Committee of Management

At its meeting on May 6, the Committee decided to invest the various contributions received in memory of Renville Wheat as an endowment fund. The total amounts to $8000, and the income will be spent on enlarging the collection of maps which Mr. Wheat bequeathed to the Library. They are now housed in a special case purchased by his fellow Governors on the Board of the Associates.

The Committee voted to contract with a publisher who will film and publish our card catalog of our books. The catalog in book form will be sold to other libraries, making more widely known our holdings in early Americana. Publication entails no cost to the Library.

Outside of various routine business, the Committee invited ideas both for the fiftieth anniversary observance of the Library in 1973, and for the coming bicentennial of the American Revolution.

Board Meeting

The Board of Governors of the Associates met on May 7 and heard a doleful report on the sale (not to them) of the first printing of the Constitution and the first printing of the Declaration of Independence. Chairman Schoff concluded: "I figure we saved more than $550,000 this past month." (See story in adjoining column.)

They also had a report on the last Streeter sale. The vacancy on the Board was discussed and referred to a committee. Members were favorable to establishing another category of membership for those persons who contribute a hundred dollars or more a year. They also discussed ideas for participating in the observance of the Library's fiftieth anniversary in 1973.

The date of next fall's meeting may coincide with the meeting in Ann Arbor of the President's Club.

Well, We Tried

That's about all we can say—we tried. We're speaking of the first printing of the Constitution, done in Philadelphia in August of 1787. Seven copies of that first printing were known when a new copy came on the market at Parke-Bernet Galleries April 15. It was Pierce Butler's copy, on which he had scribbled notes, and was accompanied by twenty-three manuscripts of further notes on the constitutional convention. These made it a highly desirable copy. It came out of the Owen Wister family, and through his mother he was related to the Butler family.

James S. Schoff, of the Library's Committee of Management and chairman of the Associates' Board, at first agreed that it was out of our reach. Then he decided, with the Committee's approval, that an effort ought to be made to raise some money so as to make a reasonable bid, to demonstrate that we were alert and not negligent to the value of this basic document. The situation was enormously complicated by the extraordinary coincidence of the auction of a copy of the first printing of the Declaration of Independence, July 4-5, 1776 (fifteen other copies known), scheduled for May 7. Further, this was the season of income tax payments, and we were also hoarding funds for the sixth Streeter auction. With the help of Associate James Shearer II, the two Jim's sent out a night letter to a couple dozen prospects, to whom the availability of our two most fundamental documents would appeal.

The response was encouraging enough to permit us to bid. But alas, the bidding soon outdistanced us, and the Constitution was knocked down for the incredible sum of $155,000! This is $4,000 more than the Bay Psalm book of 1640, the first book printed in America, brought a few years ago. This Constitution became the highest priced piece of American printing ever sold. It
was bought by H. P. Kraus, New York dealer. That record stood for less than a month. The sale of the Declaration of Independence confounded all guesses. Mr. Kraus wanted it badly, but a new collector from Texas, Ira G. Corn, Jr., paid the staggering sum of $404,000 for it!! The bidding began with $100,000, so our widow’s mite was not offered.

The experience has been disturbing. Inevitably, every owner of an eighteenth-century imprint is going to feel he has a treasure. Yet these two sales were exceptional occasions and duels between two wealthy and determined bidders. The results actually cannot be used as measuring sticks—so we tell ourselves.

Naughty Printer

In the papers of Isaiah Thomas, one of our most famous colonial printers and a founder of the American Antiquarian Society, is a letter of 1786 indicating that Thomas was trying to obtain from England a copy of the *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*—better known as *Fanny Hill*, a book of explicit sex which has been banned in this country until very recently. Banned, but not uncirculated.

Whether Thomas succeeded in his quest then is not known, but procure a copy he did. Sometime later, probably after 1800, and perhaps by decision of his son, who took over the business in 1802, the *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* was set up by the Thomas press and some sheets run off. For protection against prosecution, the title page carried a fictitious name as publisher, London as the place of publication, and the date 1787. Somewhere in the process, Isaiah, Jr., lost his nerve and did not finish the job. The unused sheets were marbleized with colored inks (which did not quite hide the printed lines) and used as end papers in binding several dozen volumes of newspapers in Thomas’ office and even in binding school books! Those newspapers and books survive in the library of the American Antiquarian Society.

Recently we were given a copy of Aaron Bancroft, *An Essay on the Life of George Washington*, Worcester, Thomas & Sturtevant, 1807. It too has end papers of marbleized Fanny Hill! This does not determine the date of Thomas’ venture into pornography, as this copy may have been bound (in calf) sometime later. Somehow I don’t think Bancroft would have appreciated this binding, as he was the pastor of the Congregational Church in Worcester.

Alvin M. Bentley, 1918–1969

Regent Bentley was a dedicated public servant, first in the foreign service, then in Congress, then on the University’s Board of Regents. Less well known is the fact that he was also an earnest intellectual. Holding both a bachelor’s and master’s degree, he was working on a doctorate in history at the time of his death. Moreover, he gave to the University an endowment fund for a chair in history. Last year he handed out the honors awards to graduates and undergraduates in the department of history.

Interested in American history, he was also attracted to the books which contained the ideas that shaped our development or recorded it. He was beginning to enjoy the pursuit of Americana at auction in London and New York. Rapidly he was becoming a devoted friend to the Clements Library, having bought a couple of titles for us in memory of his friend Renville Wheat.
Unbeknown to us, he bought four books at the last Streeter sale for the Library. (See below.) We shall miss him as much as the administrative officers of the University do.

**Streeter Sale No. 6**

The sixth auction of Mr. Streeter’s books in April concerned itself with his books on the Northwest coast, Alaska, and Hawai. We did not expect to find much of interest to us, and we were correct. The Associates finally bid limited amounts on six books and procured three of them.

One was a statement of all the facts relative to the Nootka Sound controversy, 1790, between Great Britain and Spain. As we have other material on this dispute, we wanted this title. The other two books similarly filled out the dozen or more books we have on the effort by England in the middle of the eighteenth century to find a northwest passage around North America to the Pacific Ocean. Not only was the venture unsuccessful, of course, but a violent dispute broke out among those who tried the voyage. We did not have the report of a Parliamentary committee which investigated the charges of Arthur Dobbs against Captain Middleton, 1742. We also lacked another Parliamentary committee’s report on the condition of the countries adjoining Hudson’s Bay, 1749, studied in relation to the venture. These were sound investments, we believe, and a balance remains in Associates’ funds.

Regent Bentley stepped into the sale and procured four early books on Oregon for us. One was *Geographical Description of the State of Texas; also ... of Oregon* (Philadelphia 1846) with two maps. Another was Charles Wilkes’ *Western America* (Philadelphia 1849) with two maps, designed for gold seekers and settlers. Our dispute with England about the Oregon boundary led to publication of *The Oregon Controversy Reviewed* (N. Y. 1846) by a “Friend of the Anglo-Saxons” who turned out to be pro-British. Bishop Brouillet suffered criticism that he instigated the Indian massacre of Dr. Marcus Whitman’s family. In defense he published *Protestantism in Oregon. Account of the Murder of Dr. Whitman, and the Ungrateful Calumnies of H. H. Spalding, Protestant Missionary* (N. Y. 1853), and Mr. Bentley obtained this first edition.

The seventh and last of the Streeter sales will occur next October.

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**A New Asset**

MR. AND MRS. CHARLES A. SINK of Ann Arbor have been deeply interested in this Library since it opened in 1923. When the Associates were organized, they promptly joined. Regularly they have appeared at our lectures and teas. To emphasize their interest they have just created a substantial endowment fund to be known as the “Charles A. and Alva Gordon Sink Fund Endowment for acquisition of historical books, documents, and such other historical material as the Director and Committee of Management shall deem advisable. This fund is created in respectful memory of our long time friend, William L. Clements.”

We are as pleased as we are grateful. A special bookplate will mark the purchases from this fund. Mr. Sink is probably known to all our Associates; he was president of the School of Music and has just declined another term as president of the University Musical Society, which sponsors the concerts each year in Hill Auditorium. This Library is not their only concern in the University, nor the only beneficiary of their generosity. They have long made the University an intimate part of their life—to the lasting benefit of the institution.

**Music and Memories**

FOUNDER’S DAY was duly observed on April 1 with a gathering of local friends and Associates. Miss Julia de Lacy, a graduate student, presented a program of Irish traditional songs, accompanying herself on her Irish harp. She was as charming as she was talented.

During the social hour that followed, a new exhibition was viewed. It relates to early efforts to educate the Negro before the Civil War. A descriptive and explanatory bulletin is available, prepared by William L. Joyce of the staff. Copies were mailed to all Associates.

**Enlisting N. Y. Troops**

AT THE CONCLUSION of the American Revolution, one of the major problems facing the new Nation was to protect the settlers on the Northwestern frontier from incursions of the Indians. To provide this protection, Congress in April of 1785 called for a body of 700 troops to be raised from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Recently the Clements Library acquired a series of letters sent to Lt. Col. Nicholas Fish,
The commander of the New York troops, in which
the story of the formation of several of these
companies is told. Numbering 41 items, these
letters point up the difficulties encountered in
raising and provisioning these military units for
duty on the frontier. Writing from West Point
on July 18, 1785, prior to his march to Fort
McIntosh in western Pennsylvania, Major John
Doughty informed Lt. Col. Fish of the lack of
clothing for his company.

I beg you to send me a months pay at least
& cloathing for the Recruits of my enlisting
say 35 Men, because it is possible &
probable some may join me before I
march. The Men from New York have no
Woollen Overals or stockings for the next
Winter, nor their Clothing compleat. For
Gods sake let there be nothing wanted.
Send me a sufficiency of shoes.

In addition to letters of Majors John Doughty,
John Francis Hamtramck, and other officers,
there are six letters from General Henry Knox,
Secretary of War, concerning army matters and
ordering various companies to march from West
Point to Fort McIntosh and the Ohio Country to
aid Lt. Col. Josiah Harmar, commander of the
first United States Army stationed in the North­
west Territory. As the Clements Library has the
papers of Josiah Harmar, this collection of letters
to Nicholas Fish helps to complete the documenta­
tion on the early history of the U. S. Army.

Gift Book

This year’s gift book to our Associates is some­
thing different. Previously we have offered re­
prints of rare pamphlets or publication of some
of our manuscripts. This time we have sent out
an essay by one of our distinguished professors
of history, John Higham, because we want to
share with our friends a new interpretation of
America’s cultural development—based in large
part upon Professor Higham’s research in this
Library. We found his view exciting, and we
believe you will too.

In brief, Professor Higham found certain
basic faiths which had characterized America’s
beginnings and early expansion losing their im­
 pact and being replaced in the decade of the
1850’s. As Professor John Shy pointed out in the
introduction, this interpretation lends new sup­
port to the validity of our concern with Ameri­
can history up to the 1850’s, before a new pat­
tern began to take shape.

Political Generals

Outbreak of the Mexican War created a politi­
cal as well as military problem for Democratic
President Polk. As an Expansionist, Polk was
committed to resolving the Texas boundary dis­
pute and acquiring the territory of New Mexico
and California. But success on the field of battle
would create politically potent generals, most of
whom were Whigs and not averse to challenging
the Democratic hold on the Presidency.

In three letters written in June of 1846, Win­
field Scott, the ranking general and a Whig,
related to a Whig editor in New York City some
of the intrigue and in-fighting so evident in
Washington. Scott complained that Secretary of
War Marcy had secretly asked a Senate commit­
tee to authorize the President to add two new
major generals and four brigadiers to the regular
army staff. Scott saw this move as a partisan
attempt to “pack” the military with faithful
Democrats.

Then Secretary Marcy suggested that Scott
should leave for a field command in Mexico.
Desiring to remain in Washington to organize
plans for an overall war effort and fearful of a
lack of support from the Polk administration,
Scott wrote a petulant letter to Marcy seeking to
delay his departure. To his surprise, Marcy re­
plied that another officer would be sent to Mex­
ico in his place. That wasn’t what Scott wanted,
either. He wrote another damaging letter to
Marcy, and then the correspondence was made
public at the request of Congress. A pretty kettle
of fish!

The three letters we have just acquired pro­
vide interesting insight into the worried general’s
frame of mind. He was politically ambitious and
certainly did not want to be left out of action.
News of Gen Taylor’s victories in Mexico di­
verted attention and eased tensions in Washing­
ton. We are much interested in Scott in this
period and in his early service in the War of 1812.

New Members Since March

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Roberts, Sr., Toledo;
Lawrence J. Michelson, Detroit; Dr. Robert W.
Buxton, Baltimore; Lowell Altsrin, Oskaloosa,
Iowa; John Tottenham, Ann Arbor; C. W. Wolf,
Chicago; Mrs. Edward Cobb, Jackson; William
T. Dean, Jr., Detroit; Jeffery McCabe, Port
Huron; Dr. Edith B. Pelz, Ann Arbor; and Don­
ald L. Farren, Providence, R.I.