

CLEMENTS LIBRARY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT PLAN

January 2013

Mission Statement – *“Established at the University of Michigan in 1923, the Clements is a premier research library for studying the American experience from 1492 to 1900. Dedicated to serving the students and scholars of the University and elsewhere who interpret and write the history of North America, the Library collects, preserves and makes accessible primary sources—books, maps, manuscripts, prints, photographs, ephemera, and other paper materials—that illuminate early American history while serving as a hub for ongoing historical research and scholarly conversation.”*

Vision Statement – *“In the coming decade the Clements will build on its position as an outstanding leader in service to students of American history and expand its participation in scholarly conversations on the early Americas. We will strengthen our holdings of primary sources in their original formats to attract scholars to Ann Arbor and to anticipate new areas of historical inquiry. The Library will increase accessibility and reach out to the University of Michigan campus through structured class orientations, one-on-one instruction in our reading room, exhibits, and collaborative projects. With partners at U-M and elsewhere we will foster scholarly interaction on a range of American and comparative historical fronts. We will serve a growing number of researchers worldwide through digitization of the collections, publishing and extensive use of technology. Clements staff will be active participants in intellectual life at U-M and internationally through scholarship, teaching and professional service.”*

Background – The Clements Library opened in 1923 as the gift of William L. Clements to the University of Michigan. An 1882 U-M graduate in Engineering, Mr. Clements prospered in Bay City, Michigan, as a manufacturer of heavy railroad machinery. He began collecting early Americana in 1903,

and within two decades had accumulated a remarkable assortment of American books, maps and manuscripts. A long-time U-M Regent, Mr. Clements offered to donate his collection to his *alma mater* and build a structure to house it if the University would maintain and care for the library. Construction began in 1922, and the Clements opened in June of the following year with dedicatory exercises that included J. Franklin Jameson as keynote speaker on “The American Historian’s Raw Materials.”

At the outset, the Library concentrated on North American history from 1492 to 1800. Mr. Clements collected enthusiastically in early American exploration and encounters, military history, and politics and government, with little attention to the nineteenth century. He continued to add to the WLCL’s pre-1800 holdings in the decade after the Library’s opening, and first Director Randolph G. Adams maintained the founder’s chronological emphasis until Mr. Clements’ death in 1934. Adams added selected early nineteenth-century items and materials after Mr. Clements’ passing, but on Adams’ death in 1951 the Library remained principally a pre-1800 collection.

The Clements moved forward chronologically under second Director Howard H. Peckham (1953-77) and third Director John C. Dann (1977-2007). Dr. Peckham extended the Library’s focus into the early decades of the nineteenth century, with particular attention to American religion, reform movements, the War of 1812, and antislavery. Substantial in-kind donations from James S. Schoff in the early 1970s took the Clements’ holdings of Civil War Americana from inconsequential to quite extensive. Dr. Dann strengthened those 1800-65 specialties and added large amounts of 1866-1900 printed and manuscript materials while also substantially enhancing the pre-1800 holdings; he also added visual materials to the Library’s acquisitions priorities. The results of this collecting by our founder and first three Directors are impressive indeed. Today the Clements Library is among the world’s top ten American history research libraries. A recent list of some 500 scholarly volumes published since 1923 based on the Clements collections includes leading scholars from four generations of American historians, and the wide range of their topics indicates that Ann Arbor has become a prime destination

for serious students of most aspects of America's history from Columbus through the nineteenth century.

The Future of Collecting at the Clements – In 2009 new Director J. Kevin Graffagnino instituted conversations on the future of collecting at the Library. These talks engaged Clements staff, some University of Michigan libraries, U-M faculty and administrators, Library donors, and others in extensive, occasionally spirited discussions spread over 18 months. Although unanimity proved elusive, with individuals bringing different perspectives and preferences to the table, eventually broad agreement emerged that the Clements should set 1900 as the chronological cut-off date for most of its acquisitions. Nobody disputed the importance of twentieth-century American history, but consensus formed behind the principle that no institution with the staff, budget and physical plant of the Clements could hope to collect modern Americana exhaustively. Since the Library has always tried for world-class depth at the chronological edges of its collecting, it seems better to let the other 18 libraries at the University of Michigan aim for greatness on America's twentieth and succeeding centuries than to spread ourselves thin in a quixotic attempt to do so. The Clements has long advertised itself as a library of "early Americana," and for the foreseeable future we plan to define "early" as pre-1900. That boundary will be flexible, with some of our collecting divisions acquiring representative twentieth-century primary-source materials to allow researchers to do comparative studies of aspects of American history over time, but we will hope to work with other U-M libraries to help them carry our national story forward past 1900 rather than add that responsibility to the Clements' portfolio.

With that "from 1492 to 1900, plus selected later examples" framework in mind, it is possible to envision the Library's future as a collecting institution. It seems likely that we will not acquire large new amounts of very early Americana. Our holdings are so strong in pre-1800 material, and the gaps consist of items of such rarity and cost, that relatively few printed or manuscript pieces will come our way in Mr. Clements' specialties of exploration and colonialism, military history, and politics and government

through the eighteenth century. The purchase of the second half of Sir Henry Strachey's papers at a Sotheby's auction in October 2010 constituted a splendid exception to this rule, but in general the rule stands: in all probability, small numbers of great pre-1800 Americana that we lack and can hope to add as gifts or purchases will become available in the years ahead. Instead, although enhancing our early holdings will remain a priority, the probability is that we will concentrate most of our acquisitions on the nineteenth century. There are gaps in our 1800-1900 printed and manuscript material, and we should fill them by donation or purchase. We believe that there is excellent potential for the Clements to raise its nineteenth-century collections to the level of our holdings for the preceding centuries, and we are eager to meet that challenge.

The Library's collecting divisions anticipate concentrating their future acquisitions in the following ways:

Book Division: The Book Division specializes in printed Americana from the earliest European exploration of the Americas to the end of the nineteenth century. Areas of particular strength include: early accounts of discovery and exploration; the colonization of North America; colonial American imprints; and the era of the American Revolution. In these fields that Mr. Clements emphasized in his collecting, our holdings are among the best in the world, with a vast number of rare titles and few collection gaps or opportunities to add new books or pamphlets.

The division's collecting future lies principally in nineteenth-century Americana. Our holdings of 1800-1900 printed primary sources are excellent, but there is room for improvement, especially in post-Civil War material. Nineteenth-century subject areas on which we will concentrate our collecting in the next decade include:

- Women's history.
- Underrepresented groups such as African Americans and Native Americans, and the history of race, ethnicity and immigration in America.

- Military history—The War of 1812, the Mexican War, Civil War, and Spanish-American War.
- The Reconstruction era in the American South.
- Social history.
- Education and reform movements.
- Western expansion and Trans-Mississippi books and pamphlets.
- West Indies and the Atlantic world.
- Trade catalogs.
- Pre-1900 American culinary history, which the Library curates in collaboration with Special Collections at U-M's University Library, home of the Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive.
- Travel literature.
- Representative examples of local history, especially for the South and Far West.

Graphics Division: The Graphics Division actively collects visual material related to American history up to 1900. We emphasize documentary content over artistic representations. Rarity, reproduction quality and condition are priorities for us. The collection is primarily works on paper, with many visual formats represented—prints, photographs, original art, ephemera, and some three-dimensional objects. The photography collection has grown rapidly in recent years into a nationally-important archive. With the challenge of high prices limiting major purchases, cultivation of collectors for donations will be a priority for the next 10 years.

The print collection extends chronologically from the late fifteenth to the early twentieth century and includes many rare and important items. Strengths of the collection are: portraits of historical figures; views of major events and wars; American scenery and urban views; representations

of Native Americans; wartime propaganda; satire, especially related to American wars, politics, society, and African Americans. We anticipate actively expanding the print collection in:

- Nineteenth-century American city and town views.
- Western Americana, especially chromolithographs.
- Prints and views of American Civil War subjects.
- Images of underrepresented groups, particularly African Americans.
- Early views and satire related to the West Indies.
- Patriotic allegorical representations of America, Liberty, Uncle Sam, etc.
- Whaling and Atlantic trade.

The division holdings include a variety of original artwork. There are a small number of oil paintings by important early American artists, but the majority of items in this category are works on paper by little-known or amateur artists. Strengths include Benjamin West's "The Death of General Wolfe," Civil War sketches, topographical views, American landscape and city views, and illustrated travel narratives. Areas of interest for growth generally parallel the print collection subjects, and we will look as well for selected examples of soldier's sketches from World War One and World War Two.

Our core photography collection includes many unique and important images from the 1840s to the early twentieth century, with numerous links to WLCL manuscript collections. There are excellent examples of every major photographic format in our holdings. The Currier and Tindler collections are rich in significant images to the middle of the twentieth century, and Michigan photography is a major strength of the Tindler archive. Other strengths include vernacular photography of everyday lives and people, travel, albums (early families, travel, schools, occupations, and commercial products), portraits (including postmortem), American scenery and urban views, colonial architecture and nineteenth-century interiors, American wars, and industry and occupations (particularly lumber, mining, manufacturing, transportation, and agriculture). In the next decade we will look to add photographs in:

- Stereograph views of the Civil War.
- Western expansion and the California Gold Rush.
- Slavery.
- Underrepresented groups such as Native Americans and African Americans.
- Religious and utopian communities.
- Travel and transportation.
- Professional photographers at work.
- Michigan photography.

In ephemera, the collection contains excellent examples from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century in advertising, travel, theater, bookplates, greeting cards, Civil War patriotic material, and culinary advertising. We will concentrate in the next decade on growth in:

- Nineteenth-century politics.
- Nineteenth-century photographic advertising and billheads.
- Shipping and ships, ocean trade.
- Eighteenth-century advertising (watch papers, illustrated billheads, etc.).

The Library has a strong collection of sheet music, primarily popular music published or distributed in America from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century. The collection overlaps with published tune books, manuscript music, theater ephemera, and photographs, touching on the same subject strengths as other Clements divisions. Many of the covers are illustrated with color lithographs, making it a valuable pictorial collection as well. Strengths in our sheet music include: famous songs, composers and performers; minstrelsy; American wars; political and campaign songs; African American composers; social movements (temperance, antislavery, women's rights); religion; immigration and ethnicity. We do not anticipate actively expanding our holdings, but we will fill in gaps as opportunities become available.

The division also oversees the Library's collection of three-dimensional objects. Most of this realia is directly related to our manuscript collections. Strengths include: colonial and early nineteenth-century currency and tokens; American and French commemorative medals; a small collection of weapons. We are not seeking to expand our holdings here.

Manuscript Division: The Manuscript Division's greatest strengths are its military holdings, followed by reform, which includes antislavery, education and missionary work. We are also quite strong in religion, family, travel, and personal diaries, and in such underrepresented groups as women, African Americans and Native Americans. Over the last 10 years we have added many items to our naval/sea and Gold Rush subject categories to create strength in them. We also have good collections for crime, politics, and Atlantic and domestic trade and distribution. Our most exhaustive manuscript holdings are for the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Subject areas that need strengthening – Even our main areas of depth have gaps. For example, in African American history, we would like to obtain more records on contraband, the Underground Railroad, education, military service, personal accounts, and Reconstruction-era sharecropping. For Native Americans, we would like to enhance our holdings on their participation in the French and Indian War, the Northwest Territory trade and conflicts, the "Trail of Tears" migration and other forced relocations of Indians to reservations, and on reservation life and cross-cultural exchanges.

We have good manuscript collections relating to religion, particularly missionaries and Quakers. We would like to add more manuscripts reflecting the distinctive nature of American religion, especially as it developed during the First and Second Great Awakenings.

Our Union soldiers' letters for the Civil War are voluminous, but we need more manuscripts about Confederates, female participants (nurses, etc.), colored troops, the Sanitary Commission, life on the home front during the war, and Reconstruction (particularly its effect on African Americans). We should look for acquisitions on the Mexican War and the subsequent acquisition of western territory,

the war for Texas independence, and the Spanish-American War. We would also like to add more documentation of the U.S. Navy.

The Clements has many travel diaries and accounts that complement our travel-related materials in other divisions, particularly Graphics. In this area we are especially strong on Gold Rush-era California, but we need more on non-miner businesses, life in larger communities such as San Francisco and Sacramento, and manuscripts relating to women, Mexicans and Native Americans. We should strengthen our travel manuscripts for the Midwest and the western states.

The Library's education manuscripts are excellent, especially in combination with the printed titles in the Book Division. We need to fill in gaps for Native American and African American education, and for the eighteenth century.

Collecting the "Long Nineteenth Century" – Although the Manuscripts Division is committed to a 1900 cut-off date for most of our acquisitions, we need to keep in mind that manuscript collections of value to historians can begin in the nineteenth century and spill over into the twentieth. Separating collections of papers that cross chronological lines can destroy the research integrity of both individual and institutional archives, so it is probable that Manuscripts will have some acquisitions that span the 1900 turn of the century. Additionally, Manuscripts will continue to look for selected twentieth-century papers in areas in which the Library has particular pre-1900 strength, such as soldier's letters; there the goal will be to offer scholars opportunities for comparative study rather than to create exceptional breadth or depth in post-1900 material.

Map Division: The Map Division specializes in the cartographic record of the western hemisphere from the first European explorations in the 1490s until the end of the nineteenth century. The division collects and catalogs only maps of the Americas, with a terminal date of 1900. Maps of a later date or of non-American areas will be cataloged if they have come to the Library as part of a manuscript collection.

The map collection is particularly strong in geographic, printed maps of the Americas to 1820 and in manuscript maps of the late colonial era, American Revolution and early national period. We will continue to collect in these areas, although acquisitions in them will be increasingly scarce and costly. Some significant early printed American maps are represented in our collection only in facsimile, and we will try to obtain originals of them. Manuscript maps, especially those depicting topography, cities and towns, fortifications, battles, and significant events will remain a collecting priority.

In the next seven to 10 years the Map Division will also collect in areas currently represented to a lesser degree in our holdings:

- Printed and manuscript maps of Canada, the West Indies, Mexico, and Central America from the fifteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century.
- Printed and manuscript maps of the War of 1812, Mexican War, and other small American conflicts.
- Printed and manuscript maps of the Civil War, particularly examples contemporary to the conflict.
- Maps of South America and its countries, especially of the early national period.
- Nineteenth-century U.S. travelers' guide maps.
- Nineteenth-century U.S. state and regional maps.
- American city plans, especially 1780s-1850s.
- American city directory plans and city developer plans of the late nineteenth century.
- Maps relating to the California Gold Rush.
- Thematic maps of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- Nautical and coastal charts, eighteenth-nineteenth centuries.
- Nineteenth-century American atlases, including family, school, county and state atlases.