecting.

The gift includes five rare individually cased maps. Two are very large Arrowsmith’s North America dated 1796 and 1811, each mounted on linen and folded in the box it was first sold in. Another is William Faden’s English version of D’Anville’s America, which is also backed, folded in the original marbled box. Colton’s Michigan (1835) and Steele’s 1834 map of Michigan are of the early “pocket” type now much sought after.

From the preceding it is evident that the gift contains maps that concern much more than just the Great Lakes themselves. Included are rare mappemondes, western hemispheres, polar projections, North America, America, Canada, Middle West and state maps. This concentration of maps specifically dealing with the New World, and especially North America, gives the Clements Library a tremendous boost in the area of its greatest interest, to the point of doubling our holdings in this kind of map. As a result, the Wheat Collection is to be stored in a separate case in the Map Division with the intention of enlarging Mr. Wheat’s collection through other purchases.

Streeter Auction No. 5

The fifth Streeter sale of Americana took place in October. This time the offerings were on the Far West, and many of them dated after the Civil War. Consequently there were not many items to pique our interest. The executive committee of the Board of Governors advised moderation in expenditures at this time, so we restrained ourselves by bidding on only a dozen items, of which we acquired ten.

Three of them were earlier in date than anything else in the sale and perhaps were missed when material was chosen for an earlier sale. Thus we obtained Louis Tarascon’s Address to the Citizens of Philadelphia on the Great Advantages which Arise from the Trade of the Western Country (Philadelphia 1806). What he is talking about is trade from the Old Northwest Territory, not the Far West, and he believes Philadelphia can become an outlet and port for it and beat out the development of New Orleans. Another was the Biographical Memoir of the Late Brig. Gen. Zebulon M. Pike (New York 1813), a little known sketch published shortly after Pike was killed in the war.
third was the *Voyage de l'Em-
bouchure de la Columbia à Saint-Louis* (Paris 1821) by Hunt and Stuart, with a fine map of the West. This is an early title in the Wagner-Camp biblio-
graphy. It was bought from the James Shearer II fund.

Three other Wagner-Camp titles on the West came to us. One was *The Latter-Day Saints' Emigrants' Guide* (St. Louis 1848), the first detailed guide book to the country west of the Rockies. It was prepared by Will-

iam Clayton, a Mormon convert who had gone to the Great Salt Lake in 1847 and helped lay out the city.

Two other books we bought recounted trips to California in 1850 and are much like those included in the Wagner-Camp bibliography, but are omitted. We can only assume that they are scarce and were overlooked.

Prices in general seemed to be reasonable, at times running less than the auction house expected.

**Canal Fever**

With the present ease of travel by land and by air, it is most difficult to recapture the importance of waterways in moving both people and goods in early days. Recently, canal fever was revived for the Clements Library when we catalogued a collection of ninety-one pamphlets on canal building, printed in the first half of the 19th century.

The best known canal, of course, was the Erie in New York, but there were few areas east of the Mississippi which did not have canals or plans for them. To further these schemes, interested parties printed de-
scriptions of their pet enterprises. The publications show the wide-spread interest - they tell of canal conventions, report speeches, present petitions for grants, argue for favored routes, codify canal laws, inveigh against rival projects, and often display interesting maps.

The pamphlets, a selected transfer from the Transportation Library on campus, add to similar items already in our collection and give us a substantial body of such literature. Also, they complement our many tracts on land promotion and the westward movement. A bonus feature is the number of items concerned with the activities of a prominent engineer, Loammi Baldwin, whose papers have long been in the Manuscripts Divi-

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**True Confessions**

Rousing, racy, and ribald was Lawrence Towner’s lecture at the Assembly of the Clements Library Associates and friends on October 25. In his frank treatment of “True Confessions and Dying Warnings” the Newberry Library director described changes in style and content of gallows oratory through the colonial period, changes which demonstrated the evolution of attitudes and life modes in early New England society. Public confessions by the condemned served both a religious and a legal function: they warned oth-

ers of the horrible punishments wrongdoers would suffer in this world and the next, and a con-

fession of guilt justified the gov-

ernment’s sentence of death.

As Puritanism waned, so did the moral forcefulness of many of the condemned men’s speeches; sensationalism replaced religion as a motivating force behind the crowds gathered at public hangings. Society was outgrowing the confines of the Puritan mold. Among those changes, however, there remained one static ele-

ment: the ever recurring theme of the open and unapologetic bawdiness of the lower orders of New England.

Mr. Towner’s interpretation was serious. His examples were determined by the kind of source materials available, that is, the scribblings or mumblings of con-

demned criminals as published by ministers or printers. More-

over, Mr. Towner wanted to convey not only the ideas but also the mood of the people he studied. Thus the Associates were themselves exposed to an accurate vignette from the col-

onial scene.

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**New Views of Old Problems**

New viewpoints and historical perspectives are continually suggest-

ing novel and interesting ap-

proaches to the use of our manu-

script collections. For example, the postwar American rejection of the isolationism of the thirties and commitment to internation-

alism has created an interest in the historical development of the “Atlantic community” (West-

ern Europe and the United States). Consequently, enduring problems in the history of the

Secretary, Clements Library Associates

The University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

... Count me as an Associate. Here is my contribution ($10 minimum) for 1968-69. As a bonus I shall receive a copy of the

Memos of John Adlum.

(over, too)
West have come to be conceived in a comparative framework. This has been the case with the existence of slavery in the West, and the Clements Library anticipates contributing to the research required to answer these stimulating new questions.

Research visits by two young scholars in recent months reflect the tendency to see slavery as a part of the historical development of the West rather than as an institution unique to a particular country. Patrick C. Lipscomb, professor of history at Louisiana State University, is doing research for a projected international history of the anti-slavery movement, while Peter F. Dixon, a D.Phil. candidate at Oxford, is writing a dissertation on the movement for the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies. Researchers using the library to study the antislavery movement will find an almost unparalleled collection of pamphlets relating to the slavery question printed on both sides of the Atlantic; manuscript collections relating to the English response to the issue of slavery include the John Wilson Croker Papers, the George Canning Papers, and the Viscount Melville Papers. The Birney and Weld-Grimké Papers as well as the recently acquired Danforth Papers relate the American response to the agitation concerning slavery.

New Members

The following persons have joined the Associates for the first time this fall: Edward Boss, Ann Arbor; Allen P. Britton, Ann Arbor; Earl H. Cress, Ann Arbor; Robert L. Daly, Flint; Mr. & Mrs. Don Gerhardt, Ann Arbor; Pearl Kendrick, Grand Rapids; Mr. & Mrs. Robert E. McCracken, Dexter; Richard C. Moore, Fort Pierce, Fla.; John Shy, Ann Arbor; Joseph Winer, Akron, O.; William Yardley, Chatham, Va.; Mr. & Mrs. James Daily, Ann Arbor; M. D. Jahn, Chicago.

Preparation for War

Among the various causes of the War of 1812, none has received more careful attention than the question of maritime rights. As early as 1796 American maritime rights were abused by France, and British naval vessels were also soon harassing our shipping. The United States traded with both belligerents while these powers sought to deprive each other of supplies.

After a brief interlude of peace, the Napoleonic Wars were resumed in 1803 and Americans increasingly felt the squeeze as first Britain and then France sought to reduce neutral commerce to the other. A dizzying series of commercial restrictions and retaliations by both powers rapidly fueled popular indignation in the United States. Particularly enraging were the encounters with British naval vessels which further inflamed public opinion and helped to create the mood for war.

One incident was the Chesapeake-Leopard affair of 1807. The U.S. frigate Chesapeake was hailed by the British frigate Leopard outside the three-mile limit off Norfolk, Virginia. The American commander refused to allow a search of his vessel for alleged British deserters. The British frigate responded by firing upon the Chesapeake, killing three and wounding eighteen. Then four alleged deserters were impressed by the British.

A letter recently acquired by the Clements Library indicates the depth of popular indignation in the United States. War with Great Britain was fully expected and contingency plans were circulated throughout the American military. Writing to Constant Freeman in July, 1807, Col. Henry Burbeck noted that the "present state of affairs renders it highly necessary that every exertion on your part should be made to put your garrison in the best possible state of defence." Burbeck admonished Freeman to "exercise your men twice a Day" and among other things to build a supply of cartridges to at least one hundred rounds per cannon. He also advised his subordinate to "fire a number of shot into the Harbor in order to get the proper elevation and distance."

This letter is an important addition to the library’s resources relating to the War of 1812. It illustrates the severity of the American reaction to the Chesapeake-Leopard incident and helps to explain how concern for national honor ultimately propelled the fledgling Republic into a naval conflict with the greatest naval power on earth at the time. Col. Burbeck is an old friend, having commanded Fort Mackinac in the 1790’s.