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Library Notes: Selected Acquisitions [v. 12, no. 3]

James D. Birchfield
University of Kentucky, j.birchfield@uky.edu

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Clay and McDowell Family Papers

In a ceremony on 8 November 1993 the Henry Clay Memorial Foundation, the organization that maintains Ashland, the historic Henry Clay estate, conveyed to the University of Kentucky Libraries sixty cubic feet of papers, documents, and photographs. This remarkable trove of Clay family materials, identified and assembled just prior to the recent renovation of the Clay home, was described by Dr. Thomas D. Clark, Kentucky’s Historian Laureate, as “the find of a lifetime.”

In the collection are 250 letters to and from Kentucky’s great statesman as well as many letters exchanged within the family itself. Also include is the Clay family Bible, containing genealogical records in Henry Clay’s hand. There are also several drafts of speeches by Clay, one in honor of the Marquis de Lafayette.

After Henry Clay’s death, the dwelling (perhaps originally built for railroad man and former New York Congressman Elisha Winter) was razed and rebuilt by a son, James B. Clay, who died in Canada during the Civil War. Ashland went out of the family for a period afterwards, becoming the Kentucky A. & M. College. Major Henry Clay McDowell later acquired the farm, and he was the husband of Clay’s granddaughter Ann Clay, the daughter of Henry Clay, Jr. Papers of Maj. McDowell are included in this rich cache of materials, and trace the entrepreneurial activities of a prominent businessman, stock breeder, and farmer and also those of some of his descendents in the McDowell and Bullock families.

The acquisition of this important block of Clay family materials is welcomed by the University of Kentucky (for four decades the sponsor of the Henry Clay Papers Project) where it will join other Clay papers assembled by the institution over the past fifty years. These new documents will be organized and processed to aid the research of future scholars in American and Kentucky history.
The Papers of Wilson Wyatt

The Modern Political Papers Collection was significantly enhanced in January 1994 by the generous gift of the papers of Wilson Wyatt. Mr. Wyatt, founder of Wyatt Tarrant & Combs, the Commonwealth's largest law firm, served as mayor of Louisville at the beginning of World War II and as lieutenant governor of Kentucky during the Bert Combs administration. Nationally, he was a founder of Americans for Democratic Action and also served as campaign manager for Adlai Stevenson's 1952 presidential bid. He is the author of Whistle Stops: Adventures in Public Life (1985).

The Wilson Wyatt Papers comprise 200 cubic feet of documents dating from the early 1940s to the 1960s. Included are correspondence, clippings, and campaign memorabilia. The collection is complemented by an extensive series of oral history interviews conducted by Mr. Terry L. Birdwhistell, University Archivist.

Lou Emma Wilson Mexicana Fund

Several interesting works have recently been acquired on the Lou Emma Wilson Mexicana Fund, which was established in 1963 by the late Prof. Alberta Wilson Server in memory of her mother. Prof. Server, formerly in the Department of Spanish and Italian, spent her early years in Mexico during the time of Pancho Villa; she retained ever after a fascination with the history and literature of this increasingly important American neighbor. She established this special fund to contribute toward building at the University of Kentucky an important collection of works relating to Mexico. Numerous items acquired on the Lou Emma Wilson Fund were shown in the Peal Gallery in the exhibition "Mexicana at the University of Kentucky Libraries," 24 April to 15 May 1978, mounted for the thirty-first meeting of the Kentucky Foreign Language Conference. A catalogue of the exhibition records, in a preliminary essay by Prof. John E. Keller, the very memorable Mexican experiences of the Server family.

Arte Novissima de Lengua Mexicana, printed in Mexico in 1753 is a colonial era academic study of Spanish prosody and morphology by Carlos de Tapia Zenteno, a professor of languages at the Royal University. Tapia Zenteno’s book also features two acrostic poems by Dr. Miguel José Moche in the form of two concentric wheels, and the book also contains an armorial engraving that shows the artistic skill of colonial Mexican book artists.
Sermon Panegirico-Histórico-Moral, by Nicolás García de Medina, records a lengthy celebration of the recent beatification of a Spanish Dominican. Preached in Puebla on 13 April 1819, it was printed in Puebla in the same year by Pedro de la Rosa. This is one of only two published works by García de Medina, a well-known orator who preached in favor of the Treaty of Córdoba, which made Mexico independent from Spain, within a few days of its signing in 1821.

Another scarce Mexicana acquisition is an interesting broadsheet, Capitulacion hecha entre el Señor Don Augustín de Iturbide . . . y el Comandante de las Plaza de Valladolid Don Manuel Rodríguez de Cela . . ., which was printed on a portable military field press after Iturbide’s victory in May of 1821. The text consists of the terms of the surrender of Gen. Rodríguez de Cela to Iturbide and his Army of the Three Guarantees. Iturbide had the document printed as propaganda, taking advantage of the fall of Morelia (then Valladolid) to attract new support for his cause. The strength of the Royalists rapidly eroded after this battle, and the Treaty of Córdoba, establishing Mexican independence, was concluded in a little over two months.

African-American Civil War Documents

The wartime records of an African-American Civil War Regiment from Kentucky, the 100th U.S. Colored Infantry, have come to the Department of Special Collections. The collection consists of muster rolls, records of furloughs, and inventories of soldiers who died during the war. Most of these troops were enrolled at Greenupsburg in Bath County; the papers appear to have been prepared in Nashville.

A variety of matters are recorded in these documents. Pvt. Benjamin Smith, we learn, “wishes to visit, and provide for the events of his family. He is a neat and trusty soldier, and has not had a furlough.” A forty-one-year-old farmer born in Bath County, Pvt. Smith is furloughed to go to Mt. Sterling. Another soldier, Pvt. George Storms, is furloughed to go from Nashville to Louisville. Harvey Banks is given the following equipment: two knapsacks and straps, one canteen, one haversack, and one shelter tent for ordnance.

Many of the papers record the sad details of an infantryman’s death. Pvt. William Thompson, a farmer who enrolled at Greenupsburg on 1 June 1864, died at Nashville on 1 July 1864 of
typhoid fever. Daniel Porter died at Nashville of measles. Jackson Cunningham died of inflammation of the brain. Anthony Roe died of gunshot wounds on the battlefield, 16 October 1864. Jackson Patrick, notes the official inventory, died of pneumonia and “had no effects except those interred with him.”

These papers preserve the names and simple vital details of a group of soldiers of exceptional interest. Names, physical descriptions, places of birth, ages, particulars of enlistment, and, too frequently, records of death are neatly written out or simply entered on the official forms of the War Department. The papers of this detachment will provide important facts for research on the role of Kentucky’s black troops.

The Harrodsburg Herald Gift of Printing Equipment to the King Library Press

Mr. Bill Randolph, manager of Mercer County’s Harrodsburg Herald, has made a generous gift of antique printing equipment to the Kentucky Library Press in memory of Mr. and Mrs. D. M. Hutton, Ms. Jane Bird Hutton, Ms. Mary Elizabeth Hutton Pyles, and Mr. David Drew Randolph. The Hutton family, for many years proprietors of the Herald, were keenly interested in the historic traditions of the Mercer County area, including Shakertown as well as Harrodsburg. When modern printing technology replaced the five-hundred-year-old methods of printing by moveable type, they stored their old equipment with the intent of its being used later in a historical setting. The University of Kentucky’s King Library Press has appropriately fallen heir to this valuable collection, which will be used to further the Press’s activities in teaching historical book-making methods through publishing on traditional printing equipment. Included in the gift are cabinets, galleys, imposing stones, wood type, composing sticks, and other equipment and accessories. Pasted to the back of one of the cabinets is a rare surviving specimen of Kentucky ephemera, a broadside announcing a performance of a play in the Harrodsburg opera house.

A Work of Modern Calligraphy

Dr. Charles Eastin has made a gift of a special edition of Dylan Thomas’s Under Milk Wood: A Play for Voices, written for the BBC in 1953. This publication is a color facsimile based on a modern
calligraphic manuscript of the play made by Sheila Waters. Ms. Waters, trained at the Royal College of Art and a member of London’s Society of Scribes and Illuminators, is regarded as one of America’s foremost calligraphers. The book was handbound by her husband, Peter Waters, a former partner of the eminent English binder Roger Powell and, since 1971, Conservation Officer of the Library of Congress.

The original manuscript, commissioned by British collector Edward Hornby, was a product of the artist’s occasional efforts over seventeen years. The proposed objective was to interpret an important modern text with traditional manuscript techniques. Ms. Waters selected the title. In addition to the text facsimile, the book contains a brief sample of original calligraphy by Ms. Waters, written in her modernized version of a ninth-century Carolingian style.

**Stroud Family Papers**

Mrs. Nell Blair Vaughn of Lexington has made a gift to the University of papers, photographs, and books of the William G. Stroud family. During the period represented by the collection, the Strouds resided in western Kentucky, near Sacramento in McLean County. Included in the collection is a well-preserved group photograph of Mr. Stroud, his wife Karaezeik (Katie) Plain Stroud, and other members of the family, as well as a copies of tintypes of W. G. Stroud and his father, Reuben Stroud.

The Stroud collection contains several series of correspondence, including a very extensive sequence of Civil War letters written by W. G. Stroud to his family from various Union campsites. Stroud was a sergeant in Co. H., 11th Volunteer Infantry Regiment. These wartime letters are dated from such places in Kentucky as Bowling Green, Glasgow, Louisville, Somerset, and Paris, as well as from Nashville, Tennessee, and Marietta, Georgia, and elsewhere. There are battle accounts as well as general news of friends and acquaintances. Stroud was at Shiloh, where he was hit by a miniball, and he was at Perryville with Don Carlos Buell. Also included are letters written to the family in Kentucky by other friends and relatives during the war. These accounts form a very cohesive record of a citizen-soldier’s wartime career and the concerns of a nineteenth-century Kentucky community.

Among other items included in this valuable gift is a Stroud family country store ledger from western Kentucky dating from
1840 to 1855. There are also publications on such diverse subjects as surveying and phrenology, as well as children’s books. Of particular appeal is an exceptionally well-preserved quilt, variously embroidered and dated 1 March 1894, exactly a century ago. And, of interest for its record of day-to-day Lexington activities, are two nineteenth-century ledgers of a Lexington newspaper office.

Photographs

The libraries have recently acquired four photographs by the Kentucky photographer J. C. Elrod. The lettering varies on the informative backs of each of these cartes de visites, but indicates that Elrod at this time had galleries both in Louisville and in Frankfort. The Louisville studio was at 142 and 144 Main Street, and the Frankfort studio was located opposite Farmer’s Bank. The name of H. G. Mattern is given as Elrod’s professional associate. Each image is of a uniformed youth, perhaps a student at the Kentucky Military Institute. Only two of the subjects, J. D. Allen and Henry Buehl, Jr., are clearly identified, yet these cartes de visites are valuable in showing a typical and popular type of nineteenth-century portrait photograph and in identifying active Kentucky photographers. In addition, they reveal the appearance and costume of young men of over a century ago, and show, also, from a penned note, that one of the cadets came from as far as Memphis to study in the Bluegrass.

—James D. Birchfield