



The Yale University Library

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TRADITION HAS IT THAT YALE was founded in 1701 by the meeting of ten Congregational ministers at the home of the Reverend Samuel Russel in Branford, Conn. Each clergyman brought with him a few of his precious books and is reported to have said, as he placed them on the table, "I give these books for the founding of a college in this colony." Apocryphal or not, Yale's librarians foster this tradition—the spiritual truth of it remains.

The Library in the eighteenth century grew fast at first, through the liberality of three men. Jeremiah Dummer, the agent of the Connecticut Colony in London, was most active in acquiring gifts for the struggling school from the foremost English men of letters. For instance we still have on our shelves in the Yale Library of 1742 books given by Sir Richard Steele, Richard Bentley, William Whiston, White Kennett, Bishop of Peterborough, Sir Richard Blackmore, Edmund Halley, and a copy of the *Principia*, the gift of Sir Isaac Newton in 1714. Dummer gave many volumes himself and interested Governor Elihu Yale, who sent a large box of books. In 1733 George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, gave some nine hundred volumes on his return to Ireland after the failure of his scheme to found a college in Bermuda. This was the finest collection of books that had yet come to America at one time and formed more than a third of the Yale Library when it was given.

The books migrated with the College to Killingworth, to Saybrook and finally to New Haven. The last move in 1718 cost the Library about one-fifth of its books. The citizens of Saybrook opposed the move, broke down the bridges on the road to New Haven, and destroyed some of the ox carts which were transporting the books. The Library gradually increased during the next forty years to well over three thousand volumes. During the Revolution the British attempted

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to invade New Haven and the books were hastily evacuated to the country. When they were returned to the college in 1782, they had shrunk to about twenty-five hundred volumes.

The first Library catalog was printed in 1743 and showed the Library to be strong in the classics, theology, and science and fairly good in English literature. In 1753 and 1768 two undergraduate literary societies, Linonian and Brothers in Unity, commenced collecting their own books and built up libraries totalling over thirteen thousand volumes. These two libraries were merged with the college library in 1871 and the result after consolidating the two collections has been maintained ever since as an undergraduate browsing room called Linonia and Brothers.

In 1805 Benjamin Silliman, our first great scientist, went abroad with nine thousand dollars in his pocket to buy books and instruments. In 1845 the former Librarian James Luce Kingsley, at his own expense, went to England, France, Belgium, Holland and Germany and spent some nine to ten thousand dollars which I am sure had been painfully accumulated. He bought about six to seven thousand volumes at an average price of less than one dollar and a half a volume, including all shipping costs and insurance! Here are a few of his purchases:

John Britton and Edward W. Brayley, *The Beauties of England and Wales*. (London, 1801-16). 29 vols. £7.7.0.

John Speed, *Historie of Great Britaine*. (London, 1623). 16 shillings.

The Naval Chronicle. (London, Jan. 1799-Dec. 1818). 40 vols. £7.7.0.

The Parliamentary History of England. [Parliamentary Debates after 1802]. (London, 1804-1844). 178 vols. £47.5.0.

Royal Society of London, *Philosophical Transactions*, from Jan. 1744-1800. Vols. 44-90 inclusive in 55 vols. £9.0.0.

Benjamin Franklin, *Political, Miscellaneous, and Philosophical Pieces*. (London, 1779). 8 shillings.

M. Diderot and M. D'Alembert, *Encyclopédie*, 3d ed. (Genève, 1778-79). 39 vols. £3.18.0.

Plutarque, *Les Vies*. (Paris, 1783, 1801-05). 25 vols. One of 12 copies on vellum. £4.14.6.

R. Accademia della Crusca, Florence, *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*. (Napoli, 1746-48). 5 vols. £2.5.0.

G. R. Malatesta and F. Argelati, ed. and tr. *Corpus Omnium Veterum Poetarum Latinorum cum Eorundum Italica Versione*. (Mediolini, 1731-49). 29 vols. Parchment. £3.3.0.

Addison Van Name, the son-in-law of Yale's second Librarian and the brother-in-law of our greatest scientist Josiah Willard Gibbs, became Librarian in 1865. Van Name was a real bookman and with the help of a few alumni who gave funds, the Library grew under his direction from forty-four thousand volumes to three hundred thousand when he retired in 1905. In one of his annual reports he said, "Fortunately the long history of this library puts it at an advantage compared with most other American libraries and the policy of wise selection of books goes far to make up for the smallness of resources." I believe this is still pretty largely true at Yale; we are interested more in quality than in quantity. This applies to books as well as students and faculty.

In the nineteenth century most of the Yale faculty lived well. They had large homes, built up private libraries adequate for their teaching and research, and only used the Library for the odd book. There were a few exceptions—men who were constantly in the Library and constantly helping the Librarians to strengthen our collections. This was particularly true in the field of English literature with such men as Thomas R. Lounsbury, Henry A. Beers, and later Wilbur L. Cross, Dean of the Yale Graduate School and afterwards Governor of Connecticut, Karl Young, George H. Nettleton, and Chauncey Brewster Tinker.

My predecessor but one as Librarian, Andrew Keogh, often jokingly said that the Yale professor in the nineteenth century married for money and spent his salary on books. Most of these fine and scholarly collections were willed to the Library and helped to round out our holdings in many fields. This is no longer true. Inflation, the income tax, and the cost of educating his children have forced the present day scholar to live in a smaller home—even an apartment—with no space for a large library even if he had the funds to acquire it. Also, I guess rich eligible young ladies are scarce too! So the modern scholar is much more dependent on the University Library, and the Library much less frequently profits from the gift or bequest of large scholarly collections.

The day to day development of the Library is primarily due to the atmosphere set up by the librarians and their determination to build up the collections. At Yale the Librarian has always controlled the book funds and they have not been allocated to the teaching departments. This makes for a more consistent acquisition policy. The Yale Library was most fortunate in the twentieth century in the two

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men who have been most responsible for its acquisitions. May Humphreys in the first quarter of the century bought large collections at prices which now seem unbelievable. He also pegged away at filling in our holdings of scholarly books, journals, and periodicals and early English newspapers. With his Yale background he interested alumni in helping with this activity. The present incumbent, Donald G. Wing, is a name to conjure with; he has continued this activity and constantly astonishes me with his knowledge of what is in the Yale Library, and his ability to check catalogs quickly and order the books and periodicals which we lack and need. His name is one that has become a permanent part of our bibliographical language—"not in Wing," but it usually is *there*. The dealer or scholar just does not know how to use Wing's *Short-title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America and of English Books Printed in other Countries, 1641-1700*,¹ almost ninety thousand entries, a prodigious piece of work for one man. The growth of the library during the twentieth century is due to the work of these men, other dedicated librarians, and members of the faculty such as Professor Clive Day, who is largely responsible for our strength in early economics, particularly English economics. Professor Day was in the library almost daily with a checked antiquarian book catalog. The important thing in the Library is to encourage such activity and not just groan over another catalog to check. I am sure that he must have had some influence in persuading Henry R. Wagner to give his collection of over ten thousand British, Scottish, and Irish economic tracts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

I must say, however, that one of my first real disappointments when I became Librarian was the fact that many of the faculty took very little interest in the strengthening of our holdings. In fact, it came to me as a shock. I had taken faculty interest for granted.

As the twentieth century moved along, more interest by the alumni and friends of Yale developed in the library and this brought important gifts like the Owen F. Aldis Collection of American Literature, Henry R. Wagner's many gifts of rare Americana, the Frederick S. Dickson Collection of Henry Fielding, the Goethe, Franklin, and Colonel Edward M. House collections. Some librarians and administrators looked a little askance at this alumni interest. It was only because of the determination of such collectors as Frank Altschul and the lively and imaginative Westerner, Wilmarth S. Lewis, that the Yale Library Associates was founded in 1928. The administration was

fearful that it might interfere with the University's general fund raising. The librarians, I believe, were just as afraid of these enthusiastic, dedicated, and determined individuals, with reason I guess, as one of them later became Librarian. The administrator's fear, I believe, was not justified because these dedicated collectors would give ten times as much to the University for its Library as they would for general purposes, and often the man who first became interested in the Library also helped in other areas—witness the many gifts of Louis M. Rabinowitz, William Robertson Coe's gifts to the American Studies program and ornithology, Frank Altschul's to economics and political science, Starling W. Childs' to the Medical School, and Paul Mellon's important gifts to strengthen many areas of Yale University.

Edwin J. Beinecke and his brother, Frederick W. Beinecke, are known in the book world as collectors and donors of rare books and manuscripts and the source of the funds to build and endow our beautiful Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, but they have also given an endowment of about two and a half million dollars, the income from which is spent to buy current books and periodicals and antiquarian books for the open stacks in the Main Library.

The leading figure in this development at Yale was Professor Chauncey Brewster Tinker, an avid collector himself, whose acquisitions were directed at strengthening the University Library. With some misgivings on the part of the top officials, Tinker was made Keeper of Rare Books in the new Sterling Memorial Library when it opened in 1930. We were fortunate in the fact that he knew the importance of the inside of books and also, as a collector, price did not scare *him*. For example, Sandys' *History of Classical Scholarship*² lists the first printings of the one hundred and eight most important works by Greek authors. One hundred and two of these are at Yale, and of the missing six, we have two in earlier Greek editions missed by Sandys. I am told that no other American library approaches that number. Tinker would grab an important book, put it in his desk drawer and then set in motion the effort to secure the funds to pay for it. More often than not he succeeded. He gradually built up around him a large following of collectors and former students who could be tapped.

During my career as Librarian I encouraged and helped with this activity. I also co-operated actively in the setting up in the Library

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of the many important research projects, which we locally call "factories": the Lewis edition of Horace Walpole's letters, the Franklin, Boswell, St. Thomas More, Samuel Johnson and other projects. The experts in these "factories" are constantly urging the Library to purchase material which greatly strengthens our holdings. I appointed numerous curators and advisors who were experts in their particular fields. Often like Tinker they worked hard to develop our collections, although they were not on the library payroll, and more often than not they paid for the books themselves. Thomas E. Marston greatly enlarged our holdings of early books and manuscripts. Goff in the preface of the new census of fifteenth century books in America stated that Yale had progressed more than other libraries in this field since the first census, adding some two thousand titles.³ This is primarily due to the efforts of T. E. Marston; Wesley E. Needham, in Tibetan literature; Dr. Curt Von Faber du Faur, our great collector of baroque German literature; David Wagstaff, in sporting books; Lawrence Langner, the theater; Warren H. Lowenhaupt, who has put together unquestionably the largest and most important bookplate collection in the Western hemisphere; Carl Van Vechten, in American arts and letters; Alexander O. Vietor, maps and atlases; James M. Osborn, seventeenth century manuscripts; H. W. Liebert (who is now on the payroll as Librarian of the Beinecke Library); and others. On several occasions at library meetings, friends from other institutions have said to me, "Jim, are not all those curators a damned nuisance and headache?" My reply always was, "Yes, and the moment they stop being so I will get rid of them!"

During this period Mr. Wing and I were also trying to fill in and round out our general collections. The friendly atmosphere of the Library and its staff and curators brought to us many gifts of whole libraries as well as individual volumes which greatly helped in this activity. Our book purchase funds for many years were inadequate. My constant struggle with our budget within the University was to increase salaries and enlarge the staff.

I followed the footsteps of Andrew Keogh in an effort to make our acquisitions more selective—by this I mean two things: first, the securing of individual books and periodicals of higher quality, and not just any book to increase the count. This meant that when we were given or purchased a collection for the Library we used considerable judgment as to what we would keep and what we would get rid of; secondly, that we should attempt to define the areas in which we

wished to have comprehensive coverage, next less comprehensive coverage, and finally areas in which we would make no effort to acquire research material. It is difficult to secure agreement from the faculty on these definitions; they want everything. The ever-changing emphasis in our universities on what fields are important, and the frequent failure to bring the librarian into the decision-making often defeat him in his effort to be consistent and selective.

The tremendous growth of important publications in many languages made it impossible for one individual such as Donald G. Wing, even with the help of the faculty, to select and acquire the books needed in a large university library. This has necessitated the appointment of subject specialists in many fields. Of course, in large subjects such as medicine, religion, music, law, etc., we depend on and use the expert knowledge of the librarians in those schools. Properly trained individuals are most difficult to find, and the salary budget of the Library must be greatly increased in order to hire these specialists. In some areas they are in very short supply and are prone to move from institution to institution, and industry picks off many of those best qualified in the sciences, because of better salaries.

At the end of my career as Librarian, Yale embarked on greatly enlarged area programs, with foundation help. I doubt if the administration and interested faculty fully realized what the library costs would be, first, to build up a large and specialized staff, and second, to buy much more heavily in fields where the books are most difficult to acquire and therefore very costly, such as material published in the Far East and Russia. If we are to have distinguished research programs in these areas, this large expenditure must be made and kept up indefinitely. We were pushed into developing collections in subject fields which Yale wished to embark upon, fields in which traditionally the Library had bought sparingly. This has weakened our acquisitions in the fields in which the Yale Library is rich, and also often duplicated material already at Harvard or Columbia, which have traditionally had strength in the subject. This is frustrating and discouraging. Yale's great strength in one field, for example, English literature, is primarily due to the fact that Yale has had a distinguished English faculty for several generations, and I believe we should continue that strength even if it means neglecting some other fields. The collections we have built up in English literature can never be duplicated elsewhere, and our efforts to catch up in some other fields may be fruitless, that is if we wish to be at the top. All this may be con-

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sidered heresy in some quarters, but it is what I strongly believe.

It is obvious from the above that my efforts to define Yale's acquisition policies and to limit acquisitions in certain areas were somewhat futile. I believe strongly that the Yale Library will, over the years, be a more distinguished and useful institution if we can concentrate our collecting and not try to cover the waterfront. I further believe that at present we are attempting to do the latter, and if this is to continue, someone must come up with many millions of dollars to finance it, not just to buy the world's production of important books but to provide the staff and the buildings to service and house it.

My remaining years at Yale as a consultant will be dedicated to trying to find some of these needed millions of dollars and also attempting to concentrate our acquisitions in depth in the fields where we are already strong. I would hope that our area programs may be concentrated in fewer areas than we are at present attempting to cover. Interests and fields of study shift and change in popularity from decade to decade, but I believe that we as librarians should resist, with judgment, being pushed all over the map. The great universities on the Eastern seaboard should divide up the fields of knowledge (especially the more esoteric fields), as should similar institutions in the South, the Midwest and on the Pacific Coast. Then our available funds will go much further and we will have richer and more efficient libraries and the search for knowledge will progress more effectively.

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