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Library Notes: Selected Acquisitions [v. 8, no. 2]

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Selected Acquisitions

Kentuckiana

The libraries have acquired several letters dating from the early to late nineteenth century which are appealing for their associations with the history of Kentucky and the nation. The first is a letter of 17 February 1801 from John Fowler, U.S. Representative from Kentucky, to Horatio Turpin, of Manchester, Virginia. It relates to the election of Thomas Jefferson as president. "Today on the second ballot," writes Fowler, "Mr. Jefferson was duly elected. He had 10 votes. Burr 4 & two blanks. Of course he was declared duly elected by the speaker." Writing further, Fowler speaks of Gen. James Wilkinson, a figure remembered in Kentucky for his role in the Spanish Conspiracy: "I had flattered myself when I parted with you that I should have made a collection of money from Genl. Wilkinson out of which it was my intention of making you a payment, but he had left the city previous to my arrival. I still have hopes he will make some arrangements for me this spring."

Another letter interesting for its political content is from Cassius Clay and directed to Charles A. Dana, editor of the New York Sun. Commenting on a recent editorial, Clay writes, "I am in perfect sympathy with you in your Jacksonian stand for a sound currency and no subsidies—equal taxation—& no compromise. The word 'Protection' is another for Robbery!" Further, Clay writes, "If an income tax is just it is always expedient." The letter is addressed from Clay's Madison County home, White Hall, and dated 4 November 1893.

Evidence of the nineteenth-century fascination with autograph collecting is revealed in a letter from C. S. Todd of Shelbyville in response to a query from E. B. Houghton of Boston. "It gives me pleasure," writes Todd on 18 October 1858, "to comply with your wishes as to some autographs and you have enclosed a few that may interest you." Todd sends autographs of, among others, Pres. William Henry Harrison, Pres. James Madison, Mrs. Madison (the sister of his mother-in-law), first Kentucky secretary of state James Brown, and "one of the earliest Pioneer's in Ky.," James Knox. He
also includes the autograph of a General Overton who was second to Andrew Jackson in a duel. Todd, who has just returned from Texas, writes that he has sold his farm and is preparing to "go South."

The Desha-Duffy Papers
A gift of keen historic interest, consisting of papers of the Desha and Duffy families of Harrison County, has been made through the interest and generosity of Mrs. Mary Didier of Tryon, North Carolina. The collection was removed from The Oaks, near Cynthiana, for more than a century the residence of descendants of Gen. Lucius Desha, a son of Gov. Joseph Desha. The gift consists of books, maps, photographs, letters, journals, business papers, and other valuable research material.

Among books included in the gift are a number with significance for their Kentucky associations. These include, for example, Message of the President of the United States Transmitting a Copy of the Proceedings and of the Evidence Exhibited on the Assignment of Aaron Burr (1807) and Message of the President . . . Touching the Official Conduct of Brigadier General James Wilkinson. Also present are a number of Lexington, Kentucky imprints, including the following: Maj. R. J. Dunn, Condensed Military Pocket Manual (1841), James Moore and Cary L. Clarke, Masonic Constitutions, or Illustrations of Masonry (1818), Thomas Birch, The Virginian Orator (1823), and Samuel Wilson, The Kentucky English Grammar (1806).

Manuscripts include a letter from Governor Desha concerning the sale of slaves. There is also correspondence from women members of the family, including nine letters from Eliza to Lucius Desha during the 1867 General Assembly and letters from Norma Dill, daughter of Eliza and Lucius Desha, describing early life in Texas. The collection includes a letter from Cassius M. Clay on political matters, as well as several communications from Robert E. Lee. There is material relating to the Covington and Lexington Railroad and the Claysville Turnpike. A document of special importance is a diary of General Desha outlining his escape from Camp Chase, Ohio during the Civil War. There are military commissions, items relating to short horn cattle and to horse racing, genealogical research notes, an almost unbroken run of the Frankfort Argus of Western America from October 1824 to February 1827, and approximately 500 photographs, including the
daguerreotype, the ambrotype, and other forms. The Desha-Duffy Collection does much to enrich resources for the study of Kentucky history and of nineteenth-century American life.

The Jewell Family Collection

Mrs. Frances Jewell Hammond of Louisville has generously made a gift of papers of five members of the Jewell family of Kentucky. Included are materials pertaining to John Jewell, Asa H. Jewell, Lizzie Berry Jewell, Robert Berry Jewell, and, of key importance to the University of Kentucky, Frances Jewell McVey, wife of Francis LeRond McVey, president of the university from 1917 to 1940.

These Kentucky family materials date back as far as 1820 and extend to the mid-twentieth century. Materials in the collection deal with military, agricultural, equine, educational, and other topics, for Asa Hickman Jewell, father of Frances Jewell McVey, was a partner in Tattersall's, and Robert Berry Jewell was director of the U.S. Trotting Association and vice-president of Audubon Park Racetrack.

The part of the collection generated by Frances Jewell McVey documents social life of the era. Consisting largely of letters among family and friends, it describes her girlhood activities—parties, plays, games, dances, reading, travel, life at Baldwin School at Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, then at Vassar College and Columbia. Also included is her correspondence with Dr. McVey, along with examples of his drawings. There are also three major typescripts, including that for Uncle Will of Wildwood, which was written by Frances Jewell McVey and her brother Robert B. Jewell and published by the University Press of Kentucky in 1974.

The Jewell family papers are important for the insight they afford into the life and achievements of a prominent Kentucky family and especially for their portrayal of the woman who made Maxwell Place well-known for its generous hospitality in the days of President McVey.