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The first picture of America as it appeared in Giuliano Dati's *Lettera delle isole nouamente trovate*, 1493, showing Columbus's three ships at sea, King Ferdinand on his throne, and the natives of the New World; from the only known copy of the first edition in the Biblioteca Colombina.
Thirty Years On

DALLAS PRATT

AFTER thirty years as editor of the Columns I told them I was going to retire. Why? they asked. Because of the "thirty," was my answer. If I don't do it now I'll have to wait for the forty. "Forty years on . . .," that dread phrase, although we sang it merrily enough as boys at school as we rumbled through the green New Hampshire lanes in horse-drawn barges on the way to an afternoon of rowing.

I gave another reason for retiring: "I want to have more time to write." So they immediately asked me to write a retrospective article about my years with the Columns. Hoist with my own petard!

When I said I was leaving because I wanted to write, I more truthfully might have said, "write and read." The luxury of it! to read all the things one doesn’t have to read; to behold, in Milton’s words, “the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies”; to read, like Proust, in a room “saturated with the bouquet of silence”; or to settle down behind a rampart of books in one of those great libraries whose very names are bibliointoxicants: Marciana, Trivulziana, Ambrosiana. . . .

None of these have I visited, but had I been a member of the Grolier Club, I could have seen them all, and been grandly received by mayors, on that club’s 1962 library tour of Italy. Richard Brown Baker wrote about it in the November 1962 Columns,
Dallas Pratt

describing how the visitors were made free of the patrimony of the Malatestas: 341 mss. and 48 printed volumes chained to reading stalls in the ancient library of Cesena. "Never before, at least in modern times, had a group been permitted this unrestricted examination of the Malatesta treasures."

On the other hand, among the great European libraries I have seen, there is one, the Biblioteca Colombina in Seville, into which I suspect not many of my readers have penetrated. The place is hard to find and keeps a low profile, perhaps for security reasons, although the library itself is famous since it was formed by Fernando, second son of Christopher Columbus, and contains books owned by his father. In 1976 a stopover in Seville gave me an opportunity to visit the library, but the Chapter of the Cathedral, where the Colombina is located, does not encourage visitors and the entrance is unmarked. Finally I figured where it had to be, found a door, and entered, only to come upon a sign saying that the library was not open. I rang the bell, and presently a monk appeared, at once pointing at the sign and shaking his head when I requested a brief visit.

As a collector of 15th-16th century maps and prints, I had become curious about what and where was the first "picture" of America—that is, the first representation made by an artist after Columbus's return to Europe in 1493. After a little research in the Columbia and New York Public Libraries I discovered that the very first picture of all appeared in a poetical paraphrase by Giuliano Dati of Columbus's Lettera delle isole nouamente trovate, and that it had been printed in Rome on June 15, 1493, only 90 days after the Discoverer's return. Furthermore, I learned that no more than a single copy of this first edition had survived and that it was in the Biblioteca Colombina.

In spite of the discouraging reception, I was determined to see this treasure. I insisted on being admitted, invoking the name of Columbia, the Columns, and the Council of the Friends in such bad and vehement Spanish that the guardian finally capitulated,
probably assuming that I was some kind of Columbian VIP too important or too mad to be kept out.

Entering the library, he led me to a small case, and the first thing I saw through rather dusty glass was Christopher Columbus's own copy of *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, open at a page describing the "famous city of Karmos on the shore of the ocean sea." In the margin the Discoverer had copied Polo's reference to "spices, pearls, precious stones, cloth of gold, ivory"—the riches which Columbus himself hoped to find on the eastern shores of that sea.

Next to this volume was the object of my search: the Dati, opened to the "first picture." It was a crude woodcut, showing King Ferdinand on his throne. He gazes across the sea on which Columbus's three ships make their way to an island with two huts and a throng of naked natives milling around a palm tree.

While I was peering with fascination at this ancestor of all pictorial Americana and imagining that Columbus must have seen this quaint picture, perhaps held this very volume in his hands, another monk appeared at the far end of the empty library. Immediately my guide beckoned me to leave, doubtless anticipating awkward questions from his colleague about my presence there. Well, there are not many libraries in the world named after Columbus and on this occasion I fancied myself an emissary from one to another, so I make no apologies for my intrusion.

Would an Italian, I wonder, laugh at an American's romantic reaction to names such as "Ambrosiana," "Marciana," "Laurenziana"? Or would he have a kindred emotion at the sound of "Harvard," "Newberry," even "Yale"? And, if the latter, ought we not to disillusion him, at least in respect to our own great university library, so efficient, so research oriented—and now about to be involved in automation and national bibliographic networks? Not long after her appointment as Director of Libraries, Patricia Battin wrote an article for the *Columns* of November 1978 in which she described the technological devices which are appearing in public libraries. Understandably, she has to go along with
these, if only to keep the library from drowning in the everincreasing flood of publications which are themselves spawned by this technological age. But even she, besieged by a host of computer terminals, casts a nostalgic eye back on the small-town library of her childhood, and bravely titles her article, “The Library of the Future Has Books.”

Perhaps it is unfair to our magnificent five million-book institution to say, with a slight shift in emphasis: yes, but the library of the past had books. Do you remember (those of you who saw the beginnings of our Friends’ organization) Mark Van Doren’s address at the first meeting of the Friends in Low Library, just thirty years ago this May? We printed excerpts from his talk—or rather his meditation: “I Found Myself in a Library”—in our first issue, the Fall 1951 Columns. The Professor had a puckish look and style, but on that occasion he conjured up visions like a Prospero. Gently leading us away from the hectic strivings of the present, he evoked the Low Rotunda he remembered as a young graduate student in 1915. “This room then was not a place for speeches; silence ruled it, for it was the Reading Room of the Columbia Library. In the center was a circle of low shelves containing encyclopedias and dictionaries. Then came concentric circles of desks for readers. Then, outermost of all, and crucial to my theme, stood further circles of tall bookcases in which, if one cared to explore them, there lay the materials for one’s liberal education.”

And what were the books in the tall bookcases? The core books, the indispensable books we must keep on reading, said Van Doren; and in his mind’s eye he saw “Shakespeare and the Elizabethan drama; French, German, Italian, Icelandic, and Oriental literature; the histories of Gibbon, Gardiner, Macaulay, Herodotus, Thucydides, and the rest . . . .” Although one might wonder about some of these “core” books—Icelandic literature? Gardiner?—what Van Doren wished to remind his audience was that at the heart of the library which they aimed to befriend was the literature of the humanities, the books which transcend time and have shaped our civilization.
Thirty Years On

Those indeed were books, and Professor Van Doren, after summoning up an image of where they were a third of a century before, ended with the reassurance that these core books were still kept in the "living center of libraries."

Thirty years later I hardly dare ask if Gibbon and Macaulay, much less Icelandic literature, are still in the living center of this or any American university library. And where will they be after another thirty years, to which Mrs. Battin looks forward in her description of national bibliographic networks, "dispensing information on film, fiche or screen at the press of a key"? Obsolescent perhaps. Physically deteriorated probably, as Jim Haas, Patricia Battin's predecessor, predicted in his November 1972 Columns article: "A Tragedy About to Happen." Add to that Mrs. Battin's own somber reference to the "increasing losses caused by theft and mutilation" and one can't deny that "sophisticated computerized capacities" may be the only answer. So, long before this century of radical change in the libraries is over, all the core books may end up, not in the center of the library, but on one or two videodiscs right in the student's own room. In fact it is said that all the volumes in the Library of Congress can be recorded on 100 optical videodiscs!

Well, here we are, two thirds of a century on from 1915, the time to which Mark Van Doren harked back in that first meeting of the Friends. We peer uncertainly with Patricia Battin into the next three decades which will round out that century of library history. Extraordinary to be able to survey, from the vantage point of the Friends' organization, one hundred years of the history of the Columbia library, even though the crystal ball in which Mrs. Battin visualizes the future is admittedly less clear than the lens through which Van Doren showed us the past. However, the crystal is clear enough to make us want to preserve books of value while we still have them, to exhibit them, and to write lovingly about them as we do in the pages of journals like the Columns.

"Lovingly"? Richard le Gallienne called books "those love-letters that pass from hand to hand of a thousand lovers." And
what collector hasn’t, like Leigh Hunt, “purred with quiet enjoyment as he hung over a book he loved”? Yet surprisingly few donors to the Columbia libraries have written anything in the *Columns* about their book collecting. Such reminiscences, if at all, find their way into print only through the piety of survivors or librarians. A welcome exception to this was the February 1981 *Columns* article by William B. Liebmann, in which he tells how he gathered the remarkable Benjamin Disraeli collection, now by his gift in the Columbia Library. His reminiscences have encouraged me in turn to relate some book-collecting anecdotes of my family and myself, thereby filling in the background of various
gifts to Columbia, and bringing in the origin of my own connection with the *Columns*.

To start with myself, and particularly the collection of early prints and maps already mentioned: that began with two mid-16th century maps by Sebastian Munster: one of the world and the other of the western hemisphere. I bought them in Paris, at a bookstall on the embankment of the Seine, in 1931. In contemporary color, which is rare, they testify to the good eye of that teenager who launched me on the map hunt which I still pursue with undiminished zest. But book collecting had actually started for me seven or eight years earlier, when I was about ten and living during vacations in the New York apartment of my grandfather, William Evarts Benjamin. I occupied a guest room—one not very suitable for a young boy since it was entirely furnished with original Louis XVI pieces. These I was told were very valuable and must be treated with great respect. However, I was encouraged to introduce something of my own into this period setting: books! notably a set of Edgar Allan Poe in blue half calf and one of Kipling's works bound in brilliant green calf, both purchased out of my Christmas savings, and both found, oddly enough, at Macy's. To these my grandfather added an 18th century five-volume set of Pope's *Homer*, bound in contemporary blind-tooled calf faded to a beautiful shade of old rose. When the term started at my boarding school in South Carolina the books were packed up in a closet, but when I returned for vacations I got them out and "furnished" my room with them.

You can see why books still mean "home" to me. I've never parted from the sets of Poe and Kipling, and the green leather is as bright after half a century as the day I bought it—a minor miracle wrought by whoever dyed the skin, since green leather notoriously fades.

The verses of Pope so impressed my ten year-old mind that some years later I started to put together a small collection of books and autographs from the Age of Queen Anne. In 1967–68
Dallas Pratt

I gave them to the Columbia Library—Robert Halsband described the Swift material and I wrote up the collection of letters from Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, respectively in two *Columns* articles.

Incidentally, not the least of the contributions of the *Columns* is to make the items in a donor's collection better known to other book lovers, thereby easing both the pain of parting from beloved books and the guilt which collectors come to feel when they've kept these old friends too long to themselves. After some thirty years I found that my love affair with Duchess Sarah and her letters had abated to the point where I could share them with the rest of the world. As a result, several of the letters received their first publication in my *Columns* article. But I couldn't give up Pope's *Homer*; it keeps the sets of Poe and Kipling company in my library at Castello San-Peyre. Since this is in France, my grandfather's Louis XVI chairs, which are in the next room, have, in a sense, come home again. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*....

My grandfather—Grandpa B., as he was known to his grandchildren—was an expansive not to say explosive character who peppered one with anecdotes from a mind richly stocked with Victorian/Edwardian memories. He had been an autograph dealer and publisher in his youth, and an art collector in his later years, so literary matters and collecting were favorite topics. To keep the peace, however, it was necessary to be a docile and attentive listener, so willy-nilly I received a liberal education in these subjects at an impressionable age. The walls of his New York apartment were hung with 18th century portraits by Reynolds, Gainsborough and their school; in his dressing-room he kept a few literary treasures—and on all these objects he loved to expatiate.

On a wall of the dressing-room, between two complimentary letters from Abraham Lincoln to my great grandfather, Park Benjamin, the *lares and penates* of this sanctum, was one of the original plaster casts taken from Benjamin Haydon's famous life mask of Keats—Grandpa B. had bought it at the estate sale of Rob-
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Ebert Louis Stevenson. When I started my own Keats collection in the 1930s, grandfather kept saying that someday he would give me the mask. For several years he tantalized me with this remark, but the gift never materialized. Finally when I was telling him about a Keats manuscript I had recently acquired from A. S. W. Rosenbach—31 lines from the first draft of “I stood tip-toe upon a little hill”—he said, “I really must give you that mask.” He went off on another tack but before he had finished the next sentence I marched into the dressing-room, lifted the mask from the wall, and with much feeling thanked him for the wonderful gift.

He didn’t explode, but he was surely taken aback by this act of bravado on the part of his habitually meek grandson. Still, as all collectors know, great acquisitions can often only be won by heroic measures (usually financial!).

I was still an undergraduate at Yale in 1935 when I bought the Keats ms. from the famous dealer Dr. Rosenbach. I visited him in his sumptuous offices just off Fifth Avenue, told him about my collection, and came away with the precious leaf, which includes lines with the first mention of Endymion in Keats’s poetry. At New Haven, I frequently had occasion to see a copy of the Gutenberg Bible on display in the University library. Ten years before, Mrs. Edward Harkness, prompted by Rosenbach, commissioned the latter to buy the Bible at auction, giving him a $75,000 bid. At the auction, Rosenbach thought he had it when the competition failed to top his bid of $83,000. Then, suddenly, Grandpa B., who was also present, started to bid. A fierce duel ensued. Rosenbach won, but was forced up to $106,000, unwillingly establishing a record (which lasted for years) for the sale of a book at auction. Grandfather long bemoaned the loss of the Bible which he had planned to give to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine as a memorial to my grandmother (she had died in 1924). However, Mrs. Harkness paid the full price, plus commission, without a murmur, and the University, not the Cathedral, got the prize.

Soon after I had bought the Keats ms. from him, Rosenbach sent
word that he would like to visit me at college. He obviously wanted to “place” this unknown young collector. He duly appeared, portly, jovial and rather awe-inspiring. Heedless of poor grandma, bereft of her memorial, I complimented him on securing the Bible for Yale. Then, hoping to impress him, I added, naively, “Of course you know W. E. Benjamin . . .,” but before I could say “my grandfather,” Rosy suddenly roared “Benjamin? BENJAMIN! Don’t speak to me of Benjamin!” So of course I didn’t, and the Doctor departed none the wiser about his young client. His biographers, Wolf and Fleming, wrote that it was “curious” that Dr. Rosenbach should have been willing to offer the Keats ms. to “Dallas Pratt of New Haven” when the Doctor was in the process of selling every Keats item in sight to Arthur Houghton. Indeed he did slip, as a dealer, because I never tried to buy another Keats item from him—nor, for that matter, from anyone else: it was no use competing with the omnivorous Arthur.

In 1971 I gave most of my Keats collection to the Keats-Shelley House in Rome, a museum with a magical atmosphere which I had known as a visitor and through its curator, Vera Cacciatore, for over forty years. It was the 150th anniversary of Keats’s death, and standing a few feet from the room in which he died, I handed to Vera, as a symbol of the gift, a silver reliquary containing part of a lock of Milton’s hair, the very lock which, when Keats had seen it at Leigh Hunt’s, inspired him to write his “Lines” on that subject.

Although the lion’s share of the collection went to Rome, I saved some forty items for Columbia, including a copy of Keats’s poems inscribed by Leigh Hunt. But for sentiment’s sake, the life mask, like Pope’s Homer, is still with me.

To return to family matters, my great grandfather, Park Benjamin, was a poet, lecturer and well-known New York editor in the mid-19th century. Since my grandfather was born in 1859, he hardly knew this father who died when he was five, but he was proud of the latter’s friendship with writers such as Walt Whit-
man, Irving, Longfellow and Oliver Wendell Holmes (Park Benjamin’s classmate at Harvard). Grandpa B. used to take myself and other relatives for drives in his “motor,” a stately but bumpy old Cunningham (the bumps “good for the liver,” said its owner).

Arriving at New York University’s Hall of Fame, we would slowly pass down the colonnade where stand the statues of the elect, grandfather discoursing on those known personally to his father or himself. Mark Twain, through his intimacy with the Rogers family—grandfather had married Anne, eldest child of H.
H. Rogers—had become a personal friend, so a particularly significant pause was made before his bust. "After we returned from a cruise together," announced Grandpa B., "Mark Twain declared that I was the life of the party. 'Benjamin,' he said, 'was brilliant, positively brilliant!'"

Sometime in the 1930s grandfather introduced me to Merle M. Hoover, a member of the English Department at Columbia. The interest of Hoover in the late Knickerbocker Period in New York coincided with that of W. E. Benjamin in his father's circle—with fruitful results for the University. Hoover wrote three books about Park Benjamin. He undoubtedly influenced my grandfather's decision to establish the Park Benjamin Collection at Columbia; in fact in 1940, on the afternoon before Grandpa B.'s death from a heart attack, the latter was discussing final plans with Hoover to complete the collection and to provide a place for it in the University library. The collection now includes Park Benjamin's own books as well as an assemblage of books, periodicals, manuscripts and pictures of literary New York during Benjamin's professional life, 1835–1864.

When the Friends of the Columbia Libraries rose, in Mary Hyde's phrase, "phoenix-like" to new life in the early 1950s, my uncle Henry Rogers Benjamin and myself were drafted to help. Although Grandpa B. was no longer with us, many of his rare books joined his father's at Columbia. Indulging in a final reminiscence, I can recall some of the impressive folios on lecterns and antique Florentine tables in the Renaissance-style library of my grandparents' country house at Ardsley-on-Hudson. At eight or nine years of age, this was actually my first introduction to a fine library and to rare books. More interesting than the folios to my sister Cynthia and myself were the books on the balcony, reached by a dark little stair—particularly a set of Dickens in somber 19th century cloth bindings with gilt insets of Mr. Pickwick, Oliver Twist and the rest.

We would visit this balcony, then flee to the verandah, my sister
with The Old Curiosity Shop, I with Dombey and Son, sharing between us bottles of Cantrell and Cochran ginger ale, a box of Lorna Doones, and much ice to counteract the languors of a Hudson Valley summer afternoon. On this verandah, overlooking a lawn gently sloping toward the river, we would read until the shadows of the big trees lengthened on the grass, and the voice of our governess called us back to the mundane ritual of tea with grandma: “Children! come in; you’re reading your eyes out. Grandma’s in the drawing room.”

Skipping forward to 1950 (and to a very different world!): when I agreed to become editor of the newborn Columns I was happy to find Merle Hoover, grandfather’s old friend, and his capable wife Elva, prepared to act as assistant editors. They saw the magazine through the first three years, and after Merle’s retirement in 1954 were succeeded by the Library’s factotum Charlie Mixer. Roland Baughman, Head of Special Collections, set the style for “Our Growing Collections” and wrote that section of the magazine until his sadly early death in 1967. Charlie, an ever-cheerful and unflappable collaborator, helped us for 18 years until his equally untimely death in 1972.

Kenneth Lohf, Baughman’s successor, has written “Our Growing Collections” with rare sensitivity for the past 14 years, has been assistant editor since Mixer’s death, and now takes over as editor in my place, with Rudolph Ellenbogen as assistant editor. The Columns could hardly be in better hands.

* * * *

Does it seem odd that an article which promised to sum up thirty years of the Columns has turned into an account of a family relationship with the library of Columbia? Well, I confess I had no thought of writing in such a personal vein when I began; my first idea was to summarize the subject matter of the magazine during those three decades. Instead, I seem to have stepped into a time-machine, and in trying to recall my own first introduction to a library I have slipped back not thirty years but nearly twice
that many until I find myself, as the reader has seen, in my grandfather’s library, aged eight or nine, discovering Dickens!

From that emerged later recollections of grandfather and myself as collectors, of the formation of the Park Benjamin Collection and its establishment at Columbia, and of still other links between Columbia and the intermediate generation of Benjamins: Henry Rogers Benjamin, Beatrice Benjamin Cartwright, Mary Benjamin Henderson and Mary Benjamin Rogers—this last group not touched on here because they have already been written about in several Columns articles.

It is not so much that the Benjamins have endowed the university with stupendous collections. It is rather that the university, and specifically the library, has collected them, as a family, and through three generations, more or less, has encouraged them to contribute, each in his or her own way. Doubtless the same has happened to other “Columbia families,” and if anything is needed to disprove the notion that the library is about to turn into an information factory bristling with computers and videotapes, it is the persistence and quality of this type of relationship. Librarians and faculty active in the Friends’ organization continue to make collectors feel that they are welcome and that the library will respect and cherish whatever they entrust to it. I think I may claim that the Columns has also helped here. But the best proof of the university’s good faith is that in spite of the many other needs of the libraries, it has recently authorized Kenneth Lohf to seek support for the long deferred reconstruction of the Rare Book and Manuscript Division in Butler Library, with space at the center for exhibitions and for commemoration of the treasures which have come to Columbia through the generosity of its friends.

With the completion of this project, already making progress as a result of Ken Lohf’s persuasive enthusiasm, the rarest of the great books which Mark Van Doren thought of as transcending time will at last be back where they belong, in the “living center of the libraries.”
In Dubin's Lives, Bernard Malamud creates a fictional hero who is a biographer. Early in the novel he shows us Dubin sitting at his desk in his study carefully forging a paragraph out of exquisitely chosen words and sentences. "By mid-afternoon he had done two pages," writes Malamud.

When I read this description, I said to myself, that's certainly not how I do it. It may be what the novelist does, but I don't think biographies are written that way. At least mine are not. In the first place, the biographer, unlike the novelist, does not create a character out of his head or an imaginary world. Instead, his task is to handle and manipulate the vast quantity of information he has gathered in the form of letters, anecdotes and interviews from dozens of different sources. In the end, he may sit down at a desk and write a paragraph with exquisite care. But before he reaches that point, he has to do an enormous amount of drudge work.

The first task is to choose the subject. That might seem to go without saying, but some writers produce so many biographies they cannot possibly be bothered by the scruples that trouble me in choosing a subject. For me, it is the most difficult part of all. Oscar Wilde said that great men tend to have many disciples and that Judas is the biographer. This worries me. I don't want to be Judas and I don't enjoy destructive criticism. I think it is a waste of my time and generally useless to others.

Negative biographies were invented to correct an excess. The multi-volumed Life and Letters of the nineteenth century tended to be fulsomely eulogistic. The subject is a dutiful son, a loving husband, a model parent and a person of transcendent accomplishment. Lytton Strachey is probably the most famous enemy of books of this kind. He poked fun at the tradition by dismissing three Victorian worthies in a single short volume. Strachey did
some good, but he also spawned a school of professional debunkers. Arthur Balfour said that biographies should be written by the subject’s most “acute enemy.” But why? Who needs more enemies than he already has? Writers have enough trouble without “acute enemies” sharpening their knives as biographers.

So far I have been a literary biographer. My first requirement in choosing the people I write about is to like the work well enough to write about it enthusiastically and convincingly. One of the main functions of a literary biographer is to call attention to the work of the author under consideration. I hope, when I write a biography of a writer, that readers will go to the library or, better yet, the book store, and read the books written by this writer. I write biographies because I want to share my enthusiasm for the work of certain authors.

Another consideration is to choose people who need a little help on the side, the help that a biography can give. Some writers, like Hemingway, Joyce and Faulkner, have been so written about, in critical and biographical studies, that there is surely no point in my writing anything more about them. They don’t need me, and I can’t imagine I’ll have anything new to say about them. So I take people whose reputations are slightly marginal. (I don’t do this consciously, but it has turned out that way.) Ford Madox Ford, Raymond Chandler and John O’Hara are all writers with substantial followings and many enthusiastic champions, but when I wrote about them, none of them was automatically accepted into the highest literary rank. Ford was thought inferior to Joseph Conrad; O’Hara was described rather unkindly by Faulkner as a “Rutgers Fitzgerald,” and Chandler was after all only a writer of detective stories. I set out to change people’s minds about these things.

In addition, it is important for me to have some real feeling for the subject as a human being. There must be some link in experience or heritage that will help me understand him and sympathise with him. I’ve often wondered whether I could write about a
woman writer as convincing as about a man, or about a writer whose culture and religion was completely different from mine. Caroline Gordon and Katherine Anne Porter told me they doubted I could really understand Ford because I was not a practicing Roman Catholic. But there was enough Roman Catholicism in my background to let me understand something. What
made me feel at home with Ford were my own split feelings about England and America. I was then living equally in both countries as Ford had done, and I could understand the tensions he felt about his own country and America. As for Chandler, I wrote that book after living in California for five years. In fact, I originally read Chandler in the hope of figuring out what California was all about. I felt the same sort of alienation there that he felt living in Los Angeles after being a schoolboy in England. Then there was the Irishness that linked us. With John O'Hara that element was even stronger. Also, I grew up in a small Massachusetts city very like O'Hara's Pottsville, Pennsylvania, so I understood what he was writing about, and I felt the same claustrophobia he experienced in provincial life. These personal links aren't essential, but they help.

Psychologically, they are certainly helpful, because as a biographer you have to get up every day and sit down at your desk and consider some aspect of the life of a Ford or an O'Hara or a Chandler. There are days when you may feel you'd prefer to be left alone. The subject's character can become obsessive. You begin to think like him. You begin to crack his jokes. You walk down the street and find yourself passing houses where your subject lived. You become a slave of your character in quite unexpected ways. Unless you have a deep admiration for his work and a sympathetic understanding of his character, you may begin to hate this person. If that happens, and you continue to write, you will produce a bad biography. Unfortunately, there are many books—books which began in love, but which, like some marriages, turned into bitterness and hatred. The biographer becomes a scold; he goes out of his way to quote derogatory remarks about his subject. He pretends he's being an objective scholar, but really he's running a vendetta. The process is not always easy to spot. It only gradually becomes apparent. But by then the biographer is half-way through the book and has spent his advance. He ought to tear up what he has written and throw it away. I did that twice
and don't regret it for a moment. The world has been spared two bad books and I'm saner than I would otherwise be.

For me, another motive in choosing a subject is to learn something I know nothing about. I knew nothing about detective stories or about Hollywood before writing my biography of Raymond Chandler. It was fun to find out about them, but when people suggested I go on and do biographies of other detective story writers, I refused. That would be boring, and the boredom would show up in the writing.

Once the subject is chosen, the necessary permissions secured and the contract signed, the first thing is to read everything the subject wrote and everything that other people wrote about him or her. This can take time, especially if, like Ford, your subject wrote 75 books and was an energetic journalist and correspondent as well. You have to find out which libraries have kept papers, what private collections exist. You have to read everything and take careful notes.

Then you try to meet as many people as possible who know the subject, usually beginning with the family. If your subject is John O'Hara, you'll find yourself talking to an astonishing range of people, such as Charles Addams, Lauren Bacall, David Brown, Niven Busch, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Nancy Hale, Governor Hughes of New Jersey, William Maxwell, Louis Nizer, S. J. Perelman, Richard Rodgers, Budd Schulberg, Isabel Wilder. Others may give you information by letter or telephone. It is important to be open and imaginative. Seemingly unimportant people can provide vital information. I learned more about John O'Hara from his housekeeper and from his daughter's companion than I did from many more famous individuals.

It is also necessary to visit the places where your subject lived. I take photographs, buy guide books and maps and make detailed notes about the landscape as well as about special neighborhoods.

You also have to read a great deal about the special sort of writing your subject engaged in. For Chandler, I had to learn about
the early days of *Black Mask* and other pulp magazines, and I had to read lots of detective stories. For O'Hara, I had to learn about New York in the 1920s, the speakeasies, life on newspapers, "21" and *The New Yorker*. All this and much more is necessary to place your subject in the world he lived in.

Inevitably, you find yourself becoming a detective. I was (or imagined I was) as thorough and imaginative as Philip Marlowe as I tracked down Raymond Chandler's life in California. There were a number of special difficulties because Chandler didn't start to write until he was 45 years old. I had to find out what he did before that. It was difficult, because people don't keep records or save letters from businessmen, and that is what Chandler was. All I knew was that he worked for various oil companies in Los Angeles.
Sometimes, you'll be lucky. One Saturday noon in Los Angeles, I returned from the UCLA library where Chandler's papers are kept. I had done all I had to do there and was planning to leave the city. But when I got back to the hotel, I realized I'd left my briefcase behind. I phoned the library and they said, sorry, the rare book room is locked, and it's like a bank vault. Nobody can get in until Monday morning. I was faced with a blank weekend. Fortunately at the hotel I had kept a few notes taken in the Los Angeles public library. I took these out and found a reference to the extinct oil companies where Chandler had worked, with a couple of names jotted down. I reached for the phone book to look up the names. To my astonishment, one of them was there. I rang immediately, explained who I was and said, "Did you ever know a man called Raymond Chandler?"


So I was off. I visited the man that very day. He told me about others whom I also visited and who gave me a great deal of useful information, including photographs of Chandler standing beside an oil rig. The moral is obvious. Had I not left my briefcase in the library, I probably would never have got this information.

The biographer often encounters contradictory reports about his subject. Privately, he must question everyone's reliability. Once John O'Hara was writing an article about his friend, Robert Benchley. He was wondering whether Benchley really made a wisecrack that was attributed to him. Coming in out of the rain, Benchley was supposed to have said, "Get me out of these wet clothes and into a dry martini." Hearing contradictory versions, O'Hara concluded, "There is no such thing as a reliable source." I had a similar problem. Who said that O'Hara was a "master of the fancied slight"? Was it Bennett Cerf or Joel Sayre or Richard Watts? Or someone else? The only safeguard is to consult as many people as possible and after that, be sensible. The biographer's job is to write as fair and balanced an account as he can.

After six months, or a year, or a year and a half, all the informa-
tion necessary for the biography should be gathered. It will be in different forms, depending on the subject and the kind of life he led. There will be folders filled with letters or photocopies of letters, and folders full of reviews, of articles written by or about the subject, of material about where the subject lived, and so on. There will be notebooks containing the transcripts or summaries of interviews.

As it is, this material is useless and has to be brought under control. Without a system, it would take hours, perhaps days, to find the simplest piece of information. The system that I and most biographers use is to make a file card for every piece of information. I go through all the notebooks, the letters, the photocopies of reviews, the articles and interviews and make a card for every item of importance. In shorthand form I put down the information and its source—"Notebook 11, page 37, item 5" or "Letter File A, item 14."

It is immensely tedious to catalogue the notes. It takes weeks to
Writing Biographies

complete the job. The table is covered with piles of cards that have to be separated into categories. Then they are broken down under separate headings and finally put in shoe boxes where they will be easily accessible. They are the card catalogue to the miniature library of the biographer’s research material.

At last the time has come to start. I don’t sit like Malamud’s character looking for a “compelling idea” with which to begin. I just begin. By now I have also made a chronology of the subject’s life, year by year, and if possible month by month or even week by week. This constitutes the first structure for the book. My main intention is to get the information that is now on cards or in files down on paper. I don’t much fuss about style, although in the O’Hara book I tried to shape the material more than I did when writing the Ford and Chandler books. Experience helps. I try to get the facts down in as clear a narrative as I can. I generally do not think of chapter structure ahead of time. I let the material itself dictate that. This phase of the work takes about ten months.

When it’s complete, I have a bulky, ill-formed typescript, covered with pencilled notations. This first draft will be overlong. It will almost certainly be repetitious and contain boring passages. What I have done so far is hardly a book: it is primarily a transferrel to typescript of the material I have collected.

At this point I usually go away and do something else. After some time has passed, I take out what I’ve written and read it through quickly, noting obvious errors and wrong emphasis, and making notes for new chapter breaks. If possible, I then find a place where I can work without interruption and in peace. The Chandler and O’Hara books were both written in isolated houses in Tuscany where the telephone did not ring because there was no telephone, and where I had nothing else to do but write the book.

This phase of the job is analoguous to what the translator does when he has written a rough draft from the original French or Italian text. He has got it all down, but it is not in English. His
task, and mine as a biographer, is to turn this messy draft into something that is worth reading. Although I have my notes and documents with me, I don't refer to them much any more. What happens now is not merely a matter of editing, of correcting an existing text. It is a complete rewriting. I write the book as though I were writing a novel. I think of the subject as a character in a drama. I am conscious of having to provide a setting, a world for him to live in. I shape the material to make the story as vivid as possible. I cut extraneous matter and tighten the narrative as much as I can. I work quoted material such as letters into the narrative rather than set them apart by themselves because I want them to be a part of the flow of the story. I continually try to reduce the bulk of the book. I do not believe in inflated 800-page biographies that give you more than you need to know. I think it can all be done in about 300 pages.

Writing this draft takes about six or seven weeks, working all day long. This is very fast writing, but it allows me to see the book as a whole and the relationship of the various parts. It is hard work, but it is also exhilarating. A definite rhythm is established which helps the flow of the prose. It is absorbing, even consuming work, but it creates an intensity that I believe gives life to the final product. It is at this point that Dubin's remark in Malamud's novel has its double-edged effect. "All biography is ultimately fiction," he says, and it is a cry both of triumph and failure.

I don't necessarily recommend this method and don't think I could continue it for more than a couple of months at a stretch. But it has been forced on me since I have had to write against a deadline.

Back in New York, the book is read by my agent and publisher, and suggestions are made for improvement. There is always much that needs to be done. Sometimes I am irritated by an editor's suggestion, but at bottom I am grateful for the care and dedication of editors and copy editors. They are fresh sets of eyes that can see what I have failed to see. They are intelligences which help me from making a fool of myself in public.
Writing Biographies

Writing biographies is a curious occupation. As you go on, especially in the last phase of the writing, you begin to be aware that you are not really writing a biography, you are just writing. The medium happens to be biography, but it is also a personal statement. Your words inevitably reflect attitudes, opinions, values. A scholarly conscientiousness prevents you from turning the biography into fiction, but the vigor of the writing (if there is any vigor) will inevitably be the product of a sensibility and an energy that has shaped the work so that it is more than a mere chronicle of a man’s life. I don’t like to stress this side of the affair, because it is a mysterious element and probably shouldn’t be much discussed. But I also think it is the most important side of the process.
Columbia's Eccentric Hand

COLEMAN O. PARSONS

SOME years ago I started contrasting real and fictional misers. Then, when the Collyer brothers were found in their Harlem house, booby-trapped and starved to death under tons of precious trash, memorabilia from corks to pianos long out of tune, I was questioned by reporters—an eccentric professor in pursuit of eccentrics. All this caught the sharp eye of the Curator of Columbiana, the late Milton Halsey Thomas, who wrote me on July 2, 1947, about Oliver Kane (later King) Hand of the class of '83:

Poor Ollie came from a very good family, and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa at college. He seems to have contracted some kind of disease in the Spanish-American War which affected his brain, and he was a little queer for the rest of his life. . . . Most of the time he was a hermit, living in what approached squalor in a walk-up apartment on [526 West] 122 Street. . . . He never was absent from any Columbia dinner or celebration. He adored the memory of Dean Van Amringe and always genuflected when he passed a statue or portrait of the Dean. He was the one man who dared to heckle President Butler and frequently corrected him in public addresses, or interspersed 'Amen', 'Bless his heart' or other appropriate remarks. . . . After his death, I visited his apartment, and found conditions approaching the Collyer house. . . . There were several boxes of family correspondence, which we saved. . . .

It is through these countless oddments that a family history can now be traced. Among the immediate forebears of Ollie's father, Thomas Jennings Hand, was the landscape and portrait painter, Moses Hand, who sank to house-painting for a living. Of his children two married, and three lived a total of 202 years without union or known offspring. As they drifted toward celibacy, the American Hands clung to their living and to their dead. More dis-
tnguished was the King-Kane connection. Although Ollie's mother Ellen was the daughter of James King, Chancellor of the University of the State of New York, she "was wholly absorbed by the Kane side of the family, and never cared anything concerning the King branch." The Kanes had been Tories during the Revolution and then prosperous merchants. With its pillared gateway, its fenced-in aristocratic look, Kane Walk was long the finest residence in Albany. After it passed out of the family, Kane Walk was the Executive Mansion of several governors, being torn down in 1864.

Ellen's grandmother Kane bought Woodlawn near Sing Sing (now Ossining), planted Norway spruce, and built the Stone House on acres that sloped down to the Hudson. Measuring 33 by 44 feet the three-storied house had ample chambers with mullioned windows and twelve foot ceilings, a piazza, and a green room. And it was to Woodlawn in 1861, at a rental of a thousand a year, that Ellen brought her husband after the rootlessness of Baltimore and New York.

The pair had been joined on November 9, 1858, a thirty-four year old commission merchant and a spinster aged twenty-nine, five feet three, small-boned, blue eyed, delicate featured, with a deliciously curved mouth. She was gently dominant, just the kind of woman a husband—and sons—would worship and obey as "Little Mamma." The family grew uncertainly: "Little Sybsie" or "Toadkins," "a more perfect child God never made" who died in her tenth month; "Batu," everyone's pet whose death drove his grieved aunt Sybil to France to recover; Oliver King Hand or "Smallkin . . . a very creditable specimen" who weighed in at ten pounds on his birth, March 5, 1863; Thomas Jennings Hand Jr., born two years later; and James Hand, the only offspring to marry, though childless. As the full stomach became a safeguard against early mortality, complacent Ollie was stuffed until he grew "a real piggy-wiggy of jolly health," sluggish of body and solemnly Buddha-like in photographs. Waggish, self-assured Tom
called his older brother "the Hermit." And in fact by the age of ten Ollie had taken on the lean, anchoritic look which he never after lost.

The Hands employed a coachman, Irish servants whose duties included polishing 332 taxable ounces of silver, and outside help who split logs and tended a prize herd of Jersey cattle. After the Stone House burned, the family squeezed into a cottage until the big place was rebuilt. The fullness of life crested a year after Ollie's birth, when his father's income reached seven thousand dollars. The general commission and shipping business launched by Oliver Kane King during the Civil War took in Thomas Hand, twelve years his brother-in-law's senior, as the uncapitalized junior partner at one-third the profits. But the firm collapsed in 1869, and the junior partner took three years to achieve a settlement of eleven cents on the dollar.

The panic of 1873 and other setbacks so depressed the sensitive and cultivated Micawber, Thomas Hand, that he began complaining about "the odds that misfortune has massed against me": "Dear me! what a trial it is to one's piety and pride to be so poor!" When
he sensed disaster ahead, he began erecting family bulwarks. Encouraging Ollie to be a man he sent him at fourteen to deliver twenty Jersey cattle to a farm south of Nashville. Even though Ollie was praised in *The Country Gentleman* for keeping his expenses down to $3.25, he was obviously more scrupulous than resourceful and was soon replaced by his younger brother Tom. This pleased his mother, a student of Latin, history, and modern languages, and a believer in salvation through education.

Backed by a Columbia B.A. degree Ollie ventured west where his uncle Oliver secured him the post of storekeeper in the Denver, Utah and Pacific Railroad. Reliable as ever, he received small raises, avoided bad company, attended St. John’s Episcopalian Cathedral, joined the gentlemanly Denver Athletic Club, and developed both his grip and a “splendid pair of lungs.” His father’s letters were stored with advice, and his mother’s were loverlike in endearments and rounded o’s for kisses. But she brooded (“Mamma’s anxiety is terrible”) until she came all the way to Denver, at which time she and her Ollie were “wild with joy.” As her idealized image was rooted in Ollie’s heart, advice about meeting “nice girls” fell on stubborn ears.

Then the younger son Tom (“Bowskie” or “Bowie” to his folk), a seeker after fortune, obtained a ranch at Antler’s, next to his eupeptic Uncle Oliver’s place. While dreaming of a retreat for the family, Tom contracted mountain fever, which he assured his parents in a shaky hand was nothing more than the tenderfoot’s curse of typhoid “somewhat modified by altitude.” After a relapse Tom was driven to the medical resources of Glenwood Springs, where he died on December 13, 1887. His father wrote Ollie, “I lay silently weeping after midnight last night. Oh, my Son! my Son!”

Ellen found Ollie’s growing up and no longer “needing a mother’s care” hard to take. She wrote the young man, “Oh my darling, what is worth living for but family affection?” Inexorably the circle kept closing until she was committed to Bloomingdale
Hand (standing, second from left) with Company H of the First Colorado Volunteers at an outpost near Manila.
Asylum where she died in 1890, as did her sister Sybil the following year, of asthenia and senile dementia, their lives closing as they had begun with baby talk and little speeches of love. And so the tender matriarchy came to an end.

Out of a welter of deaths, decaying faculties, job hunting in hard times, changeably jocose and carping letters from his father, Ollie emerged to face futility. Never at peace except under discipline, he was at loose ends without his parents, his professors at Columbia and his bosses in Colorado. Then came the Spanish-American War, a lark in which he would regain his self-esteem among male comrades. All this despite his feeling that the war had been criminally pursued after the enemy backed down. So, on May 10, 1898, fifteen days after the declaration of war, Oliver Hand enlisted for two years in Company H of the First Colorado Volunteers: age 35, height five feet nine inches, weight 132 pounds, light hair and complexion, blue eyes, a miner by occupation. Less reassuring was a photograph of Ollie on outpost duty near Manila. With his hesitant beard, the oldest private of the company looked like a mad prospector or a half-starved bandit.

Returning from the Philippines to Central City, his severe attack of tropical dysentery kept him on the pension list until he proudly refused the disability checks. He was photographed at that time with a tranced expression, a shrunken body, and burning eyes. The Philippines, he confessed, had left him a total wreck.

Before he reached this anticlimax, he had enjoyed the war, feeling from the start his usual loyalty to the group, “a real nice crowd.” With them he exercised unusual tact: “I am careful not to parade my knowledge on any matter, if it happens to exceed the next man’s.” He was not frightened by bullets whistling around his head “as thick as bees,” and the taking of Manila was a “soft snap.” His Pacific adventures aroused admiration, as in the response of his classmate Will Jackson, then Professor of Indo-Iranian Languages at Columbia, who had read the soldier’s Manila letter to Professor Pupin:
How proud I'd be to take you in your regimentals and show you about our grand buildings at Morningside Heights and then have you give my class a lecture on the old days of Columbia and the sons of Alma Mater in Uncle Sam's service. . . . I'll tell you Oliver you're a worthy and distinguished member of Eighty Three.

The effects of tropical disease are evident in this portrait taken in 1899 shortly after Hand's return from the Philippines.

In free time Ollie thought much of his father with a maturing protective love. Months passed before the scrawny veteran, shaken by a febrile joyousness, appeared on the threshold of the Brooklyn flat newly occupied by Mr. Papa and his youngest son Jim. The
older men’s annoyance with the spendthrift’s view of money ended when Jim left for Colon as assistant to the General Superintendent of the Panama Railroad Company. Left together night after night, Ollie listened to Mr. Papa’s stories of dwindling prosperity: the Seaman and the Seaman’s Bride, and the grounding-burning-sinking of a third clipper near Norfolk; tobacco and cotton brokerage; cattle breeding and the moving of the Jersey herd to Long Island; and secretarial jobs for fertilizing companies, farm associations, the Union and other clubs—anything finally that offered. Such was the lapse into a quagmire of debt of one whom a bank president had called “a gentleman of unquestioned integrity, morality, business capacity, caution, promptness and reliability.”

It was on Mr. Papa that Ollie modeled himself, shaping his beard, even standing like him, slightly off-balance from the waist up. Both men shared a temperamental juvenility. On his sixtieth birthday the elder Hand wrote, “I don’t mean to grow old,” and on his seventieth Ollie himself was to boast that he could still hike his twenty miles as easily as at fifty. The elder Hand’s translation of a French treatise on milch cows brought in royalties for forty-two years, and the son’s letters to The Sun, The World and The Times were readily printed. One of these castigated an ignoramus for using the plural octopi, which “hasn’t a leg to stand on.” Ollie made over his salary checks to Mr. Papa and was then free to draw on the paternal bank, with any overdraft for personal expenses in the books as a loan. The scrupulous partnership worked so well that the two men moved into better quarters, subscribed to magazines other than The Country Gentleman and revived abandoned charities. Mr. Papa again mixed his Christmas punch.

When Nature began asserting her claims, Mr. Papa’s strength failed and he died on January 9, 1908, at the age of eighty-three. Condolences stressed his idealism, courtesy, honesty, his “integrity of character and sweetness of disposition,” that of a “most intelligent man” with a “faithful never-changing love—that the
whole world can *not* replace.” At the age of forty-five, Ollie the orphan opened his first checking account and began reducing a heap of debts, some of them dating back to the 1870s. There were former landlords or their heirs, various suppliers, the Columbia Grammar School for Jim’s tuition. More than eighteen years passed before the last blot was expunged from the family scutcheon. Hundreds of dollars went into the upkeep of burial places, the purchase of Italian marble headstones, and the restoration of “the King plot . . . to its former glory.”

His income was the monthly paycheck as he rose from clerk in the City Finance Department to accountant, from $87.50 a month in 1902 to $260 in 1934, then dropping to a pension of $160.62. Complaining of political favoritism in promotions, Ollie never won a supervisory post. Morose and resentful, he bent over his corner desk in the Municipal Building, hardly spoke to anybody, talked to himself instead. His calculations were so painstaking that they were sometimes the last submitted. Malignant juniors taunted him as “Squeaky Voice” and circulated a plea for the relief of bastards left by American soldiers in the Philippines. Their butt kept on wearing the same shabby, old-fashioned clothes for years until his summer straw turned black with age. Although he went out at lunch time, he was never seen packing a bag or entering a restaurant.

He had no friends at work until he met another accountant, Martin Fenton, a Columbia man. Ollie gratefully accepted invitations to his new friend’s apartment on Riverside Drive, arriving at six-thirty quaintly formal in striped trousers, Prince Albert coat, and an everyday felt hat punched out to resemble a derby. With Mrs. Fenton he assumed a Victorian courtliness, bowing ceremoniously, quoting older and younger Romantics, Longfellow, and Shakespeare. He seldom mentioned art, music, or science, and was clever with words, rarely humorous, often puritanical, although he once flippantly boasted that he may have left offspring out Denver way.
As a weekend guest Ollie went each year in Fenton’s car to a summer cottage at Cutchogue on eastern Long Island. When first shown his bedroom, supplied by the maid with towels and a fresh bar of soap, the old man stared at the bed with a rapt expression, “Ah, sheets!” Aglow with well-being, he ate copiously, avoiding only sweet butter with which his body had been over-charged as a boy. During an after-dinner walk he rhapsodized over woods, sky and sunset. Next day he was inspired by a rainbow to spread his arms in pantheistic embrace as he quoted Wordsworth. With Martin he played the game of etymology, shadowing words from Greek and Latin to French, Spanish, or German.

Ollie had always been a solitary achiever, as when he slithered through space on the rings and flying trapezes of the Columbia gym or hiked each year from Yonkers to Tarrytown and back again on one day. So, too, at the Fentons’ he rowed out to Nassau Point on Great Peconic Bay—alone. Another time he waded into the water and, some fabulous goal beckoning him, paddled away from the beach. When he changed in the bathhouse he was overheard talking to himself, “There now, told you I could do it! Told you I could make it!” Sunday he posed for a photograph in a loose cotton bathing suit. His whimsical, sensitive face was that of a leprechaun, with a sparse, pointed, reddish-gray beard. His body was rather jaunty, with arms crooked and hands fitted into the small of his back. Except for the knots of bone at knee and shoulder and veins that were more sinewy than dwindled muscles, the old man’s frame was more shadow than substance.

The family records seem to overflow their boxes and I must exercise restraint. We see Ollie starting the day with a bowl of oatmeal and ending it at the bar of the Columbia University Club with his own homemade brandy and a Liberty Bell badge demanding REPEAL. We see him doing his own painting, plumbing, and repairs in order to foil snooping workmen; guarding the family heirlooms, the most precious being his mother’s wedding veil; making scores of donations, as to the fiftieth anniversary fund of
the Class of '83 ("You are one of the most loyal sons of Columbia," wrote the treasurer); as well as attending St. Paul's Chapel and tutoring Columbia students in weak subjects. And we see him envying and tyrannizing over his brother James King Hand when

he married Florence R. Cary and moved into a spacious apartment in the Dakota, where Ollie fondled an array of family relics, showed no gratitude to Jim or Florence, and refused aid when his brother was dying of cancer.

When Ollie's turn came, the police forced entry into apartment
5 D and came on a seventy-five pound effigy that had frozen on January 30, 1941, in the draft from open windows. Nearby was his mother and father’s dust veiled, four-pillared black walnut nuptial bed. Six members of the Early Eighties Club were honorary pallbearers, and Sleepy Hollow Cemetery was the destination. Ollie’s parents were memorialized in a bequest to Columbia of about ten thousand dollars. Otherwise, the family’s course was run.

About the dead there is seldom agreement. Jim’s widow called Ollie “the stingiest, meanest man you could possibly know”—probably insane at that. Martin Fenton thought him one of the kindest, most considerate men alive. To hundreds of Columbia men he was the eccentric who never failed in his reverence for Alma Mater.
Our Growing Collections

KENNETH A. LOHF

American Bureau for Medical Aid to China gift. The American Bureau for Medical Aid to China has established a collection of its papers with an initial gift of approximately 45,000 pieces of correspondence, memoranda, reports, minutes, membership and financial records, photographs, posters and printed materials. The papers document the work of the Bureau, which was founded in 1937 to aid Chinese medical and public health services by providing fellowship programs for faculty members and technical assistance in the form of books, laboratory equipment and other educational materials. Of particular interest in the collection are the approximately 6,000 photographs of Chinese medical colleges, hospitals, laboratories and personnel.

Anshen gift. An important group of more than 6,300 letters has been presented by Dr. Ruth Nanda Anshen for addition to the collection of her literary papers which she established in 1977. The correspondence from leading contemporary writers, philosophers and scientists relates primarily to books being written or planned for the several series of publications edited by Dr. Anshen. Included are lengthy files of correspondence with James B. Conant, E. M. Forster, Erich Fromm, Paul Goodman, Karl Jaspers, Hans Küng, Marshall McLuhan, André Malraux, Jacques Maritain, Margaret Mead, Sir Herbert Read, Jean-Paul Sartre, Paul Tillich and Harold C. Urey.

Auerbach gift. An attractive autograph manuscript in French on geometry has been donated by Mr. Bart Auerbach. Dating from the eighteenth century and owned at the time by one Ludovic Lemaire, the text, comprising a course of instruction in geometry, is neatly written in ink on 160 pp. and is illustrated with diagrams throughout, several in color.
Brown gift. The 70th birthday edition of Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass with Sands at Seventy & A Backward Glance O’er Travel’d Roads* has been presented by Mr. Walston S. Brown. Published in Philadelphia in 1889 in an edition of three hundred copies, the work is autographed by the poet on the title page and includes an original frontispiece photograph of Whitman. The copy presented by Mr. Brown is also inscribed by Whitman’s friend and literary executor, Horace L. Traubel, to Maud Ingersoll.


Coggeshall gift. A group of more than four hundred manuscripts, letters and documents pertaining to the career of Frances Perkins has been donated by her daughter Susanna Coggeshall for addition to the Perkins Papers. Included are drafts and notes for speeches, articles and reports; memoranda of talks with President Harry S. Truman; and personal records, letters and clippings dating from the 1930s to the 1960s.

Fleming gift. A fifteenth century Latin manuscript on vellum, *Homiliae Sancti Effreminii*, has been presented by Mr. John F. Fleming. Consisting of 67 leaves, the text is written in black and red Gothic script with an illuminated capital at the beginning and other initial letters in colors throughout. Only one other manuscript in America, that at the Newberry Library in Chicago, is recorded of the *Homiliae* of Saint Ephraim the Syrian. Considered the most influential of all Syriac authors, he lived in Mesopotamia during the 4th century, and his fame as a poet, commentator, preacher and defender of orthodoxy spread throughout all branches of the Christian Church.
Mr. Jonathan Hill has presented the Basilisk Press edition of Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, printed in 1979 and illustrated with more than seventy wood engravings by Edward Gordon Craig, the English author and stage designer. The illustrations, which include initials, vignettes and scenes reminiscent of his theatrical designs, were begun in 1924, and though never published until their appearance in the Basilisk Press edition, were worked on by Craig for thirty-eight years. The copy donated by Mr. Hill, one of 470 bound in blue morocco and sailcloth, includes an original print on Japan paper pulled by Craig during the 1930s, depicting Crusoe reading the Bible in his cave.

*Mrs.* Manuel Komroff has presented an attractive watercolor portrait, done by Elinor M. Barnard in 1925, of Eugene O’Neill’s son, Shane, who was six years old at the time.

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Kraus. The folio volumes, all in fine state, are particularly
attractive for their pictorial front covers and for their numerous illustrations, many of which are in color. The French writer’s best known quasi-scientific romances are represented in the gift, including *Cinq Semaines en Ballon, De la Terre à la Lune, L’Île Mystérieuse, Michel Strogoff* and *Le Tour du Monde en Quatre-Vingt Jours*.


*Ray gift.* One of the most esteemed French illustrated books of the eighteenth century and among the most important engraved books in the history of printing has been presented by Mr. Gordon N. Ray (LL.D., 1969): Benjamin de Laborde, *Choix de Chansons Mises en Musique*, published in Paris by de Lormel, 1773, four volumes bound in two in full green morocco. Although the illustrations are the work of a number of artists, those by Jean Michel Moreau, called Moreau le jeune, in the first volume are of historical importance for the truth with which they reflect the atmosphere of the Dauphine and her Court. Mr. Ray also donated 323 autograph letters and manuscripts of minor English writers and public figures of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including Michael Arlen, Arnold Bennett, Hall Caine, Dinah M. Craik, Jean Ingelow, Eliza Lynn Linton, Justin McCarthy,
Laissez travailer vos mères,
Voici l'enfant de jouer.

Engraving by Moreau le jeune in Benjamin de Laborde's *Choix de Chansons Mises en Musique* (Ray gift)
George Augustus Sala, C. P. Snow, Martin Tupper and Charlotte Yonge.

**Saffron gift.** Dr. Morris H. Saffron (A.B. 1925; A.M., 1949; Ph.D., 1968) has presented a collection of twenty editions of Sir Thomas Browne’s first published work, *Religio Medici*, in which the seventeenth century English physician and scholar attempted to reconcile his beliefs in science and religion. Written about 1635, the work was first printed without his sanction in 1642 and reissued with his approval in 1643. Dr. Saffron’s gift contains the copy of the rare first authorized edition that had once belonged to the dramatist and poet John Drinkwater, whose autograph appears on the title-page, along with a long note regarding the different editions of the work. The gift includes fine copies of eleven other English editions dated from 1659 to 1909, as well as eight seventeenth century editions in Latin and French.

**Schang gift.** Mr. Frederick C. Schang (B.Litt., 1915) has added a group of sixteen visiting cards to the collection which he established in 1977. Among them are attractive and interesting cards of Jo Davidson, Guglielmo Marconi, Jules Massenet, Odilon Redon, Friedrich Smetana and other artists, writers and public figures.

**Schuster family gift.** The daughters of the late Mrs. M. Lincoln Schuster, Mrs. Ephraim London, Mrs. Rowland Mindlin and Mrs. Walter Eytan, have presented a collection of more than thirty thousand papers relating to M. Lincoln Schuster (B.Litt., 1917) and the publishing firm, Simon & Schuster, which he founded in 1924 with his partner Richard Simon (A.B., 1920). Included in this important gift are: the lengthy file of letters written by Simon to Schuster from 1921 to 1953, regarding all aspects of the publishing firm; author and subject files of notes and clippings; advertising notebooks; files relating to the books written and edited by Schuster, among them The Inner Sanctum Library of Basic Books; galley and page proofs of selected books published by Simon and Schuster; photographs and memorabilia; and books inscribed to
Mr. and Mrs. Schuster. The correspondence files contain significant literary letters from many Simon and Schuster authors, including Max Beerbohm, Will and Ariel Durant, Max Eastman, Nikos Kazantzakis, Groucho Marx, H. L. Mencken, Bertrand Russell and Louis Untermeyer. In addition, there are individual letters and manuscripts by Gertrude Atherton, Bernard Berenson, Charles Chaplin, Theodore Dreiser, Edna Ferber, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Fannie Hurst, Henry Miller, George Santayana, Edith Sitwell, Upton Sinclair, Alice B. Toklas, Hugh Walpole, Hendrik Willem Van Loon and numerous friends of the Schusters in the literary, theatrical, publishing and political worlds.

Thorndike gift. Dr. Richard L. Thorndike (A.M., 1932; Ph.D., 1935), professor emeritus at Teachers College, has donated seventy-six volumes of diaries kept by his uncle, the late Professor
Our Growing Collections

Lynn Thorndike (A.M., 1904; Ph.D., 1905), from 1902 until 1963. The distinguished historian of science recorded his daily reading, the progress of research and writing, European travels, contacts with scholars and librarians and other personal matters.

Winter estate gift. The papers, correspondence and photographs of the late Ella Winter, writer and journalist, have been presented by her estate, through the thoughtfulness and generosity of her son Pete Steffens. She was married to the author Lincoln Steffens, and after his death to screenwriter and playwright Donald Ogden Stewart. The papers in the gift cover primarily the years after 1952 when she and Stewart settled in England. Especially well documented are her journeys to Russia, China and Ghana. Also included are the typescripts of her autobiography And Not to Yield, and files on art, the labor movement in California, Robinson Jeffers, the McCarthy era, Lincoln Steffens and Vietnam. Among the correspondents are Edward Albee, Charles and Oona Chaplin, W. E. B. DuBois, Katharine Hepburn, Kwame Nkrumah, Sean O'Casey and Muriel Rukeyser.
Activities of the Friends

Bancroft Awards Dinner. The Rotunda of Low Memorial Library was the setting on Thursday evening, April 2, for the annual Bancroft Awards Dinner, sponsored by the Friends. Dr. Gordon N. Ray, Chairman, presided. Provost Fritz Stern announced the winners of the 1981 awards for books published in 1980 which a jury deemed of exceptional merit and distinction in the fields of American history and diplomacy. Awards were presented for the following: Ronald Steel, Walter Lippmann and the American Century, published by Little, Brown & Company; and Jean Strouse, Alice James: A Biography, published by Houghton, Mifflin Company. The Provost presented to the author of each book a $4,000 award from funds provided by the Edgar A. and Frederic Bancroft Foundation, and Dr. Ray presented citations to the publishers. The evening's program also included responses by each of the award-winning authors.

Future Meetings: Meetings of the Friends during 1981–82 have been scheduled for the following dates: Fall meeting, Thursday evening, October 29; Winter Exhibition opening, Thursday afternoon, February 4; and the Bancroft Awards Dinner, Thursday evening, April 1.

EXHIBITIONS IN BUTLER LIBRARY

Gerhart Hauptmann: His Career and His Visit to Columbia in 1932
February 26-May 31

Dizzy and Beaconsfield: Benjamin Disraeli Centenary
June 29-September 16

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THE FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA LIBRARIES

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