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Library Notes: Selected Acquisitions [v. 12, no. 1/2]

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Lore of the Shelby and Hart Families

Mrs. Frances Keller Barr has generously made a gift to the University Libraries of a valuable group of papers and publications relating to two prominent early Kentucky families, the Shelbys and the Harts. Some of this material derives from the researches and correspondence of Judge Samuel M. Wilson, whose wife was a descendant of these two families. It was the bequest in 1946 of the superb Kentuckiana collection of books and manuscripts formed by Judge Wilson, the well-known Kentucky historian and bibliophile, that originated the Libraries' Division of Special Collections and Archives. These materials hence form a very sympathetic addition to our manuscripts holdings and are especially welcomed by the university.

The earliest item within the group is a letter of 11 February 1787 from the Tennessee pioneer John Sevier to Evan Shelby, father of Kentucky's first governor, Isaac Shelby. "I find the Country in total confusion and disorder," he writes, "and the foment So Great that I hardly know, where the matter may End. If you will please to take a view of the conduct of the members of the Assembly, I presume you will See, that they Have done everything to disorder and not to Reconcile, the people of this Country and have Calculated Matters as they expect, on purpose To Set Friends to Cuting each others throats." Evan Shelby was then in Sullivan County, in eastern Tennessee.

A letter of appealing family interest is from Gov. Isaac Shelby at Traveller's Rest, his home in Danville, to his daughter Susanna Hart Shelby. Along with a sister, Susanna was visiting a relative, Mrs. Thomas Hart, in Lexington; Mrs. Hart was the mother of Mrs. Henry Clay; Gov. Shelby's wife was a daughter of Nathaniel P. Hart, Thomas Hart's brother. Shelby writes that he will send for them when the weather is good: "We suppose that by that time you will have had your hearty satisfaction of Lexington, and besides I fear that you have already been too troublesome to your good
friend Mrs. Hart, whose politeness towards you is an instance of greater friendship than I have ever experienced from anyone." He sends two cheeses and tells her to buy a trunk for clothes—"it can be forwarded with your pianna by some waggon coming to Danville in the Spring."

On 2 August 1813, in his second governorship and two months before the celebrated Battle of the Thames in Canada, Shelby wrote from Frankfort to his son Thomas Hart Shelby. He relates that communications are cut off from Ft. Meigs and that Gen. William Henry Harrison has retreated below Lower Sandusky. The elder Shelby is preparing to enter into the conflict. "I expect I shall be able to raise a considerable force to March to Harrison's aid—if however I shall fail in my expectation of the Volunteer Scheme a Draft will be resorted to. I wish to take at least 3 or 4 Thousand, & expect I shall get five Thousand men." Maj. Thomas Hart Shelby lived in Fayette County at Grassland, a Federal era home dating to 1823, still standing and on a tract formerly owned by Isaac Shelby.

There is also a letter from Thomas Hart Shelby to his brother Isaac P. Shelby, dated 2 July 1846 and written from Morley's Hotel, Charing Cross, Trafalgar Square, London. The Kentuckian abroad describes a trip by rail from Liverpool to Birmingham and London. "The face of the country is most beautiful, so level that, I could see on either side as far as the eye could reach. There is no land plowed except for Wheat, Oats, Barley, & Potatoes, and which perhaps comprise one half of the land, the balance is in grass, and the whole presents to the fleeting Traveller, the appearance of one continued meadow." He has called on the American minister and consul; he also enumerates the sites he has visited, including Buckingham Palace, the Houses of Parliament, the Zoological Gardens, Westminster Abbey, and St. Paul's. Shelby's descendant Lucy Goodloe Shelby, in Grassland Days and Grassland Ways (Lexington: s.n., 1957), writes that "Major Shelby was full of energy and very successful in business. He was among the earliest importers of thoroughbred stock and 'the first in Central Kentucky to ship dressed beef to England.'"

The collection includes a fragment of a letter from the famed Dr. Ephraim McDowell with advice on use of a polk root poultice and another of dogwood ooze, along with directions for taking laudanum (thirty drops morning and evening). Also included, along with various clippings and letters, is Judge Wilson's heavily annotated copy of Sarah S. Young's Genealogical Narrative of the Hart

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Family in the United States (Memphis: Privately Printed, 1882) and a copy of Judge Wilson’s Susan Hart Shelby: A Memoir (Lexington: s.n., 1923).

Miss B. Brezing’s Cook Book

The University Libraries have recently accessioned a copy of the new and enlarged edition of the popular Housekeeping in the Blue Grass: A New and Practical Cook Book Containing Nearly a Thousand Recipes printed in Cincinnati by Robert Clarke & Co. in 1881 for the Ladies of the Presbyterian Church of Paris, Kentucky. Inscribed on the purple flyleaf of this copy is the name “B. Brezing.” Among the things that might have been offered at Miss Brezing’s home on north Eastern Avenue in Lexington are various preparations of soups, fish, oysters, meats, sauces, pickles, breads, vegetables, pastries, puddings, cakes, jellies, ices, preserves, and beverages (no mint julep recipes are included). Also featured are household hints on mixing a polish for grates, preparing whitewash and sealing wax, removing stains from marble, and removing mildew. The book also offers numerous advertisements, including a notice of Duhme & Co., goldsmiths, silversmiths, and diamond setters of Cincinnati; H. Stagman’s “spectacles to suit all sights”; Miss Armstrong’s School for Ladies and Misses; and various publications by Clarke & Co., including M. J. Keller’s Elementary Perspective with a warm endorsement by the Lexington-born artist Prof. Thomas S. Noble of Cincinnati University.

An Incunable Leaf

Those interested in the history of paper know the publications of the Bird and Bull Press. These have examined the practices of makers of marbled paper, paper money, old ream wrappers, and even paper made from grape vines and wasps’ nests. The press’s most recent project addresses early English paper.

The first use of paper made in England in an English book was for an edition of De Proprietatibus Rerum by Bartholomaeus Anglicus, printed by Wynken de Worde, England’s second printer (and a German by birth), at Westminster circa 1495. (England’s first printer, William Caxton, had learned the art of printing while working on an edition of Bartholomaeus at Cologne.) The first of the English paper makers was John Tate. A leaf of Tate’s paper from the 1495 edition of De Proprietatibus Rerum is included with

*De Proprietatibus Rerum*, meaning "concerning the properties of things," was a popular Medieval encyclopedia, written to be used in preparing sermons. Wynken de Worde’s edition of it is illustrated with woodcuts. Since only 138 suitable leaves were available for distribution with the Bird and Bull Press study of this early work, *Three Lions and the Cross of Lorraine* is limited to 138 copies, printed on Frankfurt Cream Wove paper and handsomely quarter bound in red morocco.

![Schrieber and Son's vintage photograph of "Lexington," thoroughbred owned by Dr. Elisha Warfield of Lexington, Kentucky. The skeleton of "Lexington" is on exhibit at the Smithsonian's Skeleton Hall.](image)

**Horse Photographs of the 1870s**

The libraries have recently acquired a copy of *Schrieber & Son's Portraits of Noted Horses of America*. This album-style volume contains original photographs taken by the Schreibers of a "galaxy of distinguished horses" from throughout the country and is
declared to be “the first book of its kind ever published.” Although Thoroughbreds from New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Kansas, and California are included, there are, not surprisingly, a considerable number of Kentucky animals. These include “Asteroid,” owned by A. J. Alexander; “Post’s Hambletonian,” owned by Gen. William T. Withers; “Longfellow,” owned by John Harper of Midway; and various other Kentucky horses from Fayette, Woodford, and Scott counties. Pedigrees of each entry are included with the photographic print.

—James D. Birchfield