CLA: Sixteenth Year

The Clements Library Associates end their sixteenth year of activity on September 30. Membership continues to hover around 500, not counting wives of members. Expenditures for the year on the Library amounted to $12,427, including $5922 raised in a separate appeal for funds. At the end of sixteen years, the grand total raised and spent by the Associates on the Library stands at $101,077.80!

(In the course of reviewing the past ten years of Library achievements for his annual report, your embarrassed secretary went over again the not-too-clear accounts of the Associates as interspersed in the early minutes and came up with this new total.)

The first annual Assembly was held last October incident to opening a special exhibition at the Library and hearing a speaker on the topic of the exhibition. The annual gift book from the Library to members was Life in the South, 1777-1779; the Letters of Benjamin West, edited by Associate James S. Schoff. Four issues of The Quarto were published as usual.

A fund raising campaign to purchase a group of Sir Henry Clinton letters to the Duke of Gloucester about the American Revolution was so successful that $682 was contributed, $900 more than the goal. The Board of Governors met in October 1962 and June 1963, giving faithful attention to its duties. Membership distribution and contributions were studied, and a new leaflet for attracting members will be prepared. Plans for a second fall Assembly were discussed.

Invitations have gone out to Associates and friends for the fall Assembly on Friday night, October 4. Guests will preview a new exhibition on the Indian uprising under Chief Pontiac in 1763 that centered on Fort Detroit. The Director of the Library will speak on the rise and fall of the chief. Refreshments will be served.

Annual Report

The Library's report for 1962-63, covering its fortieth year, shows a very large growth in books, a total of 608 titles added. 512 were additions to the collections, and the rest were bibliographies and reference works.

Three manuscript collections were acquired: the papers of Admiral Sir James Douglas (1703-1783), the papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg (1886-1951), and the letters of Pvt. James R. Woodworth (killed 1864). The latter two were gifts. Significant additions were made to our holdings of the correspondence of Gov. William Henry Lyttleton, of Secretary of War James McHenry, and of Gen. Sir Henry Clinton. The latter purchase was made by the Associates after a special fund drive.

Map acquisitions were light: two rare printed maps, six manuscript maps, a 1617 Ptolemy atlas, and the magnificent Portugaliae

Monumenta Cartographica recently published in Lisbon.

Research visits to the Library in the past year numbered 1162, the second highest figure. A valuable new tool for research has been fashioned by creation of a chronological card catalogue of the books in the Library. As part of the project various secondary works not germane to the collections were transferred to the General Library; the Clements Library now contains 38,538 volumes.

The complete annual report will be sent to all Associates later, after it is printed.

Yo, Ho, Ho, and a Bottle

We can't guarantee the following historical note, and since we labor among dry books and manuscripts we doubt it. Nevertheless, it appeared in the Proceedings of the U. S. Naval Institute for April:

"On 23 August 1779, the USS Constitution set sail from Boston with 475 officers and men, 48,600 gallons of fresh water, 7,400 cannon shot, 11,600 pounds of black powder, and 79,400 gallons of rum on board. Her mission was to destroy and harass English shipping.

"Making Jamaica on 6 October, she took on 826 pounds of flour and 68,900 gallons of rum. Then she headed for the Azores, arriving there on 12 November. She provisioned with 550 pounds of beef and 64,900 gallons of Portuguese wine. On 18 November she set sail for England."
In the ensuing days, she defeated five British men-of-war and captured and scuttled 12 English merchantmen, salvaging 48,600 gallons aboard by dawn. Then she headed home.

"Unarmed, she made a raid up the Firth of Clyde. Her landing party captured a whiskey distillery and transferred 40,000 gallons of stagnant water."

Maybe this is why she was called "Old Ironsides."

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Chris Brun Leaves

We are sorry to have to report that the Library's map and print curator, Christian Brun, has left for a better position with the University of California at Santa Barbara. There he will have charge of special collections, and the larger library system will offer more opportunities for advancement.

Mr. Brun began working for the Library part time as a graduate student ten years ago. Later he was put on full time. Besides his regular work of cataloging maps and waiting on readers, he brought order to our collection of prints and published a Guide to the Manuscript Maps in the Clements Library (1959). He also wrote two magazine articles about maps. In recent years he has been engaged in revising and finishing a "Bibliography of Maps Printed in America Before 1800," a monumental work started by the late James Clements Wheat. The manuscript is now ready for the press and will be published by Yale University next year.

With his young family, Mr. Brun departed in August with the best wishes of his colleagues at the Library. He will be greatly missed for his competence and unfailing courtesy. We expect to hear big things of him in California.

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Additions to Two Manuscript Collections

One of our proud possessions is the correspondence of William Henry Lyttleton while he was governor of South Carolina, 1756-1760, which we obtained in England in 1954. His career did not end then, however. He was "promoted" to the governorship of Jamaica, 1761-1766. The Library has now obtained his Jamaican correspondence, to complete the archives of his American career. It covers the period when the theater of the French and Indian War moved to the West Indies.

There is much naval correspondence, letters from the agent for Jamaica in London, letters from inhabitants, Privy Council orders, and a letterbook of the governor's outgoing letters. After the war the island was plagued by a Negro insurrection in 1765. Guess who turns up in the correspondence? Our new friend, Admiral James Douglas, whose papers we acquired last year. Inevitably there is a batch of material that belongs with Lyttleton's South Carolina administration.

Just before the last war ended, the papers of James McHenry, secretary of war under Presidents Washington and Adams, were dispersed at auction. It is estimated that the collection contained about 2,000 pieces. This Library was hardly able to bid. However, since that time it has acquired three caches of items from that sale and has a collection of 450 McHenry pieces. When a good many more letters appeared unexpectedly at auction last month, the Library was granted money from the President's Fund to bid. We succeeded in cornering 61 more manuscripts, so that we now have close to 500 of the McHenry papers—no doubt the largest group in any one institution, and a collection in which research can now be done. It is expensive business, of course, to try to put a collection back together again, and we will never succeed completely, but we are still trying.
Lady Wentworth et al.

There are two kinds of dealers in manuscript material: those who are interested in signatures of eminent persons and letters of important content, who call themselves autograph or manuscript dealers, and those who are concerned with postal markings and envelopes, the stamp dealers. Rarely does the Library have dealings with the latter. We are not interested in stamps or postal markings and can’t compete with stamp collectors who will pay a high price for a physical aspect of a letter which is of no moment to us.

However, from time to time, we have made purchases of letters of historical interest from stamp dealers who were disappointed in them for their philatelic barrenness. Recently we picked up more than a hundred items relating to the Dering family of Boston dating from 1755 to 1819. There are some references to the French and Indian War, the Revolution, and the War of 1812.

One of Mr. Dering’s nieces was Mrs. Frances Atkinson, a beautiful widow. In 1769 she married John Wentworth, Harvard ’55, governor of New Hampshire and a Tory. The couple went to England during the Revolution, but returned in 1783 when Wentworth was named surveyor of the King’s Woods. He settled in Halifax, was named lieutenant governor of Nova Scotia in 1792, and made a baronet in 1795. After Mrs. Wentworth reached New York she wrote to her uncle on January 6, 1784. She was hospitably received by friends while trying to get passage to Halifax to join her husband. The city had been evacuated by the British and was in U. S. hands again.

One incident affected her deeply. Her voyage on an English ship, the Assistance, had taken nine weeks, during which time she had gotten well acquainted with all the officers. At New York six seamen deserted the ship. Thirteen officers went to pursue them in a small boat, which was upset in a sudden squall. All of the officers were drowned.

Lady Wentworth’s portrait was painted by John Singleton Copley. It hangs in the New York Public Library, and we have before us only a postcard reproduction of it, but we regret that we can’t share it with our readers. The Atkinson connection in this collection ties in with the separate Atkinson papers we have.

Included in the lot are 18 letters from Dr. Ebenezer Sage, representative in Congress from New York 1809 to 1815. They tie in with all the other New York political correspondence we have in this period and later.

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Tobias Lear Letters

The Library has one famous and lengthy letter by Tobias Lear, Washington’s private secretary and steward at Mount Vernon. It describes in detail the last illness and death of the great man.

A few weeks ago we bought a group of 94 Lear letters dating from 1803 to 1816. They are all to his wife. Those in the period 1803 to 1807 deal with Lear’s negotiations with the Bashaw of Tripoli and the release of some 900 American seamen imprisoned after the capture of the frigate Philadelphia. This was the result of the Barbary pirates who were preying on American and European commerce and accepting bribes from time to time. Lear also made a treaty with Morocco and then went on to conduct successful negotiations of a similar nature with the Bey of Tunis. His early efforts were complicated by the appearance of a military expedition in Tripoli under William Eaton, a “Navy agent.”

Lear remained as consul at Algiers until 1812. The author of the sketch in the Dictionary of American Biography considered his diplomatic career at an end, but his letters reveal that he met and negotiated with British officers at Plattsburg after the battle in 1814. He settled in Washington, worked for the War Department, and for reasons never fathomed committed suicide in 1816.

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Lieut. Meares Again

British Naval Lieut. John Meares first went to the Northwest coast of America from India in 1786. There he was promised a monopoly of the fur trade by the Indians of Nootka Sound. He returned in 1788 with two ships, built a house, and raised the British flag. The Spanish claimed the region, and in 1789 they appeared in Meares’ absence and captured his two ships.

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

... Count me as an Associate. Here is my contribution ($5 minimum) for 1964. As a bonus I shall receive a copy of Life in the South 1777-1779, Letters of Benjamin West. (over)
Meares went home and wrote a book about his discoveries and claims which appeared in 1790. Now he faced fresh difficulty: his priority at Nootka Sound was challenged by Capt. George Dixon, who had been in that area too. Meares answered that pamphlet, and Dixon replied. We have Meares' book and the three pamphlets. We thought this was everything on the English side, but now comes Meares' little known Memorial (London 1790) to the British government about his property losses. Great Britain promptly protested the seizure to Spain, and the "Nootka Sound affair" boiled up. War was averted only by Spain backing down on her claim. Letters and a journal are added to the Memorial. It is a scarce item, and we added it to the other titles.

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Eliot's Commonwealth

Probably the most famous New England minister in the generation before Cotton Mather was John Eliot. It was he who translated the Bible into the Natick Indian tongue by phonetic spelling and had it printed at Cambridge in 1663—the first Bible to be printed in the United States. We have a copy; the most recent one to be sold brought $20,000. His Indian Grammar, 1668, sold recently for $15,600. Copies of his sermons have simply not appeared at auction in the last twenty years. We have four of them.

One of his most important essays is The Christian Commonwealth (London 1659). It was written about 1650 and is a frame of government based on the Scriptures, a true theocracy. Eliot had used it in the Christian Indian community he formed. It contained certain republican principles and Eliot's reflections on monarchy. After the restoration of the king in England in 1660, Massachusetts Bay sought royal favor by condemning the book. The Massachusetts General Court ordered all copies to be destroyed. Eliot, sorry to say, signed a public retraction. The Library has just acquired a copy from England, the eighth one located.

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Heart-shaped Maps

One of the early problems in map making was how to represent the world sphere on a flat piece of paper, or how to reduce three dimensions to two. It is still a problem in projection. Most of us like maps made in Mercator's projection, with the north and south longitudinal lines running parallel and vertical, although it exaggerates the distances at either pole.

Early cartographers were aware that the poles should be shown slightly flattened and that the equator should show a bulge.

In the early sixteenth century they played with an overall design that roughly resembled the conventional outline of a Valentine heart. Scholars call these cordiform maps.

Nils Nordenskiöld, a nineteenth-century Swedish scholar who was much interested in old maps, was intrigued by cordiform maps and determined that eight were published by different cartographers before 1560. Apparently Bernardus Sylvanus made the first one, which appeared in the Ptolemy atlas of 1511. Johannes Werner did another which appeared in 1514 Ptolemy. Then Petrus Apianus made one for Pomponius Mela's De Orbis Situ, 1520. A French mathematician, Oronce Fine, drew one that showed up in Simon Grynaeus, Novus Orbis, 1532. From this one, a Tunisian citizen named Hadji Ahmed made a map with Turkish inscription in 1559 which was immediately suppressed and not issued until 1795, when only 24 copies were pulled.

Meanwhile, Friesius Gemma had drawn one that appeared in 1544 in the Cosmography of Petrus Apianus. Caspar Vopell contributed a cordiform map to Geronimo Girava's Cosmography in 1556 and later editions. Finally, Johannes Honter showed a cordiform map in his Rudimenterum Cosmographiae, 1534.

The Clements Library has all of these eight maps. What is more, it has another! Not well known is the fact that in Proclus, De Sphaera, 1561 a new edition of Honter's map was published showing more of the New World. Yet subsequent editions of the 1534 work carried the old map too. There is also a map of Cuba in the 1561 edition for the first time.