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Library Notes: Selected Acquisitions [v. 5, no. 1]

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Selected Acquisitions

A silver bowl in the Revere style is the generous gift to the libraries of Francis E. Wilson of San Diego. The inscribed bowl was presented to Samuel M. Wilson, uncle of the donor, by the members of the Fayette County bar in October 1945 in recognition of his distinguished career as a lawyer, historian, and civic leader, and in commemoration of his fiftieth year as an attorney. This splendid memento of Judge Wilson now takes its place among the books and manuscripts of the Wilson Library, which was bequeathed to the university almost forty years ago and is one of the cornerstones of the libraries' special collections.

The recent gift of books from Mary Marvin Patterson of Washington, D.C. includes a set of The Works of Joseph Conrad (1920-1926) in a limited edition signed by the author; John Lothrop Motley's History of the United Netherlands (1861); James Henderson's A History of the Brazil (1821); and books by Mrs. Patterson's husband, Jefferson, recounting his experiences in the United States Foreign Service.

The libraries have acquired a copy of An Ode to Kentucky, by an Emigrant, handsomely printed this year at the Fonthill Press, a Lexington private press. The poem of sixty lines was published anonymously in the 7 September 1795 number of The Philanthropist, a London journal planned by the young William Wordsworth. The Ode is the earliest-known poem about Kentucky—that "modern Eden"—and the Fonthill production is believed to represent its first separate printing. Another recent acquisition of Kentucky interest is Appalachian Images and Other Bluegrass Scenes (1982), a book of photographs made by the late Stanley S. Parks, Lexington physician and lifelong photographer, in the 1930s.

The travel collection has been augmented by the two volumes of the London edition of Sir Charles Lyell's Travels in North America (1845). The Scottish geologist visited America in 1841 and again in 1845; his record of the journeys concerns itself not only with the geology of the continent but also with American life at mid-century.
Published according to Act of Parliament, Sept. 1, 1773 by Archd. Bell.
Bookseller N.8 near the Saracens Head Aldgate.

Frontispiece to Poems on Various Subjects (1773)
America's First Black Poet

An unusually interesting and significant recent purchase is a first edition of the poetry of an eighteenth-century Boston slave. Brought to America in 1761 when she was about eight years old, Phillis Wheatley was sold into the household of John and Susannah Wheatley. Mrs. Wheatley and her daughter Mary recognized the young girl's precocity and began to tutor her; within sixteen months, Phillis had mastered English and was reading with assurance in scripture and the classics. She began to write accomplished if imitative verse by the age of thirteen. In 1773, in the hope of restoring her failing health, Phillis accompanied the Wheatleys' son Nathaniel on a business trip to England; she went as a free woman. While there, she secured patronage for the publication of her first volume of poetry, Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral (1773), the frontispiece of which we show here. Already a literary phenomenon in Boston, she now won acclaim abroad as well. In 1778 Phillis married John Peters, a free black, but the alliance was an unhappy one. She died alone and poor in 1784, having outlived John, Susannah, and Mary Wheatley; the last of her three children was buried with her. Her poetry continued to be published long after her death; Joseph Sabin's Bibliotheca Americana devotes some five pages to the various editions and versions of her works.

Early Lexington Imprint

Almost 180 years after its publication in Lexington by Daniel Bradford in 1804, Alexander Pope's Essay on Man assumes its proper place among the other notable Bradford imprints in the libraries' collection of Kentuckiana. Although not the first literary work from the Bradfords' press—that distinction falls to Thomas Johnson's Kentucky Miscellany, a book of poems published in 1788—it is, nevertheless, a welcome addition to the typographical collection as the only known copy of an early Lexington imprint.

Daniel's father, John Bradford, was the pioneer printer who was responsible for Lexington's first newspaper, the Kentucke Gazette, which debuted 11 August 1787. The first notice of the publication of Pope's Essay appeared in the 4 September 1804 edition of the Gazette, which proudly announced the volume as "JUST FROM THE PRESS, And for sale at this Office . . . "

The variety of publications which flowed from the press of the
Bradfords is impressive: almanacs, books, pamphlets, broadsides. Since the tone of much of the political and religious material was often didactic, Pope's Essay undoubtedly assumed additional meaning in this frontier community. Certainly, the Bradfords' efforts to bring information and culture to a developing town were in large measure responsible for Lexington's sobriquet "Athens of the West."

Shryock's Handbook
With the acquisition of the first American edition of Abraham Swan's The British Architect; or, the Builders Treasury of Stair-Cases, 1775, the library has forged an intriguing link with Lexington's architectural past. This volume has an additional appeal for Kentuckians because one of the preliminary pages is inscribed "Gideon Shryock, 1823." A native of Lexington, Shryock was the son of Mathias Shryock, a local builder. Gideon became an architect after studying under William Strickland of Philadelphia. He introduced the Greek Revival style to Kentucky as exemplified by the Old State House in Frankfort and Transylvania University's Morrison College.

Some thirty years before the Philadelphia edition of 1775, The British Architect was first published in England. It is essentially a builder's guide and contains many fine examples illustrating various designs. Although the Kentucky copy has facsimiles for three of the sixty plates, it is, nevertheless, a fine specimen of an early architectural graphic work.

Manuscripts
The libraries have recently received a small group of letters and documents relating to William C. Ireland and his family. A native of Mason County, Kentucky, Ireland was admitted to the bar in 1848, practicing in Clarksburg, Greensburg, and eventually in Ashland. While living in Greenup County, he served as state representative during the years 1859-1863. Several letters from the Civil War period are particularly enlightening. In a 26 September 1861 letter written from Frankfort, Ireland notes that "the Confederate army are burning towns, robbing and committing wanton destruction of property where ever they go." As a strong Union man, Ireland had little sympathy for secessionist sentiments.

Another item of Civil War interest is the Kentucky Confederate
General Simon Bolivar Buckner's letter of 11 June 1864 from Clinton, Louisiana. He gives a detailed report of the estimated strength of Union General Nathaniel P. Banks's troops at various points throughout the area.

A strong states'-rights position is advocated by Amos Kendall in a confidential and candid letter of 4 November 1830 to an unidentified correspondent. Kendall urges a fellow journalist to direct a press at Chillicothe where he would be in a position to influence public opinion so that people might "... look to the state governments as the great conservatories of their liberties and to the general government only as a shield against foreign aggression and internal commotion." Kendall vows "... entire devotion to the cause, in office or out, in prosperity or adversity. I will be deterred by no dangers and discouraged by no obstacles."

In 1830, having published the Argus of Western America in Frankfort for several years, Kendall was an auditor for the U.S. Treasury and part of Andrew Jackson's influential "Kitchen Cabinet"; he later became postmaster-general.

—Claire McCann

**Edward Warder Rannells Collection**

The Art Library has acquired over two hundred art books, catalogs, and periodicals from Edward Warder Rannells's personal library, including materials that cover a wide range of subjects in his field. After serving as Associate Dean of the Art Institute of Chicago from 1926 to 1929, Professor Rannells came to the University of Kentucky in 1929 to become head of the Art Department. Writer and lecturer as well as artist, he became nationally known as an advocate of a strong role for art in education and the humanities. His articles about art education and art criticism appeared in such publications as College Art Journal, Gazette des Beaux-Arts, and Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism. He did much to build the library's collection in art, and in 1963, almost ten years before his death, the Fine Arts Library was named for him. A portrait of Rannells painted by Doris W. Rannells, his wife, is now hanging in the Art Library, on loan from his daughter, Molly Rannells.

—Meg Shaw