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# Library Notes: Selected Acquisitions [v. 11, no. 3]

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## Selected Acquisitions

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### *Letters of the LaFayette Family*

Mrs. Garland Barr of Lexington has made a valuable gift to the Libraries of a group of over a dozen letters relating to the LaFayette family. One letter, penned in English at LaGrange, the LaFayette home in France, on 26 October 1825, is from General LaFayette to Francis Allyn, captain of the ship *Cadmus*. It seeks his help in providing passage back to New York for a stranded American. LaFayette asks to pay for the traveler's passage, but Captain Allyn notes that he makes no charge.

In a letter from Norfolk, Virginia, to Captain Allyn in New York, dated 25 February 1825, George Washington LaFayette, the general's son, makes a special request for the transport of scientific objects:

I told you once you know that I had been charged by a friend, a very learned young man in france, to try to carry over to him, two *oppossums* which it has not yet been possible to perform, before, though the professors of the *jardins des plantes* have wished it most earnestly. I must confess I am not at all disposed to think of anything but my grief, but however, as my directions for procuring those animals had been given before and as I have *two males* and *two females* ready I think I must send them, specially as I have discovered that the observing of them would be still more important for the good of science than I had believed at first.

I have in your friendship confidence enough, for to ask you to take charge of them when you go, and to have them put on the roof of the *Vigilence* in havre for paris, when you go there, the only thing is that they must have always water, and earth in their cage.

The expression of concern for the success of this project is reiterated in another letter, dated from Milledgeville, Georgia, 27

March 1825. Another letter of the general, from his home in France, LaGrange, and dated 16 May 1827, also demonstrates an interest in American fauna. "I see," writes LaFayette in English, "by a letter of Mr. Skinner to his son that he had some objects to send me, Birds, Rabbits etc. Did you Hear of them?"

The letters deal largely with the need to forward communications during the American tour of General Lafayette and his son, and with arrangements for their return from America to France. There are also expressions of respect between the LaFayettes, including the wife of the Marquis, and Captain Allyn, for whom the celebrated visitors had obviously developed a strong regard. These letters initially descended to relations of Captain Allyn in Oklahoma and then were acquired a generation ago by the Barr family.

### *Kentuckiana*

The Libraries have recently acquired *Oti Ene Mnoahemowun Kaonuperuk Mrto, Epe Katotmoat Nwakanhik Kao Nuperuk E Putrwatmemwun*, printed in Louisville by William C. Buck in 1844. This interesting work provides "The Gospel According to Matthew, and the Acts of the Apostles; Translated into the Putawatomie Language by Johnston Lykins." The Indian text is 240 pages long and remains in its original calf binding.

Another recent acquisition is a copy of W. D. Johnson's *Biographical Sketches of Prominent Negro Men and Women of Kentucky*, printed in Lexington in 1897. Johnson offers encyclopedic entries on many Kentucky African Americans who had met with success in a variety of areas, including agriculture, the church, building, education, commerce, and government service. Johnson outlines the careers of such figures as Henry A. Tandy, who worked for two years in photography with the well-known studio of James Mullen, and also the life of George Lewis Clark, the original figure on whom Harriet Beecher Stowe modeled the character of George Harris in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The book also contains fifty photographic portraits.

Several other early monographs associated with Kentucky have come recently to the Libraries, as well. These include the 1854 Louisville printing of W. B. DeWees's *Letters From an Early Settler of Texas* and the *Authentic Narrative* of James Riley, published in Lexington by William Gibbes Hunt in 1823. A piece of printed ephemera with significance for local history is a black-bordered

funeral announcement for Gen. John Hunt Morgan. Although Morgan was slain in Tennessee during the Civil War, he was brought back to Lexington for burial in 1868.

### *A New Book on Kentucky's Architecture*

A major work of contemporary architectural scholarship is Clay Lancaster's *Antebellum Architecture of Kentucky*, published by the University Press of Kentucky. Mr. Lancaster's new book represents an extension of the methods he employed in his celebrated classic, *Ante Bellum Houses of the Bluegrass*, which appeared in 1961. Moving from his earlier concentration on residential architecture in Fayette County, he now expands his scope to include the broader field of the Commonwealth's buildings prior to 1861, including ecclesiastical, commercial, and public edifices, as well as dwellings. Mr. Lancaster's new *Antebellum Architecture* is a richly illustrated work, containing photographs as well as his elegant line drawings. This analytical study is extensively documented and forms a welcome complement to his familiar books on Kentucky structures, which include his popular monograph *Vestiges of the Venerable City* (1978) and his many contributions to specialized scholarly journals.

### *A Rare Botanical Work with Kentucky Associations*

The Libraries are fortunate to have received as a gift of Mrs. Jane Halley Ireland a copy of the classic American botanical study *A Flora of North America. Illustrated in Coloured Figures, Drawn From Nature*. This three-volume work, by William P. C. Barton, M.D., Professor of Botany in the University of Pennsylvania, was published in Philadelphia by Mathew Carey & Sons in 1821.

Not only is this title a rare book from a bibliographic point of view, this copy contains an inscription by Kentucky's first architect, Matthew Kennedy (1781-1853):

This book was selected by Dr. Charles Wilkins Short and presented by Matthew Kennedy to his son Thomas S. Kennedy for superior attainment in botany at school, The Eclectic Institute, Rev. B. O. Peers, principal, Prof. H. H. Eaton, botanist, Robert Peter, M.D., Chemist, Henry A. Griswold, Mathematician. Lexington Ky 1832

This inscription is followed by another, a century later:

This book is presented to Samuel H. Halley, Jr., by his mother, as a graduating present, June 1932. Samuel H. Halley is the great-grandson of Thomas S. Kennedy and graduated at The McCallie School just 100 years later than Thomas S. Kennedy. Lexington Ky. 1932

Charles Wilkins Short, who chose the work, was a physician and botanist trained at the University of Pennsylvania, where he studied under Benjamin Smith Barton, the uncle of the author of the book selected for Thomas Kennedy. He was later dean of the faculty at Transylvania University, was a co-founder of *The Transylvania Journal of Medicine*, and was the author of *A Catalogue of the Native Phaenogamous Plants and Ferns of Kentucky* (Lexington: J. Clarke & Co., 1833). In 1838 Short left Transylvania to join the Louisville Medical Institute, and he died in Louisville in 1863. Benjamin O. Peers, principal of the school, later became acting president of Transylvania University.

### *The Photographic Archives*

Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Sayre Combs have contributed two well-filled photograph albums to the university. The images included are paper prints from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of the pictures show military maneuvers by state troops under Gen. Roger Williams. There is a view of troops at The Woodlands, now Woodland Park, in Lexington and other views are from the Frankfort area. There are also local Lexington scenes, some with architectural interest.

The Libraries have recently obtained several ambrotypes of the Civil War era. Although the individual subjects are not identified, they hold a special interest for the depiction of costume, including a U.S. Naval uniform and two Kentucky Military Institute uniforms.

### *Modern Fine Printing*

Several books from Larkspur Press, the private press of Gray Zeitz of Monterey, Kentucky, have recently been added to the collections. The titles include Robert Aitken's *The Dragon Who Never Sleeps: Verses for Zen Buddhist Practice*, printed in 1990. In addition to Aitken's poems, the volume contains a glossary and an

"Index of Occasions for Practice." Fifty copies of the book were printed on Iyo Japanese paper (another 500 were produced on Mohawk Letterpress stock) and hand bound by Carolyn Whitesel. The book is signed by Aitken.

*Book One from "Crazy Quilt," A Novel in Progress*, by Kentucky author Gurney Norman, is another 1990 imprint of Larkspur Press. Sixty handsome copies are printed on oriental papers and bound in hand decorated paste papers by Carolyn Whitesel. The book is a collection of reminiscences mostly of the World War II era. It concludes with a letter of the chief character, Lester Dunham, to a potential publisher: "Write to me quick, Mr. Collier. If it's money you're worried about, you need to for me'n you are going to come out in the black on this book, I know of many people already that wants to buy it. I'll keep setting down my recollections until I hear from you, then we'll work together to get it right." Other recent Larkspur titles new to the collection include Wendell Berry's *Sabbaths 1987* (1991), Keith Hubbard's *Reenacting Our Birth: Jazz Primer* (1991), and Frederick Smock's *12 Poems* (1991).

Prof. Robert James Foose, Chairman of the Art Department at the University of Kentucky, has made a gift of two books from his Buttonwood Press. These are *Eight Fables of Aesop as Presented & Illustrated by Grace Perreiah with Eight Original Serigraphs* (1969), a *livre d'artiste*, with each fable in a small folio and a serigraph tipped in, and Prof. Foose's *Amish Portfolio: Eight Original Prints & Essay* (1971), with eight linocuts on Hosho paper, protected by individual folders. These two works demonstrate Prof. Foose's skill as a book designer and printer, an impressive complement to his more generally known reputation as a talented watercolorist.

Work by another private press printer has also been added to the graphic arts holdings. These items represent the efforts of Carol J. Blinn of Warwick Press, Easthampton, Massachusetts, who delivered a lecture and conducted a workshop for the King Library Press in November of 1992. Examples of her work include *Two Grandmothers* (1980), with a fine example of her pen drawing, and *A Fowl Letter Book* (1989), containing a preliminary essay by Louisville printer Timothy J. Hawley.

—James D. Birchfield