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ARTICLES

19TH AND 20TH CENTURY CHINA-RELATED BOOKS, MANUSCRIPTS, ARTIFACTS AND PRINTS: A SURVEY OF THREE MAJOR COLLECTIONS IN PHILADELPHIA

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Philadelphia boasts over thirty excellent collections of books and manuscripts, spanning more than 300 years of life in this city. One previous paper in this series of panels has discussed the records in the collections of Philadelphia institutions prior to the mid-nineteenth century,¹ especially those having to do with the China trade. I wish to discuss more recent book and manuscript holdings in three major Philadelphia institutions which are within walking distance of one another: the Library Company of Philadelphia, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and the American Philosophical Society.

The Library Company of Philadelphia² (hereafter LPC) stands in the shadow of City Hall. Its collection consists of over 400,000 rare books, the most valuable such collection in Philadelphia. These books "tell the story of America in the words of the men and women who made it." The LCP is an independent center for scholarly research, and it depends on an endowment and private support from members and friends. The oldest cultural institution in the United States, it was founded in 1731 and is the only major colonial American library which has survived virtually intact. It served as the Library of Congress from 1774 to 1800. In 1850 the LCP was the second largest library in the country.

The LCP has no major collections of books on China itself. However, there are several hundred volumes on Asian history and travel, a significant proportion of which have to do with China. I shall highlight a number of these items:

- 1 *An Account of a Journey Around the Globe*, by Li Kwei (Li Siao-chih), published in China in 1879 in Chinese; a boxed set of four volumes. Li Kwei visited the American Centennial in Philadelphia in 1876 and, when his book was published in 1879, he sent a copy of it to a friend he had made in this city.
- 2 *New and Enlarged Edition of the Chinese Classical Book of Poetry With the Commentaries Explained*, by Wu-Ko (Tsou Wu-kang), published in Chinese in 1822 in four volumes.
- 3 A volume published in Chinese in 1842 of the works of Confucius.
- 4 *Manual of Chinese Bibliography, Being a List of Works and Essays Relating to China*, published in English in Shanghai in 1876 by P. G. and O. F. Von Mollendorff. It consists of over 4,600 entries in 343 pages and has three sections: Chinese Language and Literature, The Empire, and Extra-Provincial China.

¹Jonathan Goldstein, "Resources on Early Sino-American Relations in Philadelphia's Stephen Girard Collection and the Historical Society of Philadelphia," Association for Asian Studies, Inc., *Committee on East Asian Libraries Bulletin* 60 (Oct. 1979): 16-23; and in *Ch'ing-Shih Wen-T'i* 4, no. 3 (June 1980): 114-29.

²1314 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 546-3183.

- 5 *A Dissertation on the Nature and Character of the Chinese System of Writing*, compiled in 1838 by Peter S. Du Ponceau and published by the American Philosophical Society (of which he was President). This also includes an appendix titled, "A Vocabulary of the Cochinchinese Language" by Fr. Joseph Morrone, a Roman Catholic missionary in Saigon.
- 6 Three excellent woodblock prints of Chinese anatomical charts showing acupuncture points.
- 7 *Dictionnaire Chinois, Francais et Latin*, by Chretien Louis Joseph de Guignes, Paris, 1813. This dictionary was compiled at the insistence of Napoleon. It was the most complete Chinese dictionary published at the time and remains a masterpiece of French typography.
- 8 *Chinese Courtship, in Verse; to Which is Added, an Appendix Treating the Revenue of China*, by Peter Peering Thomas, London, 1824.

The most interesting item, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Collection in Philadelphia*, is a small volume of 120 pages describing Dunn's Museum, which stood at 9th and George Streets in 1839. This Museum displayed thousands of Chinese articles "illustrating the appearance, manners and customs" of the Chinese, of whom few Americans had direct knowledge at that time. There were fifty life-size mannequins dressed in authentic Chinese clothing, depicting people from the highest to the lowest classes in natural settings.

Edwin Wolf II, former Librarian of the LCP, is quoted in the 1982 Annual Report as describing the LCP as a "mom-and-pop library with a supermarket stock." He meant that it has the advantage of being compact in size and offering personal attention to the researcher. This is important because the card catalogue is arranged by author and title only and has no subject access. However, there are also several printed book catalogues which do have subject access. The LCP's hours are 9:00 to 5:00 Monday through Friday. If you write or visit the LCP, ask for James Green, Curator of Printed Books; or Phillip Lapsansky, Chief of Reference.

Next door to the Library Company is the Historical Society of Pennsylvania³ (hereafter HSP). Founded in 1824, it is the first historical society in Pennsylvania and among the first in the nation. Its primary focus is Pennsylvania history. With over 14 million manuscript pieces in its collection, it covers nearly three centuries of American history. The HSP is the largest and most important historical manuscript collection in private hands in the United States. Most of the China-related holdings have to do with China-trade manuscripts of the 18th century.

A number of family papers do contain materials relating to China in the mid- and late-19th century, such as the Learning Family Papers and the John and Mary Sword (Parry) Collection. The HSP Guide #108, *Miscellaneous Business Enterprises*, includes material on commerce between the U.S. and China during the 17th to 19th centuries. There are various other items of interest, including a letter from Pearl Buck in China dated 1941 and material on the Chinese demonstration against the Japanese in 1919. There are seven photographs of China taken by John Fulton Reynolds Scott about 1930. Most interesting are two lithographs on "China Retreat," a Chinese-style house built by William Russell Birch (d. 1834) near Philadelphia.

Returning to Dunn's Museum, the HSP has a fascinating poster in its collection advertising the Museum. Another lithograph depicts a fancy dress ball which was held in the Museum.

³1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 732-5200.

The HSP is open Monday through Friday, 9:00 to 5:00. Bruce Laverty, Chief of Manuscripts, and Linda Stanley, Archivist, will be glad to respond to your queries.

The American Philosophical Society⁴ (hereafter APS) has been one of the principal institutions in the United States for the study of the history of science since 1700. As the oldest learned society in the U.S., APS has played an important role in the cultural life of America for more than 200 years. Unlike the HSP, whose holdings consist only of manuscripts, and the LCP, which collects only books, the APS collects both books and manuscripts. Compared to the two other institutions, the APS Library holds a somewhat larger number of books relating to China over the past two centuries. The APS card catalogue lists over 100 items under the heading "China," mostly in the areas of science, history, and travel. These include books and other items, such as an 1898 map of China depicting communications. There are also runs of a few English-language journals published in China: *The Journal of the China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1884-1889); and the *Quarterly Bulletin of Chinese Bibliography*, published in Shanghai from 1934-1939. Reprints of a few U.S. and foreign journals are also in the APS collection.

The *Transactions* and *Proceedings* of the APS provide a number of papers on the history of science throughout the world, including China. *The Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* is the oldest scholarly journal published in America with a continuous history; it was established in 1769. The Society also publishes the *Transactions* separately in book form. Two recent publications by APS on contemporary China are: *Our China Prospects*, edited by John K. Fairbank (1977, 51 pp.); and *Organized Business and the Myth of the China Market: The American Asiatic Association*, by James J. Lorence (1981, 112 pp.).

If you wish to use the APS Library, Roy Goodman, in the Library Reading Room, will be glad to respond to your questions. See also Mr. Goodman's paper, "Benjamin Franklin's Legacy: Printed Materials from before 1870 Relating to Chinese Language, Science, Geography, and Culture at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia," presented at a panel of the Mid Atlantic Region/Association for Asian Studies on October 29, 1983.

The APS Archives include a number of collections relating to 19th and 20th century activities in China, such as the papers of Benjamin Smith Lyman, James A. Bonckon, Simon Flexner, and Eugene L. Opie. Lyman was a geologist and mining engineer in China in the latter part of the 19th century. Flexner and Opie were connected with the China Medical Board, also known as the Peking Union Medical College, which was founded in the early part of this century by the Rockefeller Foundation.⁵ Flexner was an important figure in biomedical research in the U.S. and was involved in control of epidemic diseases. He was Director of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research and Head of the China Medical Board. Opie was also a member of the China Medical Board.

Of primary interest are the extensive papers of Victor George Heiser (1873-1972). Heiser studied medicine at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia and became one of the preeminent public health physicians of this century, traveling around the world sixteen times. His *An American Doctor's Odyssey* vied with *Gone with the Wind* as a best seller in 1936. Heiser spent most of his time in Asia (over ten years in the Philippines alone) from 1903 until his retirement from the Rockefeller Foundation in 1934. For twenty years, particularly between 1916 and 1932, Heiser was in China. His basic philosophy held that preventive medicine was always better than treating a

⁴104 South Fifth Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106, (215) 627-0706.

⁵For a related paper, first presented at the 1981 panel in this series on library and archival resources in the Mid-Atlantic States region, see: Charles R. Lilley and Harold K. Kanarek, "A Resource on Twentieth Century American-East Asian Relations: The William Henry Welch Papers at the Alan Mason Chesney Medical Archives, the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions," published in the *Association for Asian Studies, Inc., Committee on East Asian Libraries Bulletin* 67 (Feb. 1982): 16-19.

disease. Heiser's papers contain a wealth of data on public health in China and on the China Medical Board. Of note are the 78 diaries and notebooks which he kept throughout his life. The 42 boxes of correspondence, representing about 25,000 items, include names such as Pearl Buck, George C. Marshall, and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Heiser's diaries, reports, and letters yield significant social, political, and economic insights.

Stephen Catlett, the Manuscripts Librarian at the APS, will be glad to provide further information about the collection.

These three collections represent a fine cross-section of research institutions in Philadelphia that preserve China-related materials. Although other China-related collections do exist, these three have the largest number of books and manuscripts. In addition, their collections have been used by a large number of researchers.