

FROM PRIVATE COLLECTION TO PUBLIC INSTITUTION: THE WILLIAM ANDREWS CLARK MEMORIAL LIBRARY

LAWRENCE CLARK POWELL

THE fate of a man's books after his death sooner or later troubles every collector. What will become of those scores or hundreds or thousands of volumes which during the years of his life gave him instruction, delight, distraction, and solace? Should they be left to wife or children or be sold for their benefit or be willed to an institution? Quoting Edmond de Goncourt in justification, A. Edward Newton ordered his books dispersed so that other collectors now and in years to come might have the pleasure of re-collecting them and so that they "shall not be consigned to the cold tomb of a museum, and subjected to the stupid glance of the careless passer-by."

There are dangers in making an unrestricted gift of books to a library; for Randolph G. Adams was right: Librarians are too often among the enemies of books.¹ Only the wealthiest of collectors, such as Huntington, Folger, Morgan, Clements, and Clark, can guarantee the security of their gifts by providing separate buildings and, usually, endowments. Few impecunious collectors could achieve the witty triumph of Samuel Pepys in insuring the perpetual integrity of his collection—without cost to himself. Only two weeks before his death, in the spring of 1703, Pepys added a second codicil to his will, beginning:

I do hereby declare That could I be sure of a constant Succession of Heirs from my said Nephew qualified like himself for the use of such

¹ Adams, "Librarians as Enemies of Books," *Library Quarterly*, VII, 317-31.

a Library I should not entertain a thought of its ever being Alienated from them. But this uncertainty considered with the infinite paines and time and cost employed in my Collecting Methodizing and reducing the same to the State wherein it now is I cannot but be greatly Solicitous that all possible provision should be made for its unalterable preservation and perpetual Security against the ordinary fate of such Collections falling into the hands of an incompetent heir and thereby of being sold dissipated or imbezelled.

The testator therefore proceeds to state his "present thoughts and prevailing inclinations" in this matter, as follows:

1st That after the death of my said nephew my said Library be placed and for ever Settled in one of our Universities and rather in that of Cambridge than Oxford. 2dly And rather in a private College there than the publick Library. 3dly And in the College of Trinity or Magdalen preferable to All others. 4thly And of these two Caeteris paribus, rather in the latter for the Sake of my own and nephews Education therein. 5thly That in which soever of the two it is a faire roome be provided therein on purpose for it and wholly and soly appropriated thereto. 6thly And if in Trinity, That the said room be contiguous and to have communication with the new Library there. 7thly And if in Magdalen That it be in the new building there, and any part thereof at my nephews election. 8thly That my said Library be continued in its present form and noe other books mixt therewith Save what my Nephew may add to them of his own Collecting in distinct presses. 9thly That the said roome and books so placed and adjusted to be called by the name of Bibliotheca Pepysiana. 10thly That this Bibliotheca Pepysiana be under the sole power and custody of the Master of the College for the time being who shall neither himself convey nor Suffer to be con-

veyed by others any of the said books from thence to any other place except to his own Lodge in the said College nor there have more than ten of them at a time and that of those also a strict entry be made and account kept of the time of their having been taken out and returned, in a booke to be provided and remain in the said Library for that only purpose. 11thly That before my said Library be put into the possession of either of the said Colleges, that College for which it shall be designed first enter into Covenants for performance of the foregoing articles. 12thly And that for a yet further Security herein the said two Colleges of Trinity and Magdalen have a Reciprocal Check upon one another. And that the College which shall be in present possession of the said Library be subject to an Annual visitation from the other and to the forfeiture thereof to the like possession and Use of the other upon Conviction of any breach of their said Covenants.

William Andrews Clark, Jr., was not an impecunious book-collector; nor was he a Croesus. The fingers of two hands would more than number his millions, and, at his death in 1934, he left a library of only sixteen thousand volumes. By willing his private collection, complete with building and grounds, to a public institution—the University of California at Los Angeles—Clark joined the select company of American book-collectors whose bequests are among the glories of our national library strength. Clark's bequest was neither casual nor crotchety. The gift deed was executed in 1926, eight years before his death, and reserved to the donor during his lifetime the full use of the Library and property. Since 1934 the University has maintained and developed the Clark Library in accordance with the gift deed, and it is my purpose in this paper to scrutinize the sixteen-year record and to note the way in which a private collection with several highly specialized segments has been transformed into a public institution. Four years ago the Library issued a first decen-

nial report, which took the form of a symposium on the origin, the growth, and the several specialties of the Clark Library.² These notes are intended to supplement the report and to enlarge on certain of its aspects.

It should be known, first of all, that W. A. Clark, Jr., was a book-collector by instinct, not merely by virtue of his wealth. He was a reader as well as a collector of books. He was also generous by nature and not solely for benefit of tax deductions. The memorial library to his father, the Montana senator, which is UCLA's richest single endowment, was only one of his benefactions, which included also a law school building to his Alma Mater, the University of Virginia, in memory of his first wife; Poe and Jefferson manuscripts to the Alderman Library at Virginia; a library building to the University of Nevada in memory of his second wife; and the founding of a symphony orchestra in the city of Los Angeles.

The family fortune was made in Montana copper, and Senator Clark spent no small part of it on the art objects in his Fifth Avenue mansion, which were willed by him to the Corcoran Gallery. His other son, Charles, was also a collector of books, notably early printing, and the catalog of his library, printed by John

² University of California, Los Angeles, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, *Report of the First Decade, 1934-44* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1946). Contents: Lawrence Clark Powell, "Introduction"; Ernest Carroll Moore, "The Gift: How It Was Made. I"; Edward Augustus Dickson, "The Gift: How It Was Made. II"; Cora Edgerton Sanders, "The Beginnings of the Library"; Robert D. Farquhar, "The Building"; Hugh G. Dick, "The English Drama to 1700"; Sigurd B. Hustvedt, "The Age of Dryden"; Edward N. Hooker, "The Eighteenth Century"; Franklin P. Rolfe, "The Nineteenth Century"; Lindley Bynum, "Western Americana"; H. Richard Archer, "Fine Printing."

Henry Nash in 1914-22, is a distinguished collection's only memorial; for the Charles Clark books were left to his family and have been gradually dispersed by sale.³

In 1909 Will Clark, settled in the then fashionable West Adams district of Los Angeles, began collecting English literature so earnestly that in a little more than a decade he found it necessary to employ two librarians, Robert Ernest Cowan and Cora Edgerton Sanders. In 1920 appeared the first volume of the catalog of his library, which, over the next ten years, grew to a total of twenty volumes.⁴ Clark's Preface to this volume seems to me worth quoting in part for the unconscious portrait it gives of a modest man who loved books more than he loved himself:

If it is axiomatic that every book should have a preface, then *a fortiori*, a book about books should therewith be the most necessarily adorned. I shall not, as so many others have done, proffer as an excuse for the publication of this volume, that I have been urged to do so by my friends. In truth I find but few persons that are really interested in old and rare books and in the first editions with their variations.

As I became interested in rare books and in their acquisition, I naturally turned to the study of bibliographies, but having in the course of a few idle months made copious notes on the volumes that I had collected, it occurred to me to put these notes into a permanent form by publishing them in a printed catalogue. From the various catalogues of other libraries that I had carefully studied, I culled from each what in my judgment were the best and most essential features of compilation and collation, resulting in the scheme herein presented. For this purpose it required a complete revision of what data I had gathered together, a task for which I had

not the time, owing to many business interests that required attention, to undertake myself.

Fortunately I was able to call to my assistance Mr. Robert Ernest Cowan of San Francisco, a man of most profound scholarly attainments, a bibliographer well known to book lovers, and a gentleman in the true sense of the word, with whom it was a pleasure to collaborate whenever I could spare the time from my other occupations. I had personally collated a great part of this volume, which he carefully checked over and corrected in many details. Many of the volumes we collated together, many he collated personally, so that all in all the work may be called the result of our joint efforts. I shall always hold in fondest memory the many pleasant hours that we passed together in my modest library at Los Angeles. To Miss Cora Edgerton Sanders of Los Angeles, I wish to express my thanks for her valuable assistance to us in our work.

I claim no originality in research, but have combined in this volume so far as I could all the information of interest that is scattered through many printed catalogues and bibliographies, which I trust may make the book one of value for those who are not fortunate enough to possess the works cited in the references. Mistakes no doubt have been made, and I would be grateful to have those pointed out to me as they are discovered.

The relationship of Will Clark with his printer, John Henry Nash, is worthy of study. In addition to the catalog, Clark commissioned Nash to print for private distribution the well-known series of Christmas books—facsimiles of such treasures in the Clark Library as *Tamerlane* and *Adonais*, accompanied by sumptuous modern reprints. The Nash Papers in the University library at Berkeley and in the Clark Memorial Library form a rich source for such a study.

In 1923 a fire in the Clark residence gave the collector real fright and led him to commission architect Robert D. Farquhar to plan a separate, fireproof building. The structure cost \$750,000.00 and is a jeweled oasis in a city of stucco.

³ Only thirty-five copies of this seven-volume catalog were printed; hence its extreme rarity.

⁴ Fifty sets were printed, except for the Oscar Wilde and Kelmscott-Doves volumes, of which 150 copies were made.

In planning the Library, Clark had not decided that it was eventually to be a public institution, and so the functional idea of public service was not uppermost in mind (as it was, for example, in the planning of the Houghton Library). In the Clark Library, rare books have the rooms of honor on the main floor; readers are relegated to the basement. And thus, upon taking possession in 1934, the University had the twofold problem of how to adapt the building to public use and of what collections to develop.

In Regent Edward A. Dickson, President Robert Gordon Sproul, and Provost Ernest Carroll Moore the University had three top officials who were appreciative of the material value of the bequest and sensitive to the donor's wishes. It is worth repeating that Clark's deed or gift was neither careless nor crippling. The Library was not to be merged or consolidated with any other institution. The books were never to be removed from the building, nor were they ever to be "perforated or otherwise disfigured." In so stipulating, Clark had not forgotten his experience when, several years before, in visiting another local institution (a possible recipient of the bequest before it had been made to the state university), he saw copies of his privately printed Christmas books, which we had given to that institution, perforated, stamped, and inked with call numbers on the backstrips.

Clark's stated object in giving the books, building, and grounds was "the advancement of learning, the arts and sciences, and to promote the public welfare." The administration, management, maintenance, and development of the Library was left to the discretion of the regents of the University. As their executive officer, President Sproul appointed a library committee, with himself as chair-

man, which included the provost of the University at Los Angeles, the University librarian at Los Angeles, and several members of the faculty; the first three were members *ex officio*, the latter were subject each year to reappointment or replacement.

The second wise step was the appointment of Cora Edgerton Sanders, longtime librarian to Clark, as curator of the Memorial Library; and her familiarity with the Library's contents, her bibliophilic sophistication, and her innate good taste were invaluable to the Library until her retirement from state service, in 1944, at the compulsory age.

From 1934 to 1938 the program for the Clark Library received intensive study by the committee. A reading of the minutes shows how conscientiously the University sought to carry out the letter and the spirit of Clark's bequest; and it was Miss Sanders who was able to read between the lines of the gift deed and recall from conversations what was in Clark's mind when he wrote them.

Several projects were advanced from within and without the University for the expenditure of income from the \$1,500,000.00 endowment, after the necessary grounds and building maintenance expenses were met. But in the end it was agreed that the collections must be broadened and deepened if the Library was to attain true research strength and usefulness.

But which collections? Shakespeare and the Renaissance? Dryden and the Restoration? French dramatists of the late seventeenth century? The English Romantic poets? Oscar Wilde and his contemporaries? Montana history? Printing and bibliography? In all of these disparate areas the Library had starts ranging from good to excellent.

While it was true that the Library con-

tained an impressive group of folios and quartos, as well as certain rare works of Shakespeare's contemporaries, *STC* holdings were not to be ranked with the English Renaissance collection in the Henry E. Huntington Library. And in the field of early printing, again, the Clark's few incunabula were dwarfed by the Huntington's massive holdings. Thus the idea of regional co-operation was accepted from the beginning, and the Clark has refrained from collecting in the pre-1640 period.

As for the French dramatists, Clark's early schooling and later travels in France had given him an abiding love for that country, and he had acquired a superlative collection of first editions of Corneille, Racine, Molière, and Le Sage. This is an expensive field, in which the purchase of one or two dozen books could use up the Library's entire book fund of a given year, as well as a field in which UCLA scholars were not actively engaged; and so it was decided to let the French collection remain dormant.

A comparison of the Dryden collection with that of the English Romantics showed the seventeenth century by far the stronger. The book fund was not large enough to develop both, and so a decision was made in favor of the earlier period.

As for the Oscar Wilde collection, so complete was it in original works and *Wildeana* that little could be added, apart from occasional manuscripts and letters, new editions and reprints, and contemporary publishing on Wilde. Montana history was likewise represented by a strong collection, but it did not truly represent Clark's interest. In spite of his Montana origin, Clark's collection on his native state was the result not of his own but of his librarian's enthusiasm for western Americana. The decision was to

leave this general field to the University library, which, in 1936, acquired Robert E. Cowan's own distinguished library of Californiana.

A good start had been made by Clark in collecting bibliographical works, particularly on English literature, printing, and publishing, and this was continued. As for reference works, a selective policy was adopted which would bring in the standard biographies and modern critical editions of the English literary figures from 1650 to 1750. The Library's distance of ten miles from the campus required a certain amount of duplication of holdings in the University library, but shortage of funds, of shelf space, and of staff were primary reasons for the Clark's decision not to assemble a complete reference library on its specialty periods in the way that the comparatively isolated Huntington Library was compelled to do. Although Clark books could not be taken to the campus, the University library's volumes could be readily charged to scholars working intensively at the West Adams location.

Thus the Library's development has been dictated by the proximity of two strong research libraries, the Huntington and the UCLA; and, from 1943 until Louis B. Wright's departure to the Folger Library, the Clark committee included faculty representatives who held joint appointments in the UCLA English department and on the Huntington staff. Since his appointment as Folger director, Dr. Wright has continued to serve on the Clark's advisory committee.

Since 1934 the Library has grown from sixteen thousand volumes to forty-four thousand, and most of the accessions have been in the 1650-1750 period. It has been estimated that English publishing during those hundred years totaled three hundred thousand items, an essential

core collection of which might reach one-third of that number.

The Clark Library is acquiring books in virtually all branches of English culture, including literature, philosophy, religion and science, economics, geography, and history. Early law is not being collected because of the strong holdings in the Los Angeles County law library, and early medicine is being left to the UCLA biomedical library. The emphasis has been on acquiring many inexpensive and moderately priced items rather than a few costly "high spots," with which the Library was already rather well endowed.

Publication of Wing's *Short-Title Catalogue . . . 1641-1700* has been both a boon and a bane to collectors. The only negative result has been to raise prices. On the affirmative side, libraries can now learn what there is to be collected and the location of items in other libraries. Wing's prefatory proviso should not be overlooked: "This is not a census of copies, but rather an effort to locate copies available in various geographical sections. Normally, therefore, not more than one copy is listed in the same city." The compiler's apparent unfamiliarity with western geography led him repeatedly to cite the Huntington copy of a given book rather than the Clark, although the two libraries are in widely different parts of a metropolitan area which is itself larger than some of the eastern states!

The curator's retirement, in 1944, was followed by the appointment of a director who also became librarian of the University library. Closer co-operation between the Clark and the University library, particularly in technical processes, was thus assured. An intensive review of the Clark program resulted in no change in the basic collecting policy, although it

was extended to include local fine printing, virtually all of which receipts came as gifts.

The Library's sphere of activity was enlarged. A program was undertaken to publish through the University Press certain unique materials in the Library, edited by faculty scholars. A project to re-edit Dryden's works, which had been suspended because of the war, was reactivated, and the first of what may run to a twenty-volume subscription set will soon appear.⁵ A similar project on Oscar Wilde has been considered. In 1949 the Library assumed responsibility for publishing the "Augustan Reprints," a series founded by Professors E. N. Hooker and H. T. Swedenberg of UCLA and R. C. Boys of Michigan to make cheaply available to scholars and libraries photographic facsimiles of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century works. A member of the library staff was added to the editorial board. The state-wide University of California libraries are preparing to publish a journal of acquisitions, to which the Clark Library will contribute essays and notes rather than issue its own bulletin (except for occasional mimeographed reports).

Other than a drawing-room, in which only a small number of folding chairs can be placed, the Library has no facility for large meetings. Once a year in June, since 1945, an open-house Founder's Day celebration has been held in honor of the donor. Friends in the University and the community are welcomed, to the number of several thousand, and are instructed by exhibits and talks and re-

⁵ This project has been described by Dougald Macmillan in *South Atlantic Bulletin*, May, 1949, p. 10. Earlier publications are: F. J. Klingberg and S. B. Hustvedt (eds.), *The Warning Drum: The British Home Front Faces Napoleon; Broad-sides of 1803*, 1944; T. and E. Swedenberg (eds.), *George Stepmey's Translation of the Eighth Satire of Juvenal*, 1948; *Report of the First Decade* (cited, n. 2, above).

galed with an outdoor presentation, by student and faculty performers, of some dramatic or musical offering drawn from materials in the Library. During the first five years of these celebrations, the Library produced Coffey's ballad-opera, *The Devil To Pay*, the Dryden-Handel *Alexander's Feast*, Dryden's *Marriage à la Mode*, scenes from *The Beggars' Opera*, folk dances from Playford's *English Dancing Master*, Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and, in the Gold Rush year, a rousing revival of the melodrama known as *A Live Woman in the Mines*. In 1953 it is planned to observe the two hundred fiftieth anniversary of the death of Samuel Pepys, whose works and memorabilia are present in large numbers.

Throughout the University's administration of the Library the faculty has made increasing use of the Library's facilities by holding seminars in the rare-book rooms. Under gentle supervision, students in English literature, history, philosophy, theater arts, music, history of science, fine printing, and bibliography gain the stimulation of firsthand experience with the printed records of the periods and subjects of their study. To hold in hand (and students are taught *how* to hold and handle rare books) a Milton, a Dryden, a Purcell, or a Newton first edition, in original seventeenth-century binding, is an experience not available to most students, not even at the Huntington Library, where, because of heavy usage, only advanced scholars have access to rare books.

The civilizing effect of fine libraries and rare books is a real one, particularly in the Far West, where such centers are uncommon in a comparatively book-poor land. Will Clark left his library deliberately to the state university, for he believed in democratic education and was aware of the potential role of rare books

in this process. He would have been pleased by the reaction of one seminar student who attended the first session wearing a shabby suit and no necktie. After a tour through the beautiful building and a two-hour session in the bronze-cased book room, surrounded by ten thousand rare volumes, he returned the following week still wearing the shabby suit (probably his only one) but with shoes shined and a necktie!

The Clark Library is not able to serve masses of people, but from the masses who throng the state university it can magnetize to it the few who can be educated beyond the average and upon whom the transmission of culture depends. This is a Jeffersonian concept with which Clark became familiar while he was a student at the University of Virginia.

The Library also aids research by offering an annual graduate fellowship to a UCLA student who has particular need of Clark materials to complete his dissertation.

A separate paper could be written about the organization, the staffwork, and the technical processes of the Library, for it is on their smooth and efficient functioning that the collecting and service policies of the Library depend. Much thought, experiment, trial, and error, particularly during the last lustrum, have gone into simplifying these routines. Cataloging on cards was commenced in 1936 by Frank A. Lundy, now librarian of the University of Nebraska, and is neither full-dress bibliographical description nor simplified cataloging but a middle course which registers the pertinent information and locates the book. Main cards go also to the UCLA catalog and to the union catalogs in the University library at Berkeley and the Library of Congress.

The staff includes three librarians, two

clerical aids, a custodian, three gardeners,⁶ and a bookbinder. Four years ago a bindery was established in garage quarters formerly occupied by servants, to repair, reback, and rebind leather books and to make cloth cases and portfolios for fragile items and heavy paper cases for the pamphlet collection, now numbering 7,000 items. Leather-bound volumes are oil-dressed and polished, and a regular program is followed of reiling older books, cleaning the shelves, and fumigating the entire building. The regional problem in the care of rare books is dryness and dust rather than dampness and mold. Maintenance of the grounds and building is the responsibility of the University superintendent, all expenses being met from the endowment income. The director's executive officer in charge of the Library is known as the "supervising bibliographer"—with equal emphasis on "administrator and bookman"—and H. Richard Archer has been the able incumbent since 1944. Microfilming is done by the University library's photographic division.

The Library's greatest problem now is that of expansion for books and readers. Each year between fifteen hundred and two thousand volumes are added, and, as the collections grow, more readers are attracted. In addition to the increase in research by UCLA faculty and students, more and more scholars at the Huntington Library are finding it worth while to investigate the Clark's holdings. Every available space has been filled with books, until the saturation point has now been reached. In addition to stacks, the need is for studies and cubicles where advanced scholars may pursue their

work without distraction by visitors and by others working in the reading-room.

Both needs will soon be met by the construction of an underground annex, to be connected by passageway with the present basement reading-room. Storage space thus gained will not be filled for an estimated twenty-five years, at which time, thanks to the large lawn adjoining the building, another underground unit can be added, and so on and on. This type of buried construction is the most economical to build, to maintain, and to enlarge, and it also affords better security in time of war. Ground will be broken in the spring of 1950, and the annex should be completed by the end of summer.

Such, then, are the bare facts of the transformation of the Clark Library from private collection to public institution. Those who knew Will Clark and heard him voice his hopes for the future of his library say that the transformation has richly realized these hopes. The building and grounds are in immaculate condition, the books are zealously conserved and carefully used, the collections multiply and are made known; and from many cities, states, and countries earnest men and women come to study the printed legacy of the past. Although it is composed of so-called "dead" things—books, wood, metal, and stone—the Library is a living organism, not the "cold tomb of a museum" abhorred by Goncourt and Newton. The University of California proudly treasures the Clark Library; and, at the same time, it modestly hopes that its stewardship thereof will help allay the fears of collectors for the future of their books and encourage them to do like Sam Pepys or Will Clark, whose private collections, by one means and another, were successfully transformed into public institutions.

⁶ The gift deed stipulates that the four-and-a-half-acre gardens surrounding the Library are to be maintained as a public park.