

GIFTS AND ACQUISITIONS

OVER THE PAST YEARS we have noted here the arrival of many gifts and acquisitions, selections indeed from among thousands of items received annually. We have not, however, described the implications of those arrivals in the losing struggle for space—the eternal shifting to gain a few inches of shelf room, the trying task of sorting and checking in too little working space.

In considering again today the subject of gifts and acquisitions, we find our thoughts happily wandering to the prospect of a long-awaited new library building which we are soon to occupy. Most of the rare, semi-rare, and special collections, of which we have written before, will shortly be housed there in spacious luxury.

The Library's special collections—i.e., rare books and newspapers, old maps, manuscripts, Rutgersensia, and other categories of out-of-the-way research and display material—will occupy what is called the New Jersey Room on the main floor, together with a similar space directly below it. The New Jersey Room itself will serve in part as an exhibition area, with floor and wall cases, and with glass-fronted wall shelves for selected books. Removable seating will be available in the room for small gatherings.

Exhibit facilities in the new building will be more extensive than those presently in use. Besides what has been mentioned above, located in the New Jersey Room, there are two built-in wall cases in the entrance way nearby.

As part of the opening ceremonies, a special exhibition is being planned. Dean Freiday is handling most of its preparation. The Library is fortunate to have available to it at this time the exhibits experience and other valuable talents which Mr. Freiday brings with him. Although no name for the opening exhibition has been chosen, its theme will be "New Jersey Source Material in the Library," with an emphasis, of course, on the unusual. This is considered an appropriate debut for a New Jersey Room, especially as the subject moreover represents an area of special interest in the Library's collecting and activity.

The Library's photoduplication facilities will be expanded in the new building, and it is expected that the work of microfilming newspapers and records will be developed considerably. The filming of

newspapers, especially those dating from about the Civil War, is an urgent need, as the modern newsprint breaks down within a comparatively short time. The filming of records may be in some cases for preservation, but ordinarily serves rather as a means of extending the Library's research collection. It brings together a variety of source material which usually could not be obtained in the original.

Mr. Westling, who is in charge of the present book-storage system as well as the photoduplication work, has accomplished a great deal in the way of microfilming, notwithstanding the double claim upon his time. Several current newspapers are filmed periodically, and complete files of some older ones have been covered. Various bodies of records have been filmed as well. The latter work is more complicated, as extensive editorial preparation is usually needed to convert a body of raw records into a research tool. During the past year or two, records of the following organizations have been copied on film (in a couple of cases the work is still in progress):

- Council of Proprietors of the Western Division of New Jersey, minutes and surveys, from 1688; 14 reels
- Piscataway Township minutes, etc., from 1682
- Parsippany Presbyterian Church, from 1828; 3 reels
- New Brunswick First Baptist Church, from 1809; 2 reels
- Spotswood St. Peter's Church, from 1761; 2 reels
- Morristown First Presbyterian Church, from 1742; about 7 reels
- Scotch Plains Baptist Church, from 1747; 3 reels
- Cranbury First Presbyterian Church, from 1745; 3 reels
- Cranbury Second Presbyterian Church, from 1838; 2 reels
- Montville Reformed Church, from 1774
- Washington Presbyterian Church, from 1787; 2 reels
- Kingston Presbyterian Church, from 1791; 2 reels
- Delaware St. James Church, from 1769
- Flatlands Reformed Church, Brooklyn, from 1671
- New Market Library Company, 1812-43
- British Army orderly book, Philadelphia, 1778

Positive copies of the above, and any other material of which the Library holds microfilm negatives, are made available to other institutions.

And now a few words about gifts and acquisitions. Without doubt the most striking single gift is that of the Class of 1933, which had presented earlier an extra-illustrated set of Benjamin West material. The present gift, preserved in the same form, is the Jesse Metcalf collection of George Cruikshank prints and manuscripts. It is interleaved in a first edition of Blanchard Jerrold's *Life of George Cruikshank* (1882), published originally in two octavo volumes, here expanded to seven gilt-edged, large folio volumes bound in scarlet crushed Levant morocco. The items have not been counted, but a careful estimate places the number of prints at nearly a thousand, with perhaps six dozen manuscript letters. Virtually all types of Cruikshank's artistic work are represented (oil paintings excluded): etchings, some in color, woodcuts, at least one original watercolor, etc.; caricatures, book illustrations for Dickens and others. His well-known temperance series, *The Bottle* (1847) and *The Drunkard's Children* (1848), are present. The first volume also contains his famous *Specimen of a Bank Note—not to be imitated* (1818), a bitter, effective caricature inspired by the hanging of several women convicted of passing counterfeit notes. Engraved in banknote style, it shows eleven hooded figures hanging by the neck, and other macabre decorations.

The Library has added some good examples of press books, products especially of the Kelmscott and Doves presses. Of particular interest for the former is the eight-volume *Earthly Paradise* (Kelmscott Press, 1896-97) in which the versatile William Morris is represented both as author and publisher.

The Class of 1937 has presented a fine copy of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, first edition, first issue. It was published anonymously in 1726 (London, 2 vols.) under the title, *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver*.

An unusual collection of pamphlets and prints relating to the marital contest between George IV and Queen Caroline adds notably to the Library's material on that fruitful topic. The collection, which formerly belonged to the writer Thackeray, is put together in four octavo volumes, in red half-leather bindings and slipcases. It includes more than fifty satirical tracts and dozens of engravings (many of them in color), by the leading caricaturists of the day—Gillray,

Rowlandson, Cruikshank, and some anonymous gentlemen yet to be identified.

Historians of the American labor movement are handicapped by a number of research difficulties, at least for the earlier period. For one thing, the value of newspaper files is limited, as old-time editors usually treated labor activity with bias, disinterest, or ignored it altogether. Further, labor people in the past have done their work with minimum records, indifferently kept and frequently destroyed. Fortunately, however, some records survive. Through the University's Institute of Management and Labor Relations, the Library has received from the New Jersey State Federation of Labor virtually all of its non-current records known to exist. While most of the Federation records are believed to have been destroyed, somewhat inadvertently, in the course of a headquarters move during the late 1940's, a nearly complete set of the annual convention proceedings from 1901 through 1951 has been preserved and is now in the Library's collection. These are the original stenographic transcripts, in typescript form. As anyone must know who is familiar with the Federation's varied interests and activities, these are an irreplaceable source for many historical areas.

With the transcripts have been received all of its annual publications which the Federation has held in its own files or could assemble. These are very rare, reported to the *Union List of Serials* in scattered holdings by only a handful of libraries. With a substantial set of them now available for comparison, it is found that the Federation actually published *three* annual series which have been erroneously entered in the *Union List* as one, under the title "Proceedings." The Library had had already some of the publications, including sixteen dating between 1883 and 1904 presented lately by the Wisconsin Historical Society.

It is not too soon to begin documenting the grim story of the late depression. One of the best mirrors in which the economic and social problems of that day reveal themselves is the work of the legislatures. Mr. Joseph T. Karcher, today a leading attorney and well-known speaker and author, was a member of the New Jersey Assembly during three crucial depression years, 1930-32. Mr. Karcher, himself a writer of local history, and knowing well the significance of source material, has presented to the Library his

complete files (some seven boxes) covering the period of legislative service. This fine body of correspondence, notes, clippings, etc., shows a good deal not only about the Assembly business, but also about the workings of democracy in its representative-constituent relationship. It is expected that additions will be made to the Joseph T. Karcher papers. It is further hoped that the papers of other legislators, whether of the remote or recent past, will be made available to the Library.

The late Dr. Carlos E. Godfrey, long director of New Jersey's Public Record Office, wrote a number of historical articles and pamphlets. One of the subjects to which he devoted considerable research was that of New Jersey Loyalists. From the Trenton Free Public Library have been received two boxes of Dr. Godfrey's notes, lists, and transcripts relating to Loyalists. These, assembled about 1899-1914, are based in large part on military returns and memorials of the emigrés living in Canada and England.

The John Demott papers, seven folders, 1742-1868, have been received lately. These are largely representative family papers of western Somerset, Hunterdon, and Morris counties, N.J., a number of them farm leases or otherwise relating to land. Of special interest are letters written by relatives who had migrated to other parts of the country, and particularly the John and Peter Vroom families in Nova Scotia. The Vrooms, once residents of Raritan Landing, near New Brunswick, had chosen the King's side during the Revolution. As a result their New Jersey properties had been confiscated, and they, with many other Loyalist families, found more congenial homes in Canada.

A descendant of the Demotts mentioned above, Mr. John J. DeMott of Charlotte, N.C., has presented another body of family papers, 1777-1859. These are largely the papers of John D. Van Liew (1763-1823) and Abraham J. Voorhees (1795-1880), both of Franklin Township (Somerset County), N.J. There are two good letters of the 1830's from out-of-state relatives, one a Michigan settler, the other attending school in Utica, N.Y.

From the estate of Miss Sarah Atkinson, who died recently at an advanced age, has been received a body of her papers, with some allied material. The Misses Sarah and Florence Atkinson, with unusual fortitude and initiative, defied conventions of the 1880's by

making an independent trip to Argentina. They lived in that country for several years, keeping journals and writing to their family many letters of description and adventure. Florence died a young woman, but Miss Sarah made something of a professional life for herself, chiefly as a translator. She was associated with the Paris Peace Convention in 1898, from which she wrote numerous letters now in the Library's collection.

Miss Mary L. Tappen has presented an unusual record, the constitution and minutes of the New-Brunswick Musical Society (originally called the City Amateurs), 1830-32. The members of this organization ventured at least one public concert, but it is not clear whether they formed a band or a practice group. Their leader or instructor, in any case, was Capt. John Holden, and his music text bearing sixty-two tunes in manuscript has been preserved with the Society's records.

The Library's Whitman collection has included for some years a scattered run of the *Walt Whitman Fellowship Papers*. The *Papers* were leaflet-size periodicals, published at Philadelphia by a group of Whitman enthusiasts between 1894 and 1918. The size and frequency varied, at first with over fifty pages of text annually, but ultimately reduced to a single leaf per year. It is, at best, an ephemeral body of Whitmaniana, and it contains a number of original contributions concerning the poet. We are consequently gratified to receive from Mr. Charles E. Feinberg, leading Whitman collector, fifty-five additional numbers of the *Papers*, together with six other related leaflets, etc.

D.A.S.