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Library Notes: Selected Acquisitions [v. 4, no. 3]

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Selected Acquisitions

Kentuckiana

A number of valuable papers, photographs, books, and memorabilia relating to the Breckinridge family of Kentucky have been given recently to the libraries. Ms. Joan Breckinridge of Lexington has placed in the libraries a fine portrait, attributed to Meredith Johnson, of General Joseph Cabell Breckinridge (1842-1921), the general's personal Bible, and a Victorian chair used at Cabell's Dale. Mr. Scott D. Breckinridge of Lexington has presented an 1860 Currier and Ives print of "Hon. John C. Breckinridge, Democratic Candidate for Sixteenth President of the United States," an album of photographs, and a number of pamphlets and other memorabilia of General Breckinridge.

The libraries recently acquired at auction a number of items from the library of Dr. Robert Peter, pioneer Lexington physician and historian. Included were photographs of Winton, the Peter family home on the Newtown Pike, as well as a number of broadsides, pamphlets, and books. Included is an early Lexington imprint, the Rev. Robert Cloud's *Funeral Sermon Preached on the Death of Col. Richard Dallam*, printed by Daniel Bradford in 1820. *A New Light of Alchymie*, a seventeenth-century English medical work bearing Dr. Peter's wood-engraved bookplate, was printed in London in 1650.

Also notable among recent acquisitions are four antique photographs of a Kentucky railway accident.

Louisville's Rival

A welcome gift of Mrs. James W. Steiner of Los Altos Hills, California, is the James Ferrier Liston and Katherine Lathem Liston Collection, consisting of approximately 1500 pieces relating to the early development of Jeffersonville, Indiana. Among the more interesting items in these papers are several letters of William Steinway of Steinway & Sons, the piano manufacturers; three land grants with authentic signatures of President James Monroe; and correspondence illustrating the early economic rivalry between Jeffersonville, Indiana, and neighboring Louisville, Kentucky.

Manuscripts

The libraries, through the generosity of the Office of the President, have acquired seventeen Henry Clay letters (28 September 1820–14 November 1830) which are particularly noteworthy for the candor Clay displays in writing to William Creighton about the 1824 presidential campaign. (This campaign was treated in the late Albert Kirwan's essay in the winter issue of *The Kentucky Review*.) Although portions of this series of letters (1822–1825) are marked confidential, it is nevertheless surprising how outspoken Clay is about his opponents and how forward he is in expressing his opinion of their characters and political leanings. Clay's letter of 7 February 1825 is especially significant because it is the earliest known document revealing his interest in appointment as secretary of state should John Quincy Adams be elected president. In it he asks: "Shall I, under all the circumstances of abuse which surround me, go into the Department of State, if it should be offered to me? Whether it will be or not I really do not know." Two days later, the House of Representatives elected Adams president, and on 5 March 1825 the new president nominated Clay as secretary of state.

The Appleton Sturgis Civil War correspondence (18 March 1862–14 July 1863), a gift of Dr. Robert Warfield of Lexington, is a remarkable collection of over seventy letters written from the point of view of a Union soldier who served in Virginia, Maryland, and, later, in Louisiana. His lengthy letters contain detailed descriptions of military life and include his personal observations of a tour of the ironclad Monitor (4 May 1862) and his impressions of General William T. Sherman (24 January 1863). This exceptional group of materials provides an abundance of contemporary information about the Civil War written by a well-educated, knowledgeable eyewitness.

Another recently acquired Civil War document of unusual interest is a letter of 2 September 1863 from General Edmund Kirby-Smith, in command of the Trans-Mississippi Department of the Confederacy at Shreveport, Louisiana, to John Slidell, Confederate Commissioner at Paris. Slidell urges that France's interests in Mexico justify its intervention on behalf of the Confederacy. "Without assistance from abroad or an extraordinary interposition of Providence, less than twelve months will see this fair country irretrievably lost, and the French protectorate in Mexico will find a hostile power established on their frontier. . . ."

Kirby-Smith discusses the Rio Grande as the only channel for transporting supplies and munitions and for maintaining a trade in cotton with the French after the loss of the Mississippi.

Fine Printing and Printing History

A distinguished private-press book printed in 1967 by the nuns of Stanbrook Abbey in Worcester, England, is *A Prayer of Cassiodorus*, in the translation of Thomas Merton. The text of the preface is also by Merton, and the copyright is held by the Abbey of Gethsemani at Bardstown. The book is beautifully produced on handmade papers and bound in boards covered with marbled papers in the Cockerell style and joined by a vellum gilt-lettered spine.

William Everson, or Brother Antoninus, poet and printer at the Lime Kiln Press in California, is author of *Blame It on the Jet Stream* (1978). The book was printed under Everson's direction and sponsored as a typographic project of the Friends of the McHenry Library at the University of California at Santa Cruz. It thus becomes a part of our collection of books relating to typographic laboratories such as the King Library Press.

Gordon Craig's *Paris Diary, 1932-1933* is a handsome product of the Bird and Bull Press in Philadelphia. The text is by the son of actress Ellen Terry. Gordon Craig was an actor, stage designer, and publisher. He was also a book designer, and his treatment of *Hamlet* in the Cranach Press edition is regarded as a superb aesthetic achievement. The *Paris Diary* records a difficult year for Craig, who is troubled by financial problems but buoyed by his love of books and bookmen and of the arts.

Gutenberg and the Book of Books, produced at the New York printing house of William Edwin Rudge in 1932, is of particular appeal to those drawn to records of the earliest printed book. This handsome folio provides a brief biographical sketch of Gutenberg, an essay on the significance of the printing of the Bible, fine facsimile plates of Gutenberg's leaves, and a census of known copies of the Gutenberg Bible. This work comes to the libraries as the gift of a member of the faculty, Prof. Arthur Graham.

—James D. Birchfield and Claire McCann