How to Fish

Fishing Season Will open soon, and enthusiasts may be interested in our recently acquired *The American Angler's Guide* (New York 1845) which we added to our sports collection. The author was John J. Brown, but he published it anonymously. It is a rarity.

He compiled what English authors had written on the subject and added "opinions and practices of the best American anglers." In reality it is a manual, with chapters on rods, hooks, lines, baits, sinkers, artificial flies, etc., followed by chapters on a variety of fish, their locations and habits, and how best to catch them—which he calls the "art of angling." Would any fisherman disagree? There are the usual fish stories, or anecdotes of success.

The reason for anonymity appears at the end: a five-page advertisement for fishing supplies of all kinds—from John J. Brown & Co.!

Captain John Smith

Contributions Received from Fellows this year prompted the executive committee of the Board of Governors to plunge into a London auction before Christmas. Offered was a rare descriptive account of Virginia by the man who knew the area best and had saved the Jamestown colony. Capt. John Smith arrived here with the first settlers, served on the council, and explored the region. He obtained corn from the Indians and kept the few colonists alive. He also wrote three accounts of Virginia and two of New England. The only one we lacked was his *A Mapp of Virginia, with a Description of the Countrey* (Oxford 1612)—now up for sale. The last copy had sold for $5500. It was the tenth known.

Well, the eleventh copy fell into our laps for $3850! A bargain, and a highly desirable source book by a famous author. It runs to 110 pages, has a folding map, and is bound in full morocco.

Since the executive committee figured it might have to go to $6000, it would never have acted without the cushion of the Fellows' monies. That is what extra funds can do for the Library. We are delighted and grateful.

The book is still good reading. Capt. Smith refers to the native Indians as Virginians and shows real respect for Chief Powhatan. "He is of personage a tall well proportioned man, with a sour look, his head somewhat gray, his beard so thin that it seemeth none at all, his age near 60. About his person ordinarily attendeth a guard of 40 or 50 of the tallest men his country doth afford. Every night upon the 4 quarters of his house are 4 sentinels." A mile away in the woods he had another house in which he kept his "treasure—skins, copper, pearl, and beads," and his store of "red paint for ointment, and bows and arrows." Two women guarded him while he slept and waited on him at meal time. Quite a guy!

The War of Jenkins' Ear

In the spring of 1738, ship's Captain Robert Jenkins appeared before a Parliamentary committee to open a handkerchief and display his severed ear. He claimed it had been cut off by the Spanish when they found smuggled stores on board his ship bound for the West Indies. No matter that the incident was said to have taken place in 1731, seven years before. A war fever swept the countryside over this supposed outrage, and England declared war on Spain. The motivation for what was essentially a contrived war combined traditional animosity for Catholic Spain with greed for the wealth she still possessed in the American colonies, and a trade she would not open to the English.

As soon as news of the declaration reached America, General Oglethorpe gathered together some colonial troops and Indians and launched an abortive attack on the Spanish fort at St. Augustine. Meanwhile Admiral Vernon sailed
the English fleet into the harbor of Portobello, Panama, and sacked that seaport. Then he turned on the Spanish seacoast fortress of Cartagena, Colombia, with a joint Anglo-American army for the land operation. The assault was belatedly launched with poor coordination and with inferior British army officers in command. Only 600 of the 4,000 Americans survived to tell the tale. Eventually all European powers were drawn into this struggle which in later stages became known as the War of the Austrian Succession.

We recently purchased two important maps relating to this War of Jenkins' Ear. Both are English, both portray the American continent, and both have elaborate engravings on their side borders.

The larger and earlier map was printed by Thomas Bakewell in 1740. Its decorative borders depict such curiosities as beavers constructing a dam at Niagara Falls “in order to form a Great Lake” (!), as well as Indian scenes from the earlier John White drawings and a view of the fish industry at Newfoundland. The bottom border gives instructions on how to make firearms, complete with sample hand grenades, mortars, and fireships. One of the reasons English printers indulged in these extravagant decorations is because the quality of English cartography was so poor in this period. Most of their maps were blatantly plagiarized from French and Dutch sources, and these ornamental engravings were used to fill a credibility gap. This map also contains the earliest example of national coloring known to us: English colonial interests are shown in yellow and Spanish in red.

The second map is only slightly smaller than the first and was printed by Henry Overton in 1745. The side panels portray ten American town plans and views. Both this map and the earlier Bakewell have the dubious distinction of being two of the last to show California as an island, an error disproved at the beginning of the century. Yet the peculiarities make these two maps interesting. Because they were never included with an atlas, but printed and sold separately, they are also quite rare. Both are valuable contributions to the unfolding story of America.

Volunteers?

If there is a woman resident of Ann Arbor among our readers who has time on her hands and would like to drop into the Library once or twice a week, we can promise her unpaid work. This would not be glamorous tasks, but such housekeeping duties as repairing, counting, pasting, recording, and similar odd jobs that get ahead of us. If she can type, so much the better. Museums sometimes recruit volunteer aides, who meet the public and conduct tours, but a library does not have that kind of patronage. Our jobs would be with materials—books, maps, manuscripts and newspapers. All we can promise by way of reward is afternoon tea with the staff.

Tracking General Greene

Four significant items have recently been added to our extensive Nathanael Greene collection in the Division of Manuscripts. They are of particular interest in that they come from a hitherto unknown source.

Greene, placed in command of the southern army in December, 1780, gradually forced the
British to retreat to the Charleston area in the course of the summer, 1781. The Battle of Guilford Courthouse (March 15, 1781), technically a British victory, was a very costly one for the redcoats. A newly added memorandum of British losses by Greene's aide, Lewis Morris, describes the punishment inflicted upon the enemy. Cornwallis had a horse shot from under him, Lt. Col. Tarleton lost several fingers, and many of the finest officers and soldiers were killed.

The British were forced to retreat to Wilmington, N. C., from which place Cornwallis initiated the disastrous Yorktown campaign. Greene wishfully prophesied in the just acquired letter of September 17, 1781 to Morris that "our prospects are flattering in Virginia, and I hope the campaign will close gloriously for America."

Charleston was not evacuated by the British army until December of 1782, and Greene's forces had the wearying task of waiting out their embarkation. To obviate the dangers of malarial fever, the general sent his wife and several ailing subordinates to Kiawah Island on the South Carolina coast. In the letter of September, 1782, which we have obtained, Greene refers enviously to the healthful "Keewaw air," to long rides on the beach, and to a general Merriment which contrasted sharply with the tedious military effort. The refugee party had established a "rule of the house" requiring each man to sing a different song daily; it was a regulation which Greene heartily approved of for everyone else, "... but was I there, I must get a dispensation as musick dwells not in me."

The fourth item is Morris' parting letter to his commander as he sets out for his native New York at war's end.

The Clements Library and the Rhode Island Historical Society are co-sponsors of the forthcoming publication of Nathanael Greene papers. Additions to our collection are particularly welcome. Unfortunately, however, the market value of Greene letters has risen so sharply in the last few years, it is questionable whether we shall be able to acquire any more letters. We cannot go on paying what we had to pay at auction for the four letters mentioned above.

Publishing Clements Map Catalog

In addition to our well-known book and manuscript collections, the Clements Library contains one of the eight best map archives in North America. We are pleased to announce that we have contracted to publish our map catalog in book form with G. K. Hall and Company of Boston. Few existing catalogs of other map libraries will be able to compete with ours when it is printed next fall. It will be devoted entirely to maps of the Americas before 1860 and designed to facilitate advanced research in the fields of historical cartography, the history of printing, discovery and exploration, American colonial history, American military history, and westward expansion.

Photographing the cards will begin in July, and Douglas Marshall, Head of the Map Division, is busy preparing new cards to replace older inadequate ones. By the time the photographer arrives, all the flat maps in the map cases will have been recataloged, as well as all of our Dutch atlases. When finished, the printed catalog promises to become a standard reference of map research. It will take its place beside the seven volumes that reproduce our cards for printed books, published in 1970.

The President as Villain

Like all previous Presidential administrations, the Nixon administration has taken its lumps from enraged critics. But a public of short memory sometimes seems to think that the latest attacks are the worst in history and that any previous administration inspired more public confidence than the present one.

A counter argument could be made that on the contrary criticism of the President has grown milder with the passing decades, and that critics of Mr. Nixon handle him more gently than did critics of past Presidents. Consider President John Tyler, who was still being vilified after he was defeated in 1844. He became President in 1841 by the accident of President Harrison's death, the first time a President had died in office. In Virginia he had been a lukewarm Democrat and an antislavery man, and was placed on the Whig ticket in 1840 to give it balance and national
appeal. Suddenly catapulted into the White House, he was not the leader of the Whig party nor accepted by the Democrats. This made him fair game for every critic.

One Hiram Cumming, a onetime Post Office employee and disappointed patronage dispenser, took after him early in 1845 with a pamphlet we just acquired entitled *Secret History of the Perfidies, Intrigues, and Corruptions of the Tyler Dynasty, with the Mysteries of Washington City Connected with that Vile Administration, in a Series of Letters to the Ex-Acting President.* That was only the mild beginning. He accused Tyler of treachery and duplicity, avarice, awful profanity, calculated villainy, perfidy, cruelty and fiendishness, cowardice, vanity, drunkenness, and various other sins. He related incidents and private conversations. He reviewed Tyler’s long political career, seeing vice in every act of his. His climax of vituperation seemed rather weak when he called Tyler “one of the most reckless monsters known in history.” Obviously he had exhausted his vocabulary of hate before he reached his peroration.

The author justified his attack by declaring that “the wicked should never be permitted to outlive their shame, nor bury with them the remembrance of their iniquities.” Well, Mr. Tyler survives in history respected and even admired. Whoever heard of Mr. Cumming?

**Northwest Passage**

**The Search for the fabled northwest passage continued into the eighteenth century on the strength of an argument which has become known as the Middleton-Dobbs controversy.** As an influential landowner and entrepreneur, Arthur Dobbs was interested in the development of the region west of Hudson’s Bay. He commissioned Captain Christopher Middleton to make a reconnaissance of the area in expectation of finding the passage. Middleton set out in 1741 and returned with the truth which Dobbs refused to accept. This sparked a pamphlet war which ricocheted across fifteen pamphlets in seven years. The Clements Library now owns fourteen of the fifteen.

One overlooked aspect of this episode was a map controversy which included the fictitious account of Joseph la France, a half-breed trapper who reported to Dobbs on the existence of the passage. With the conviction of a fanatic, Dobbs sketched out a map of the area and published it with a pamphlet which we came to own. Several years ago we acquired an unidentified map entitled, “A Polar Map of Part of the Northern Hemisphere.” It is now evident that this map incorporates the information of Joseph la France and is therefore another part of the same argument. Now we have finally acquired the opposing views of Christopher Middleton published in 1743. It is a far more scientific map than either of Dobbs’ cartographic attempts, and includes magnetic variations, tidal directions, and depths in fathoms. It was Middleton’s contention that the pull of tides in the bay was from the east and the Atlantic Ocean and not the north, which would have indicated another outlet. Middleton’s cartographic defense was vindicated by a parliamentary inquiry in 1749. Dobbs devoted himself to other subjects after 1750 and was later appointed Governor of North Carolina. It is a distinct pleasure to add this finely engraved Middleton map to our collection on the controversy.

**More Fellows**

We welcome additional new Fellows and renewals for 1971–72 with warm appreciation and gratitude. Their support is significant. Their names appear below:

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