

Report of the Librarian

OUR associate, Mr. Thomas Barbour, in his recent autobiography asserts from his long years of experience that a museum or a library dies when it ceases to grow. He might have added that the two requisites of growth are nourishment and space. Consequently libraries are likely to perish from one of two causes, strangulation resulting from lack of space, or pernicious anemia of the book funds. To both of these ills our Library, like most, is heir. During the past year we have reduced the pressure on various parts of the Library anatomy by means of the additions to the map and print room which are mentioned in the report of the Council, by shifting more recent newspaper files to the old coal bin, and by discarding recently published material in the field of the natural and physical sciences.

Like an overweight individual we find that this reducing diet has increased our strength and efficiency, but we do not propose to carry this policy to the point of stabilizing the Library at its present or any other size. We ought to obtain all current works relating to American history, literature, arts, anthropology, genealogy, biography, and bibliography, but we can wait until the greater part of them have come by gift or by purchase at second-hand prices. On the other hand, there is a portion of the current output which comprises the essential tools of our trade, and these we must obtain as they appear. These essential current works, which are principally periodicals, bibliographies, genealogies, and local histories, consume nearly all of our book funds, but we must have them in order to carry on work in the collections of early Americana which have made this Library famous.

Consequently it is in these collections of early Americana that anemia of the book funds would have made itself felt this year had it not been for most generous transfusions from our members and other friends.

The accessions for the year are as follows:

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| Bound volumes | 2093 |
| Pamphlets | 2706 |
| Engravings, maps, mss. | 3245 |
| Total in Library, October 1, 1943: | |
| Bound volumes | 256,086 |
| Pamphlets | 393,217 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 649,303 |

The year's accessions are somewhat less than in previous years, due chiefly to the fact that we have received no especially large collection.

It is upon some of our accessions of rare Americana that I shall report. Because the function of such a document as this is to record useful bibliographical information rather than to gloat, I shall pass over some of the most valuable and appreciated accessions to describe the unique or excessively rare pieces although some of them have relatively little financial value.

The concentration of our efforts and our means on early American newspapers has brought us perhaps more good and important files than in any recent year. Among the more important newspaper files acquired were the following:

- New London, *Connecticut Gazette*, 1774
- Sandwich Islands Gazette*, 1836-37
- Boston Post-Boy*, 1759-60
- Charlestown Chronicle*, 1841-42
- New Bedford, *Columbian Courier*, 1802
- Northampton, *Republican Spy*, 1807

Springfield, *Hampden Federalist*, 1819
 New Orleans, *Courrier de la Louisiane*, 1832
 New Orleans, *Démocratie Française*, 1882-84
 New Orleans, *Harlequin*, 1903-04
 New Orleans, *Our Home Journal*, 1871
 New Orleans, *Renaissance Louisianaise*, 1868-71
 St. Charles Parish, *Avant-Coureur*, 1854-72
 St. Jacques Parish, *Louisianais*, 1865-81
 St. Jean-Baptiste Parish, *Meschacébé*, 1854-1901, partial file
 Fredericktown, Maryland, *Hornet*, 1802-03
Albany Gazette, 1818
 Cooperstown, *Otsego Herald*, 1796-97, 1803-04
New York Evening Post, 1802
 New York, *Republicain*, 1853
 New York, *Time Piece*, 1798
 New York, *Youth's News Paper*, 1797
 Eugene, *Oregon State Journal*, 1864-1909
 Philadelphia, *Claypoole's Daily Advertiser*, 1797-99
 Philadelphia, *Dunlap's Daily Advertiser*, 1793-95
 Philadelphia, *Pennsylvania Packet*, 1784-89
 Philadelphia, *Poulson's Daily Advertiser*, 1800-29
 Philadelphia, *Political and Commercial Register*, 1804-13
 Reading, *Berks and Schuylkill Journal*, 1816-31
 Reading, *Neue Zeitung*, 1793-96
 Columbia, South Carolina, *Telescope*, 1815-16
 Middlebury, *Vermont Mirror*, 1812-13

The most important newspaper acquisition of the year, and perhaps since the days of Isaiah Thomas, was a file of Philadelphia papers extending from 1784 to 1829. First in the series comes the *Pennsylvania Packet*, beginning with 1784 and going through 1789. The *Packet* is of especial interest because it was the earliest successful daily paper in the country, and the issue of September 21, 1784, was its first daily publication. Then follows the *Packet's* successor, the *American Daily Advertiser*, successively published by Dunlap, Dunlap and Claypoole, Claypoole, and finally Poulson. This long file, extending through 1829 and cover-

ing nearly half a century, except for a few unimportant gaps, was the most important Philadelphia newspaper of the period. Washington, during his presidency, considered it the official paper of his administration. Throughout its life it was a strong Federalist publication, in opposition to the *Aurora*, but not descending to party abuse. It is a file which we have long needed and it will be especially useful in historical research. Mr. Stephen W. Phillips generously provided the means for this acquisition. By stretching our regular book funds we were able to purchase another Philadelphia file, the *Political and Commercial Register* from 1804 to 1813. It was a prominent Federalist daily paper edited by William Jackson, who was private secretary to Washington during his administration and who entered upon a journalistic life when Jefferson came into power.

Another important gift was the impressive collection of French newspapers of Louisiana presented by Mr. Edward Larocque Tinker. Mr. Tinker's paper read before this Society in October, 1932, entitled "Bibliography of French Newspapers and Periodicals of Louisiana," and printed in the *Proceedings*, revealed the cultural and intellectual influence of these French newspapers upon Louisiana during the nineteenth century. Of the large number of French journals listed, Mr. Tinker himself owned by far the greatest existing collection, and this he has given to our Library as the most convenient center for the scholars who will wish to consult it. The longer Louisiana files are recorded in the above list of the year's acquisitions, but in addition there are hundreds of miscellaneous and scattering issues, representing a score of other newspapers. We already had an excellent collection of Louisiana newspapers, but this gift is the largest single accession for that State.

A long newspaper file representing the Far West was obtained through a gift by Mr. Paul B. Morgan—the *Oregon*

State Journal, a complete file from 1864 to 1909. This paper contains a larger proportion of local news, observation, and editorial comment than do most of its Eastern contemporaries, so it affords a great block of source material little of which is duplicated elsewhere in the Library. From still farther West there came to us through the hands and kindness of Mr. James M. Hunnewell a file of the *Sandwich Island Gazette* for 1836-37, and with it came a lot of Hawaiian broadsides.

One small acquisition which calls for particular notice is a complete file of *The Youths' News Paper*, the first American periodical for young people, running from September 30 to November 4, 1797. It was a weekly, issued in New York. The outstanding item of news in it is the progress of construction on the frigate *Constitution*, but there is a liberal sprinkling of hangings and the like.

An even greater rarity, if it is not painting the lily to call an unique item a rarity, is a little volume of verse, obtained by exchange, entitled *A few Lines on the Happy Reduction of Canada: as also, the Great Fire in Boston, and Sickness at Woodbury, in the Year 1760. To which is Added, some Lines, on the Remarkable Providence of God, in the Year 1761 as also Reflections on the Sins of the Times, and some notorious Acts of Sin*. The imprint is only the date, 1761; probably the pamphlet came from the New Haven press of James Parker.

Contrasting with this verse, which is so bad as to be funny, is the much more able poetry in a volume of manuscript which came as the gift of Dr. Harold S. Jantz. It is the work of Deborah Pratt, who has not hitherto been known as a poetess, and indeed is so little known that it was only by the aid of Mrs. William D. Disston, of Philadelphia, that we discovered who she was. Deborah was born in 1746, the youngest daughter of Henry and Rebecca (Claypoole) Pratt, of Philadelphia, a sister of the artist, Matthew Pratt.

She married the Reverend Daniel Ruff, of Abington, Maryland, and died in 1796. The verses, which are dated between 1761 and 1776, are partly topical and are possessed of some small merit.

In connection with Matthew Pratt it is of interest to note that Mr. William Sawitzky's book about him shows conclusively that our two pictures of John Bush and his wife, formerly attributed to Charles Willson Peale, are by Pratt. Our attribution to Peale was made many years ago on the opinion of a Boston critic, and Mr. Brigham was never quite satisfied with it.

From Mr. George Mather Randle we received a handsome oil portrait of Richard Mather which was obviously closely related to ours. He bought it in 1890 of a Mr. Armstrong of New London. On the back we found the stamp of William Schaus, a New York dealer in artists' supplies, and the address, 289 Broadway. That was the address of the Schaus store in 1853, the year in which George F. Wright of Hartford was granted permission to copy our portrait of Richard Mather. After ninety years it has come home.

Of the prints which we acquired this year one of the most interesting was Pelham's mezzotint of William Cooper. We have the largest collection of Pelhams, lacking now only the Hooper, the Shirley, and the Louisburg map.

Mr. Brigham's quick eye detected in the catalogue of a book dealer a lot of papers described as relating to the exhibition with which John Nepomuck Maelzel mystified European and American audiences in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Knowing that Poe had seen this exhibition and had in the *Southern Literary Messenger* for April, 1836, essayed an explanation of its greatest marvel, the automaton chess-player, Mr. Brigham purchased the papers. They related, it turned out, to a rival exhibition owned by three Boston men, John Lilley, Samuel Curtis, and

Washington P. Gragg, who in 1828 purchased Maelzel's automaton dancers, speaking figures, and panorama of the conflagration of Moscow, which they showed at Albany, New Orleans, and Nashville in the next two years. Aside from the Poe interest the papers are of value as a record of the show business of that time.¹ The automaton chess-player which challenged Poe's detective instincts was constructed in 1769 by Baron de Kempelen, of Presburg, Hungary, and, after having mystified a generation of Europeans, was sold to Maelzel who brought it to the United States about 1826. It survived its second owner and was destroyed by fire at Philadelphia on July 5, 1854.

The chess-player was a figure in Turkish costume seated behind a cabinet with cupboards and a drawer below, and a chess-board on the top. The cupboards and figure appeared to be full of machinery which, when ostentatiously wound by the exhibitor, seemingly enabled it to play an almost unbeatable game of chess. There were several substantially correct explanations of the marvel before Poe turned his attention to it but he essayed a review. By the processes of reasoning so familiar to the readers of his mystery stories he came to the conclusion that the chess-player was not automatic: the timing of its movements was not that of a machine, the appearance of the machinery in the cupboards as seen from different angles suggested mirrors, and the sound of its winding was unconvincing. Poe concluded that the figure was operated by a concealed man who escaped detection by shifting his position in the cabinet as the cupboards and the drawer were opened for inspection in a predetermined order. He pointed out the fact that the figure of the Turk was really much more than life-sized,

¹ These papers add a considerable amount of information to the classic account, "The History of the Automaton Chess-Player in America," pp. 420-84, in Daniel Willard Fiske, *The Book of the First American Chess Congress* (New York, 1859).

which would make operation by a concealed man much easier, and suggested that the operator of the supposed automaton was a member of Maelzel's staff named Schlumberger, who seemed to have no regular duties.

The papers which we purchased show that this William Schlumberger was for a time in 1829 detached from Maelzel's service to aid the purchasers of the Conflagration of Moscow. In November, 1829, while preparing to remove the exhibition from Albany to New Orleans, John Passarow, manager of that show, repeatedly urged the Boston owners to buy Maelzel's automaton chess-player or to have a similar one made for their show by a Daniel Walker, best known as a member of the firm of music publishers, Geib and Walker. The secret comes out in the course of the correspondence:

"I doubt not a player sufficiently qualified may be found in N. Orleans. Mr. Walker says the necessary instructions may be imparted to a person who exhibits in one or two days and if a good player is procured it would be as successful as that of Maelzels."

"I know of no person who will bear comparison with Schlumberger in the game of chess but, if it belonged to me, would announce it as an American Chess player and should not pretend to its invincibility, but, presuming that an excellent player might be obtained in N. Orleans, would depend on that place for a Confederate, and I think a person might be discovered who from interest would be faithful."

Poe was right!

From Dr. Rosenbach we have received an interesting collection consisting of thirteen volumes of the letter-books of McCarty & Davis, early Philadelphia booksellers, covering the years from 1816 to 1842. The firm of William McCarty and Thomas Davis in 1815 bought out Johnson & Warner, long noted for the publishing of children's books. They became prominent as booksellers and publishers. In

1831 Moses Pollock, who was born at Philadelphia in 1817, entered their employ as a clerk. After McCarty retired, Davis continued the business, relying chiefly upon his clerk. When Davis died in 1851 he left Pollock the means to buy the business. Pollock lived to become the oldest bookseller in the United States and when he died his business descended to Dr. Rosenbach, his nephew. This collection of letter-books is highly important for the study of bookselling conditions in this country, and we shall index the names of booksellers which appear in it as we did those in our collection of Mathew Carey account books.

Several manuscript volumes of unusual interest came to us from Mr. Charles L. Morse of Worcester. These included the letter-books of Henry Moore of Chicago, covering the year 1836-43, and the diaries of George Moore of Concord, Massachusetts, and Quincy, Illinois, covering the years 1828-45. The diarist kept school at Acton, Chelsea, and Plymouth, Massachusetts, attended Harvard College, Harvard Law School, and the Divinity School, and became a minister at Quincy. He wrote voluminously and with great care, deliberately selecting and recording the kind of facts for which the historian turns hopefully to such documents. This should some day be printed.

Mr. Gilbert Grosvenor gave us the diary which Colonel Jonathan Holman of Sutton kept while on the Ticonderoga campaign of 1759. The volume includes lists of soldiers and some later accounts. Mr. Grosvenor also gave us a set of the London, 1750, edition of *Tom Jones* with fine John Hancock autographs.

From Mr. Winship came a particularly rare lot of Connecticut imprints. There are still large gaps in our collection of Connecticut printing, but it was pleasing to note that Ellen Starr Brinton's new bibliography of the excessively rare tracts relating to the Rogerenes shows that of those

printed before 1820 we have eighteen titles, Yale has fourteen, the Connecticut Historical Society eight, and the Huntington Library seven. From the University of Vermont we received by exchange a number of Vermont items to add to our already unexcelled collection of the early printing and history of that state. The most valuable item in the lot was Ethan Allen's *Animadversory Address* (Hartford, 1778). By purchase we acquired a hitherto unknown edition of John Fox, *The Door of Heaven*. The title page is the same as that on the Newport edition of 1731 except for the imprint which reads "Boston: Printed by B. Green, for Nicholas Buttolph, at the Corner Shop at the Head of King Street. 1709."

Since the attention of collectors has driven up the price of early American broadsides we have restricted our purchases to items which supplement our present holdings and have real historical or literary interest; but in spite of this policy some of our most interesting acquisitions of the year have been in this form. Mr. Lawrence W. Jenkins gave us a Revolutionary ballad entitled "Granye: Or Lord Conway's Contest in the British Parliament against the American War. . . . Together with Paddy's Love-Song." By purchase we obtained a contemporary and hitherto unreported printing of "The Farmer and his Son's Return from a Visit to the Camp." These songs seem quaint and distant, but there is a painful immediacy in a broadside which came as the gift of Mr. George S. Barton. This begins "In Pursuance of an Act from the Great and General Court . . . the Selectmen of Newburyport, have set and affixed the following prices. . . ." Except for the date of the imprint, 1777, and the prices themselves, it is all very familiar. The OPA system of that date was not an entire success as is shown by an unique broadside which we acquired this year. This sheet, headed "Boston, August 31st, 1779" is an address "To the Gentlemen who represented the Country Towns in the late Con-

vention at Concord" and is in effect an appeal to the farm bloc to encourage the movement into Boston of the sheep and beef which were being kept off the market to fatten because the ceiling prices did not suit the farmers.

From Mr. James M. Hunnewell we received a ballad entitled "The Major's Only Son, And his True-Love's Overthrow." Although this is known in several editions it has been excluded from bibliographies of American poetry on the supposition that it was English. This copy, however, has the subtitle, "Being some Lines Composed by himself, on the Occasion; He is a Native of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and is now alive the present Year, 1792." We also acquired an unrecorded broadside of 1801 entitled "Jefferson, Freedom and Glory."

I rarely have the good fortune to discover that something which I have bought because I like the looks of it is really an excellent purchase, but that was our experience with a broadside which we took because of the gory red and black woodcut of an Indian massacre which headed it. The title is "Murder of the whole Family of Samuel Wells, consisting of his wife and sister and eleven children by the Indians," and when we acquired it we presumed that it related to some New England battle, but a closer reading of the text showed that the massacre was one which had taken place on April 10, 1813, "somewhere about two hundred miles up the river Missouri." There is no imprint but the account suggests that the printing was done in New York shortly after the receipt of the news via New Orleans. This was the only unique western item to come our way this year but from Mr. Thomas W. Streeter we received a lot of two dozen rare western books, a gift the more appreciated because the comparative weakness of our collections in this field makes it unwise for us to attempt to cover it with the book funds at our disposal.

Our collection of early music has been strengthened by the addition of a number of hitherto unreported pieces. The most interesting accession in this field is *The Complete Fifer's Museum: or, A Collection of Marches of all Kinds, now in use in the Military Line. Also a Number of Occasional Tunes for the Actual Service and the Militia. . . . By James Hulbert Jun. . . . Printed and Published by Ansel Phelps, Greenfield, Massachusetts, about 1812.*

Our long and arduous work on the *Union List of Serials* has been most unexpectedly rewarded. After consulting this list, several libraries in different parts of the country have written to offer us broken files of rare periodicals which supplement our own holdings. Cooperation of this kind is so common, and useless competition is so rare, that most of our sister institutions should be described as cooperating, not rival, libraries.

The fact that several of the great libraries of the country have put away their rarities for the duration of the war has meant that the activity of this Library has not declined as much as we expected. During this last year the number of visiting scholars has been just about the same as the number for the preceding year, although fewer than before the war. We have lost four members of our staff, and we have found but one replacement. A half of the Librarian's work still rests on the shoulders of the Director. One would expect the added burden of work falling upon a reduced staff, together with the natural restlessness of people not employed in war work, to result in shortness of temper and a decline in the quality and quantity of the work done. Strange to say, in our Library this year past has been even more harmonious and productive than usual. The reason for the kindness and industrious activity of the staff when the times would justify very different conduct is not at all clear, but it is appreciated by the wondering Librarian and by our visitors.

The name of the American Antiquarian Society connotes to outsiders something long dead, but to us on the inside the future of the institution presents such a difficult choice of enticing activities that we hardly know what to begin next. Our various collections cry out for the reorganization and the bibliographical studies which will increase their utility to scholars. This we cannot accomplish if we allow ourselves to be hampered by uncontrolled and indiscriminate growth; but by planning and foresight we know that we can in the years to come grow greatly in usefulness and importance to the scholarly world.

Respectfully submitted,

CLIFFORD K. SHIPTON,

Librarian

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