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

Brian Throckmorton
University of Kentucky

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Books of Architect Thomas Lewinski

Mr. Clay Lancaster, of Warwick, Salvisa, Kentucky, has made a gift to the Department of Special Collections of six books formerly in the library of Maj. Thomas Lewinski, the nineteenth-century Lexington architect who designed Clay Villa, Mansfield, Woodside, Christ Church Episcopal, and the rebuilt Ashland of the mid-1850s. In December of 1952 Mr. Lancaster published a study of this figure, “Major Thomas Lewinski: Emigré Architect of Kentucky,” in the Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians.

Included in the gift are A Companion to the Fourth Edition of a Glossary of Terms Used in Grecian, Roman, Italian, and Gothic Architecture (1846); Edward Cresy and George Ledwell Taylor’s Architecture of the Middle Ages in Italy (1829), a study of the cathedral at Pisa; Robert B. Leuchars’s A Practical Treatise on the Construction, Heating, and Ventilation of Hot-Houses (1850); John Jacob Thomas, Rural Affairs: A Practical and Copiously Illustrated Register of Rural Economy and Rural Taste (1860); and Gervase Wheeler’s Rural Homes; or Sketches of Houses Suited to American Country Life (1851). Major Lewinski also taught French in Lexington, and included is his copy of A Key to the Exercises in Ollendorf’s New Method of Learning to Read, Write, and Speak the French Language (1850).

These books from the Lewinski library were acquired after the architect’s death by one of his knowledgeable admirers, Judge James Hilary Mulligan of Maxwell Place, and were given to Mr. Lancaster by Judge Mulligan’s daughter, Miss Kathleen Mulligan, in the 1950s. Correspondence from Miss Mulligan is included. The Leuchars title contains the bookplate of Judge Mulligan; Major Lewinski’s bookplate appears in the Companion... to a Glossary of Terms and in the Key to the Exercises. A list of these and other books owned by Thomas Lewinski appears on page 274 of Clay Lancaster’s Vestiges of the Venerable City (1978). The libraries are very fortunate to hold these valuable books from the collection of
Nineteenth-century armorial bookplates from two distinguished private libraries of Lexington. That at left marks the books of Maj. Thomas Lewinski, the London-born architect; the bookplate at right identifies the books of Judge James Hilary Mulligan of Maxwell Place, the witty poet of “In Kentucky.” Gift of Mr. Clay Lancaster.
an important nineteenth-century Lexington architect, presented by a distinguished architectural historian.
Stained Glass from a Gothic Villa

Some fragments of stained glass from Loudoun House, saved during its renovation in 1984, have come to the Department of Special Collections. Loudoun, the Gothic Revival villa of Francis Key Hunt, was designed by the New York architect Alexander Jackson Davis and begun in 1850. The glass was placed in the libraries by Prof. Patrick A. Snadon, formerly of the Department of Human Environment/Design at the University of Kentucky and advisor to the renovation. The glass was originally supplied by the Bolton Glass Works, located near New Rochelle, New York. The Bolton firm is believed to be the first stained and decorative glass manufacturer in the United States. Some of the glass shows an enameled oak leaf and vine pattern.

An article on the McChord Presbyterian Church, published in the Lexington Observer & Reporter on 3 November 1847, states: “The windows filled with stained glass imported direct from Germany, are the first of that kind which have been used to any extent in this place.” Related transcriptions of Hunt’s correspondence, provided by Professor Snadon, show Hunt as chairman of the Building Committee of Christ Church Episcopal, writing to Davis on 22 July 1847 seeking “the benefit of your skill & taste in filling the windows with stained glass.”

On 21 January 1850 Hunt begins his correspondence with Davis, now at the Metropolitan Museum, regarding a plan for his home, Loudoun. On 19 May 1850 he raises the question whether it would be proper to place stained glass in a bay window of his drawing room. On 5 June 1850 Hunt writes, “My wife is inclined to have colored glass in the Dining Room windows. What do you think of it? Should the whole be of the clear colored glass (if any be adopted), or should there be a mere border, with center of drab, or opaque glass, or should the center be of clear glass.” Work on the foundation had begun while this matter was being resolved.

On 5 June 1851 Hunt requests that Davis send him glass for his house, reminding him that the sidelights of the drawing room sashes are to depict a vine border. On 26 May Hunt protests to Davis concerning the quality of Bolton’s second shipment of enamel panes—“most wretchedly made.” He asks Davis to have Bolton reaccomplish the order. Hunt writes that his house will probably be finished before Bolton delivers the new glass. He remarks that his house “commands universal admiration as the handsomest building in Kentucky” and promises to send Davis a
daguerreotype of it when finished.

Stained glass was also used in Lexington's two other Gothic houses, Elley Villa, completed in the fall of 1851, and Ingelside, built in 1852. Lexington's John McMurtry was the builder for each, as he had been for the McChord Presbyterian Church, which was designed by Maj. Thomas Lewinski. Stained glass was used thereafter in many Lexington buildings, extending to numerous examples of fine artglass work by the end of the nineteenth century.

Photographs by Doris Ulmann

Ninety fine art photographs by New York photographer Doris Ulmann have been presented to the Photographic Archives in the Department of Special Collections. This important selection of prints was given by Mr. Thomas M. T. Niles of Brussels, Belgium, and Mr. John Edward Niles of Washington, D.C.

Some of the prints in the Niles gift are early examples of the well-known photographer's work and are signed "Doris Jaeger," her maiden name. Although Ulmann is widely appreciated today for her sensitive visual studies of rustic life in the Appalachian region, the images added to the Photographic Archives reveal something of her earlier, formative experiences in photography. Included are several portraits of editors in New York, chosen from a series devoted to figures in that field. There are also various marine views taken in New England fishing villages.

These photographs from the Niles Ulmann collection provide a fresh view of the work of an important American photographer, and they handsomely complement a group of representative Ulmann photographs transferred to the libraries by the Niles family in past years. The prints are part of a legacy of photographs left by Ulmann to the composer, balladeer, and folklorist John Jacob Niles, who assisted her in her work in the mountains and in the South.

Records from the Hillenmeyer Nurseries

The libraries recently received a gift of papers from the Hillenmeyer Nurseries. This brought to campus, along with other items, a document dated 19 October 1840 that represents the first order for plant stock (it was sent from Europe to America) for the firm's founder, Francis Xavier Hillenmeyer, a native of Alsace-Lorraine. Also included is a document showing that he had
completed training with the Baumann Brothers, nurserymen of Bollwiller, Department of Haut-Rhin (Upper Rhine), on 20 February 1836.

Francis Xavier Hillenmeyer first came to the United States in 1838, when he arrived in Philadelphia from France. He worked in Savannah (where the 1840 shipment mentioned above was directed), designing parks for private estates, and went from there to New Orleans before settling in Central Kentucky in 1841. He secured acreage on the site of Col. Lewis Sanders's “Sanders Gardens” on the Georgetown Road, and the business has remained there for well over a century. Hillenmeyer's is the second-oldest business concern in Lexington. The firm will observe its sesquicentennial in 1991.

The Hillenmeyers for many years maintained careful records of the weather that were of interest to others and to the press. These records extend from 1879 to 1953. On 16 July 1934 the ledgers record a notable storm: "This was the most terrifying storm in our memory. Cyclonic in force with hail and terrific rain. Great damage to crops and trees." In 1949 an unusually warm Christmas was noted: "Christmas Day was a wonderful bright day with temperatures up to 60-70. Louis, Bob & Bill, Dick knocked some golf balls in front yard."

Hillenmeyer Nurseries also issued catalogues, and an extensive run of these illustrated sales documents is included in the archive. These help to identify the variety of stock available in the area over a long period of years. The Hillenmeyer Collection is a welcome addition to the libraries and will be of continuing interest to those involved in ornamental horticulture, botany, and the history of business development in Kentucky.

—James D. Birchfield
Kentucky Newspaper Grant Extended

The University of Kentucky Libraries have been awarded an additional $137,563 from the National Endowment for the Humanities to continue the Kentucky Newspaper Project through December 1990. The supplemental funding will be used for the preservation microfilming of Kentucky newspapers. Since the grant's microfilming phase began in late 1987, over 675,000 newspaper pages have been preserved; the new funding will increase that number to nearly 946,000 pages.

The Kentucky Newspaper Project, headquartered in the Margaret I. King Library Periodicals/Newspapers/Microtexts Department, began with a six-month planning grant in 1983. This was followed by a three-year, $149,992 bibliographic control grant to inventory and catalogue newspapers in libraries, historical societies, and newspaper offices across the Commonwealth and to enter the cataloguing and holdings information into the national OCLC United States Newspaper Union List computer database. Cataloguing was completed and preservation microfilming began during a third, 1987-1989, NEH grant of $273,920. The newspapers are being microfilmed in the University of Kentucky Libraries' Microfilm Center, where Kentucky newspapers have been collected and filmed since 1954.

To date, over 1,950 titles and 11,000 holdings records for newspapers held on a permanent basis in Kentucky have been entered into the database by KNP staff to help researchers locate needed United States newspapers. In addition to the online computer database, the Project has produced a microfiche copy of the newspaper records it has created. The Kentucky Union List of Newspapers, as well as other reference assistance with newspapers, is available in both the Periodicals/Newspapers/Microtexts Department and the Reference Department of King Library.

The Kentucky Newspaper Project is part of the United States Newspaper Program. NEH hopes eventually to involve every state in the program in order to preserve and improve access to newspapers. Already, over 77,300 newspaper titles and 244,700 holdings records have been entered into the national database from twenty-eight states and nine repository projects.

For further information about the Kentucky Newspaper Project, call Judy Sackett, Project Director, at (606) 257-3493.

—Brian Throckmorton