

THE OLD LIBRARY OF TRANSYLVANIA COLLEGE*

The Board of Transylvania Seminary held its first meeting at Crow Station in what was then Lincoln County, Kentucky, on November 10, 1783. After the business of organization, the board adjourned "to sit in the meeting-house at Dutch-Station Thursday next succeeding Lincoln court in December," but such were the difficulties of the period that a quorum did not assemble until March 4, 1784. At the meeting then held there was discussed a "Library" which had been presented to the Seminary by John Todd of Virginia. The record reads: "The Board has received word that the Rev. John Todd of Louisa, in Virginia, has presented to the Seminary a Library and Philosophical Apparatus for the encouragement of Science in this Institution."

Much appreciation is expressed in the old records of the "liberal gratuity of Mr. Todd towards the introduction of Useful Knowledge in this Western Country." There is also much discussion of plans for transporting the gift across the Alleghenies. On motion it is resolved that money for transporting the "Library" shall be secured by subscription, and a paper, filed among the archives of Transylvania, reads as follows: "Whereas a donation hath been made to the Transylvania Seminary of a valuable Library of Books and a Philosophical Apparatus, which are now lying at the house of the Rev. John Todd, in the county of Louisa, and cannot be transported to the District of Kentucky on account of the low funds of the Seminary; We, the subscribers, sensible of the great advantage which the good people of this District would derive from the said Seminary being set on foot, and of the benefit which would accrue by having the said Library and Philosophical Apparatus deposited in the said Seminary, have paid into the hands of Harry Inness, Chairman of the Board, the several

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sums of money annexed to our names as a loan to be repaid out of the first monies which shall accrue from the funds of the said Seminary.

SIGNED:

Harry Inness	£1..10..0	Willis Green	£1..10..0
Christ Greenup	1..10..0	Rob. Johnson	1.. 0..0
Caleb Wallace	1..10..0	Levi Todd	1..10..0
Sam. McDowell	1..10..0	John Campbell	1..10..0
Rob Todd	1.. 0..0	John Edwards	1..10..0
R. Patterson	1.. 0..0	Isaac Shelby	1.. 8..0
T. Marshall	1..10..0	Benja. Logan	1.. 7..0
Thos. Lewis	1.. 8..0	William Ward	1.. 0..0

We read later in the records that the "Library" has been received and that a member has been appointed "to convey to Mr. Todd, in the manner that will be most agreeable to him, the thanks of the Board." On the Transylvania shelves today stand several old volumes bearing on their flyleaves the inscription, "Rev. John Todd." Justly he may be called the founder of the Transylvania library.

That the board of Transylvania Seminary placed much emphasis upon the importance of a library in their educational plans for the "Western Country" is shown by the frequency with which it is discussed in their proceedings. The first entry regarding the purchase of books reads: "Resolved that a committee be appointed to draw any sum of money, not exceeding £50, out of the funds of the Seminary to purchase such books as they may judge immediately necessary for the use of students." Fifty pounds for books at that early date, in the far-lying District of Kentucky, was not a small sum and that it was for immediate needs implies the intention of more liberal gifts later on, an intention that was generously fulfilled.

Among the files of old documents are numerous bills for books. One from Matthew Cary, Philadelphia, in 1795, totals £278-3-7. Fortunately it is an itemized bill, and we are interested to find here such familiar titles as Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Locke's *Educational Writings*, and, strange to tell, *The Rights of Woman*.

When in 1798 Transylvania Seminary of Lexington and Kentucky Academy of Pisgah nearby united to form Transyl-

vania University, the aims of the board became more ambitious. The sum of \$500 was immediately appropriated for medical books, to be purchased by Dr. Samuel Brown, and \$600 for books for the college of law, which was under the direction of the Honorable George Nicholas. Kentucky Academy had brought to this union books valued at £288.

The citizens of Lexington responded generously to appeals in behalf of their university. In 1821 Dr. Charles Caldwell of the medical college took with him to Paris \$17,000 with which to buy books for the medical library. He writes in his autobiography: "The time of my arrival in Paris was uncommonly and unexpectedly propitious for my purpose. The ravages and wastelays of the French Revolution had not entirely passed away. Toward the close of that catastrophe the libraries of many wealthy and literary persons had found their way to the shelves of the bookseller. No sooner was I apprised of these precious repositories than I procured permission to ascertain of what they consisted. Some of them were stored with venerable literature. * * * I found and purchased at reduced prices no inconsiderable number of the choicest works of the fathers of medicine from Hippocrates to the revival of letters—works which in no other way, and perhaps at no other time, could have been collected so readily and certainly and on terms so favorable, in either Paris or any other city in the world. Hence the decided superiority of the Lexington Medical Library, in those works, to any other in the West and South, and probably in the whole United States."*

Another foreign purchase was made in 1839 when Dr. Peter and Dr. Bush, of the medical faculty, spent, in London and Paris, \$11,000 for books and apparatus for the medical college. It was in that year that Daguerre gave to the world the result of his studies, and one of his primitive cameras, the novelty of the hour in Paris, was bought for Transylvania. It is today, along with other rare and costly apparatus of an early date, in the college museum.

The medical library is practically intact and is rich in rare material. To the lay-observer the volumes which are most impressive are those of the early fathers of medicine, books published in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a few

**Autobiography of Charles Caldwell, M. D.*, p. 391.

in the sixteenth century. Their exteriors, as well as their beautiful plates and type, are a delight to the booklover.

The collection of medical botanies and works on natural history has a special interest because of the fact that Rafinesque was for seven years, 1819-1826, the head of this department, and many details of the collection point clearly to his influence. There are among the bird books the set by Alexander Wilson published in Philadelphia, 1808-1813, together with the five volumes added to this set, 1825-1833, by Charles Lucien Bonaparte; *A Natural History of Birds and Gleanings of Natural History* by George Edwards, London, 1743-1764; *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*, Mark Catesby, London, 1771; and other sets less imposing in size and in the beauty of their plates. The plates which most excel in beautiful workmanship, both in design and in softness of color, are those of the *Dictionnaire des Sciences Naturelles*, M. Dumont de Sainte-Croix, Paris, 1816-1830.

Among the botanies are the *Flora Boreali-Americana*, Andreas Michaux, Paris, 1803, said to be the first publication ever given to the world on the general botany of North America; *Flora Virginica*, John Clayton, Leyden, 1762; *The North American Sylva*, F. Andrew Michaux, an English translation published in Paris in 1819; *The Flora of North America*, William P. C. Barton, with original colored figures, beautiful in coloring and design, Philadelphia, 1823; and works by Benjamin S. Barton. This department is particularly full.

A collection in the medical library which deserves mention is that of the bound manuscript theses of all medical graduates from 1818 to 1859. Among these is the inaugural thesis of Thomas H. Chivers, graduate of Transylvania in 1830, whose name became famous in the literary world through his controversy with Edgar Allan Poe. Other widely known names are found in this long list of graduates whose number runs into the thousands.

The law college of Transylvania University, developed and fostered by the genius of Henry Clay, possessed a library that was once the equal of that of the college of medicine, but unfortunately it has not been so well preserved. The volumes of the American Archives, the early state papers of Kentucky, the files of the *Portfolio*, 1812-1820, and of Niles' *Baltimore Register*,

1811-1823, are found here. Among the earliest publications are many quaint English law books of the seventeenth century.

The academical library, built up by gifts and purchases innumerable, has interests as varied as its sources; the texts, the dedications and forewords, the bindings, the publishers, the printers' marks, and lastly the inscriptions presumably written by the owners' hands. In 1834 "His Britannic Majesty, William IV," so reads the record, presented eighty-one folios, in each of which is bound a slip which states that the volume "is to be perpetually preserved in the library of Transylvania University." Among these works are four volumes of the Doomsday Book; catalogues of the Harleian, Cottonian, and Lansdowne manuscripts in the British Museum; Calendars of the Proceedings in Chancery, and the Pleadings in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; the Itinerary of King John; statutes of the realm under the various kings; and books of facsimiles of the historic charters of England.

In the Hargrave collection of state trials in England are found the proceedings of the trial of "Capt. William Kidd, at the Old Bailey, for Murder and Piracy on the High Seas"; the trial of Anne Boleyn, in which is given her last letter to King Henry; the trial of Charles I; the trial of Sir Walter Raleigh; of Lord Cobham who was the original of Shakespeare's "Falstaff"; of Mary, Queen of Scots; of the members of the Gunpowder Plot; of an archbishop of Canterbury who is tried for heresy—twelve folios in all.

Edward Everett, in 1830, presented twelve, vellum-bound folios of Latin and Greek authors. On the flyleaf of one is his autograph. In 1824, the younger Michaux, the famous French scientist, presented through Dr. Samuel Brown of the medical college a huge Chinese dictionary with translations in French and in Latin. On the inside of the cover is a paper, its four corners held by old-fashioned wafers, on which is written: "Offert au Doctr. S Brown Par Son tres devoue Serviteur, F Andre Michaux. Paris, le 14 Septembre, 1824."

A treasure of special interest is a folio volume bound in leather with the coat of arms of Sir William Cecil, First Baron of Burghley, deeply impressed in gold on each cover. Within are beautiful strips of illuminated parchment, two inches wide, running the full length of the cover and placed here to stay the

binding, which is held by thongs of soft white leather. The book, *Contra Octoginta Haereses*, is in Greek, of perfect type. It was made in Basel in 1544 and is dedicated to Erasmus. On the title page is written in a beautiful hand, "J. Moore to the University Library, 1802." James Moore was the first president of Transylvania University.

In a list of donations to the library published in 1822 there is mentioned an "illuminated Persian manuscript by a Mohammedan theologian." No hint is given as to its source. The beautiful writing is enclosed on each page in a band of gold, while a narrower gold line is drawn near the border, the whole being made into a book of five hundred pages. The manuscript was recently translated by a Persian scholar. It is the history, written in 1739, of Timour, the great conqueror of Persia.

The most sumptuous volumes in the library are the "classicks," large, vellum-bound folios, some of them in perfect condition, though their years are numbered by centuries, four centuries the oldest of them. On the margins are often found notes made by some reader in Greek letters as clear and perfect as the type. These rare volumes, representing some of the most famous publishers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, are "jewels of typography" made when printing was among the fine arts. Chief of these is a copy of Diogenes Laertius made in Rome in 1594 and dedicated to Philip II of Spain. Conspicuous for its size and its handsome exterior is a volume of Plutarch's *Lives*, published in Paris in 1624. It measures $16\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2} \times 4$ inches in size and weighs sixteen pounds. Some of the vellum bindings carry a design in tooling which has the appearance of exquisitely carved ivory. A large tome of Grotius, made in Amsterdam, is a fine example of this. Other vellum covers have beautiful decorations in gold. Among the early nineteenth century bindings is a three-volume edition of *Gil Blas* made in Paris. It is in tree calf, with a delicate border of gold on the cover, both inside and out. Rare art is shown in the unobtrusive design of gold covering the back. Similar to this, but not so well preserved, is a two-volume edition of Plautus made in Leipsic. To this period belong also the many little volumes, $3\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ inches, of French worthies, from the press of Firmin-Didot, shelf after shelf of them, all in leather bindings brightened by decorations in gold; Voltaire, 27 volumes; Rousseau, Corneille, Molière, Buffon, and others.

Choosing at random separate volumes of interest one may mention a copy of the first English edition of *Novum Organum*, published in 1655; Descartes' *Principia*, 1680; *The History of Cambridge University from the Conquest to the Present Time*, 1645. There is a London edition of Erasmus' *Familiar Colloquies*, a work which was denounced by the doctors of the Sorbonne as "an erroneous, scandalous, and impious publication" and its reading prohibited. This copy gives evidence of much use. *The Souldiers Exercise* states on its title page that it is "a worke fit to be studied, and mete for the knowledge of Captaines, Muster-Masters, and all young Souldiers, and generous Spirits that love the Honourable Practice of Armes," London, 1643. Culpeper's *Astrological Judgement of Diseases*, 1655, is dedicated to the astrological physicians of England whom the author addresses as "deare soules." To them "Nicholas Culpeper wisheth peace and prosperity in this world and eternall beatitude in that which is to come." An epistle to these "deare soules" which opens the volume is signed: "Spittle-fields next dore to the Red-lyon, Nich. Culpeper." Samuel Pepys writes of lying at the Red-Lyon, "the best inne." The thought of the proximity of the two arouses pleasant imaginings.

Among the books of local interest are Filson's *Kentucky* bought in 1795, as Matthew Cary's book bill informs us, Imlay's *Topographical Description of the Western Territory*, and Michaux's *Travels Westward*, the three outstanding classics in this field, with Mann Butler's history, which closely follows them, Marshall's *Kentucky*, with its introduction by Rafinesque, and other more recent Kentucky histories. A scrapbook kept by Mrs. Holley, wife of Transylvania's noted president, Horace Holley, from 1818 to 1829, is a rich store of Lexington history. There is a full set of the *Western Review*, Lexington, 1820-1821, a magazine to which Rafinesque contributed, and a bound volume of the college magazine, *The Transylvanian*, for 1829, with which is a catalogue of the university for 1826. Two unbound catalogues of the years 1823 and 1824 are each printed in Latin.

Of much interest are the old library records which show what books President Holley read in the years 1821-1826, and those read by John Everett, who chose much French. John Everett, Greek tutor in Transylvania, was a brother of Edward

and Alexander Everett of Boston. Tutor Jenkins was an omnivorous reader, his list covering works on medicine, religion, travels, voyages, and history, including Filson's *Kentucky*. Madison C. Johnson's list is of interest, as is also that of Charles Slaughter of Morehead, who also read much French. Rafinesque drew from the library Schlegel's philosophy, histories, voyages, and on three different dates Barton on the American Indian. In addition to his professorship Rafinesque held the position of librarian in 1825, and on the shelves today are the records that he kept, identified by their beautiful handwriting. The trustees used the college library. We find Benjamin Gratz and John Tilford, R. A., constant readers of the *Athenaeum* and the *North American Review*. By far the longest list is that of Mann Butler, whose chief interest is mathematics.

The handwritten inscriptions in the Transylvania books cover in years almost three centuries. The dated autographs begin with that of the fearless John Oxenbridge who, banished from England by Charles II, came in 1670 to Boston, where he was ordained minister of the First Church. The volume bearing his name with the date, 1642, was presented to the Transylvania library by William Gibbs Hunt, graduate of Harvard, lawyer and editor of Lexington. From Boston must have come also a volume of Descartes which has on its flyleaf the words: "Jeremy Dummer, pretium 18, 1699." Beneath this is written: "Henry Flint's Book," and in the same handwriting there follow two quotations from the Aeneid. It was while musing over such a page as this in his *Erasmi Colloquia* that Dr. Holmes wrote: "Various names written on title-page. Most conspicuous this: Gul. Cookeson; E. Coll. Omn. Anim. 1725; Oxon.—O William Cookeson, of All-Souls College, Oxford—then writing as I now write—now in the dust, where I shall lie,—is this line all that remains to thee of earthly remembrance? Thy name is at least once more spoken by living men;—is it a pleasure to thee? Thou shalt share with me my little draught of immortality,—its week, its month, its year—whatever it may be,—and then we will go together into the solemn archives of Oblivion's Uncatalogued Library."

Not wholly into oblivion have Henry Flint and Jeremy Dummer gone, for the former was a famous tutor of Harvard, while of Jeremy Dummer it is recorded that President Mather said he was the best scholar who ever left Harvard College.

The early life of Kentucky is woven into the history of her first college, and the names written on the pages of the books belonging to the early Transylvania show that the men who helped to make her history helped also in the making of her university. A few of these names are: Honorable John Todd, Levi Todd, John Brown, Harry Toulmin, John Bradford, Robert Todd, Henry Clay, William T. Barry, Buckner Thruston, Benjamin Gratz, Charles S. Morehead, James Garrard, Richard M. Johnson, Thomas A. Marshall, Nathaniel G. Hart, Humphrey Marshall, Robert Wycliffe, John C. Breckinridge.

A word about the bookplates. Three dignified, vellum-bound folios are the proud possessors of a cardinal's bookplate. Three others wear the beautiful plate of an archbishop. There are plates with Moor's head and others with mailed wrist, suggesting the beginnings of heraldry; plates of doctors, lawyers, some with artistic designs and others with simply a name. To one plate may be attached an interesting history. There are on the shelves five small volumes of the *Craftsman*, in handsome, leather bindings. In each is a bookplate, of ornate but graceful design, bearing at its base these words in flowing script: "Gabriel Jones, Attorney-at-Law, Virginia."

In 1776, Kentucky, then a province of uncertain status in the eyes of her parent, Virginia, sent as agents to the Virginia Assembly George Rogers Clark and Gabriel Jones. They were instructed to negotiate for a supply of powder for defense against the Indians. Arriving at Williamsburg, these two Kentuckians had some difficulty in obtaining an interview with Governor Patrick Henry, but finally their request for powder was placed before the Council. To the request was added the statement that "a province not worth defending was not worth claiming," a remark carrying the hint that if Kentucky did not receive means of defense from Virginia, the source from which she had a right to expect it, she would declare her independence and defend herself, an attitude characteristic of the Kentucky of that day.

The powder was granted and the difficult journey back to Limestone was made in safety, but between that point and Lexington, at the Blue Lick Springs, Indians attempted to seize the powder, and in trying to prevent its capture, Gabriel Jones was killed.

Gabriel Jones was a backwoodsman and an Indian fighter. He was also a scholarly gentleman, as his beautiful volumes with their tasteful bookplate show. The trustees' list of Transylvania Seminary and Transylvania University is a roll of the founders and early statesmen of Kentucky. That they were men of iron mould history has shown. Of the fact that they were also men of scholarly attainments and aspirations the library of Transylvania is a noble witness.

So numerous are the volumes of interest and the phases of interest in this library of the historic Transylvania that any general sketch is of necessity inadequate. The library contains more than 18,000 volumes and about 10,000 pamphlets. It is housed, with the growing modern library, in a building that is deplorably lacking in means of protection in case of fire. Visitors who marvel at the library's richness marvel still more that means have not been provided for its safekeeping.

The last century gave to Transylvania Colonel James Morrison, whose generosity made possible the beautiful building which bears his name. There is urgent need for a like generosity in order that a safe and well-equipped building may protect and make accessible this library not only for future sons of Transylvania but for students from any source who may need the material which is here.

Transylvania in her long and worthy history has made a notable contribution to American statesmanship. This library has been a definite factor in developing many leaders of men. If given adequate equipment, it may enter upon a new period of usefulness, in a different field, and be the means of adding many honored names to the long list of those whom Transylvania has served.

ELIZABETH NORTON

EDITOR'S NOTE.—In addition to the books mentioned in the preceding article, there are in the Transylvania Library several hundred volumes on the Ancient Regime and the French Revolution. These books were collected by William Short during the time that he was Secretary of Legation and *Chargé d'affaires* at Paris (1785-1792) and while he was Minister of the United States at The Hague and Madrid (1792-1795). They were given to the Transylvania Library by a descendant of William Short. They contain complete editions (some of them first editions) of the *philosophes*—Voltaire, Rousseau, Holbach,

Helvétius, Raynal, and others. There is a collection of pamphlets, bound in one volume, that are replies to Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*. There are a number of books on travels in America, among which are those of Chastellux, Crèvecoeur, Brissot, and other authors. There are several contemporary histories of the French Revolution, such as those of the *Deux Amis* and Madame de Staël. The collection is poor in memoirs and journals. Though there are several libraries in this country that have considerably better collections of contemporary materials on the French Revolution, this is probably the best in this vicinity and the only one in the world which can boast autographs and marginalia (perhaps) in the hand of William Short.