Building a Library by Collecting Collections

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Delivered at the Library Company's annual meeting, May 25, 2004

At the opening of the exhibition

From the Bottom Up: Popular Reading and Writing in the Michael Zinman Collection of Early American Imprints

The Michael Zinman Collection of Early American imprints is perhaps the largest en bloc acquisition the Library Company has ever made, but apart from its enormous size, it is nothing new for us. Throughout our history we have collected books one by one as our readers requested them or (in modern times) as our librarians selected them from catalogs. But all along we were also collecting collections, and those collections had a much greater impact on the library that the books we acquired one by one. In almost every instance the addition of a new collection changed the library to a greater or lesser degree and provoked a reinterpretation of its mission. Moreover the collections we acquired long ago continue to challenge us just as much as the collections we acquire today. [1]

Our first en bloc acquisition of a collection took place in 1769 when the Library Company absorbed the collections and membership of three smaller subscription libraries that had been established in imitation of Franklin's original. The merger nearly doubled the size of the collection and the number of shareholders, but more important, it marked

[1] *"At the Instance of Benjamin Franklin": A Brief History of the Library Company of Philadelphia.* Revised and enlarged edition, Philadelphia: Library Company, 1995. Most of the information about the history of the Library Company is taken from this institutional history, originally written in 1976 by Edwin Wolf and expanded in 1995 by John Van Horne, James N. Green, and Marie Korey.

the point where the Library Company ceased to be a reading club and became in effect the city's public library. The expansion of the collection redefined the mission of the institution.[2]

During the colonial period the Library Company acquired all its books from England; it owned very few books printed in America or even about America. Once a small collection of 17th-century tracts about the settlement of the colonies were sent from London by the Library's agent Peter Collinson, who imagined Americans were interested in their own history, when in fact they preferred to read about the mother country.[3] They wanted useful modern books, utility being defined to include both practical knowledge and reading conducive to the refinement of manners.

When Philadelphia became the capital of a new nation, however, the Library Company became the de facto library of Congress, and so the collection was put to a new use in the effort to establish an American national identity. Thus when the vast collection of American historical materials formed by the Swiss-born antiquary Pierre Eugène Du Simitière was sold at auction in Philadelphia in 1785, the Library Company was the major purchaser. We acquired his exhaustive collection of Stamp Act and Revolutionary era pamphlets and newspapers, and reams of printed ephemera that he had gathered in Philadelphia and New York literally as it came from the press. The Library Company also bought many important charters and historical documents, either originals or copies Du Simitière had made in the course of compiling his unfinished Natural and Civil History of the West Indies and North America. This was the first acquisition of primary

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[2] James N. Green, "Subscription Libraries and Commercial Circulating Libraries In Colonial Philadelphia and New York," a paper given at the 2002 Philadelphia conference on The History of Libraries in the United States," in Thomas Augst and Kenneth Carpenter, eds. *Institutions of Reading: The Social Life of Libraries in America,* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004.

source materials relating to American history made by a public library, and it is the first sign that the Library Company was assuming a new identity as an American national library.[4]

In 1789 the Library Company tried to reconcile these two divergent aspects of its collection, the useful books and the American historical materials, by means of a new printed catalogue. Previous printed catalogues had been mere shelf lists. In those days books were shelved by size -- folio, quarto, etc. -- and then in the order of their accession, regardless of subject; and for the most part they remained where they were placed on the day they entered the library, like layers in an archaeological site. The early printed catalogs simply repeated this more or less meaningless arrangement. The 1789 catalogue was a radical departure from all other early American library catalogs. It listed books by subject, according to a scheme derived from the Diderot Encyclopédie, which divided all knowledge into three categories, Memory, Reason, and Imagination, that is history, arts and sciences, and *belles lettres*. Library catalogues are not only finding aids but also potentially a means of imposing intellectual order on a diverse collection and constituting it as an organic whole. The Library Company's 1789 catalogue did this brilliantly. Here for the first time the book culture of the old world was reconciled with the homely, quotidian realities of the new. Every single Du Simitère pamphlet was cataloged with the same weight and in the same scheme with stately folios imported from Europe. [5]

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[3] Randolph G. Adams, "Dr. Franklin as a book buyer," *Colophon,* n.s. II:4 (Autumn 1937), 606-608.
[4] James N. Green, "Mémoire, raison et imagination: La Library Company de Franklin et l'American Museum de Du Simitière," in Marie-Jeanne Rossignol, ed., *Mémoire privée mémoire collective dans l'Amérique pré-industrielle,* Paris: Berg International, 1994; *Pierre Eugène Du Simitière his American Museum 200 years after,* Philadelphia: Library Company, 1985; Paul G. Sifton, "Pierre Eugène Du Simitière, collector in Revolutionary America, Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1960.
[5] *A Catalogue of the Books belonging to the Library Company of Philadelphia,* Philadelphia: printed by Zachariah Poulson, 1789.

The inspiration for this innovative subject scheme seems to have been the now-lost manuscript catalogue compiled by Benjamin Franklin for his own library. His was by far the largest private collection in America and almost as large as the Library Company itself. Much of it had been recently accumulated in London and Paris, and so it was also more up-to-date and cosmopolitan that anything to be found over here. In January 1786 Franklin summoned some of the Library's directors for an interview, and intimated to them that he would consider bequeathing his library if a suitable building could be built to house it. The Directors' minutes give no hint of excitement, but they must have seen how perfect the match between the two libraries would have been. They began to scheme to buy a lot of land next to Independence Hall, but they had to move cautiously because Franklin had also encouraged his American Philosophical Society to do the same thing, and so the two institutions found themselves competing not only for land and building funds, but also for Franklin's favor. Franklin lived to see both new buildings rise across the street from each other, but in the end neither institution got his books. Instead he bequeathed them to his grandson William Temple Franklin. [6]

Having built a splendid new building, however, the Library Company had excess capacity, and something soon came along to fill it. James Logan had come to Pennsylvania in 1699 as William Penn's secretary and had managed to fashion himself into a philologist and scientist of international standing, despite being separated by an ocean from his fellow scholars and from the libraries they required to carry out their work. He overcame the library obstacle by building one of his own that rivaled all but the

[6] James N. Green, "Thinking about Benjamin Franklin's library," in Carla Mulford and David Shields, eds., *Finding Colonial Americas: Essays honoring J. A. Leo Lemay,* Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2001, 343-356. For a discussion of Franklin's proposal to the Library Company see Keith Arbour, "Using history: Americans and Benjamin Franklin, 1790-1845," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1994, 82-88.

largest European private collections. When he died in 1751 he gave some 2,600 volumes to the city with the stipulation that his heirs were to manage it as a sort of American Bodleian. It was a curious gift, because most of the books were in languages few Philadelphians could read, and in any event his sort of erudite scholarship was going out of fashion even in Europe. No one used it and none of the heirs wanted to run it, so in 1792 they asked the Library Company to take it off their hands. Having so brilliantly incorporated the Du Simitière collection, you would think the Library would repeat the trick with Logan's library; but no attempt was made to integrate it. Instead it was maintained as a library within a library with separate finances and board of directors. Despite the fact that there were lots of empty shelves in the new building, the Loganian Library was given its own rooms in a hastily erected new wing. It also had its own printed catalogue, which reverted to the old shelf list arrangement, though with books in "other languages" helpfully segregated from those in plain English. The Loganian Library was a reserve collection for scholars, whereas the main library was arranged in the new building for easy access by the public.[7]

Throughout the early and middle 19th century the Library Company continued to grow book by book, acquiring all the best new British and American publications, but it grew even more by the purchase or gift of whole libraries. Collections that were erudite were added to the Loganian Library and those that were more popular were added to the main collection; and if a collection had books of both types they were divided between the two. Not all these collections were formed by Philadelphians. The medical library of James Logan's brother Dr. William Logan of Bristol England had already been added to

[7] Edwin Wolf 2nd, *The Library of James Logan of Philadelphia, 1674-1751,* Philadelphia: Library Company, 1974, xvii-lvii.

the Loganian Library in 1776. In 1799 Henry Cox of Ireland, noted in the records as "a stranger," sent without explanation a collection of old books, including some medieval manuscripts appropriated by his grandfather while he served as Lord Chancellor of Ireland. In 1803 the 2,500-volume collection of fine illustrated books formed by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Preston, rector of Chevenning, Kent was steered to Philadelphia by the expatriate artist Benjamin West.

By the turn of the 19th century, however, the book collecting habit was well established in Philadelphia, and all the largest and best local collections eventually came to rest in the Library Company. In 1828 the 7,000 volume collection of merchant William Mackenzie was acquired by bequest and purchase; he was probably the first American to collect books for their rarity and beauty, the first to buy incunables and illuminated manuscripts cast onto the market by the Napoleonic Wars. In 1832 two collections were acquired by purchase, one from naturalist Zacchaeus Collins and the other from the eccentric bibliomaniac and artist James Cox. (Cox's library of 6,000 volumes was acquired in return for an annuity of $400 per annum, but since he died after only two years, the collection proved to be a bargain.)

In 1835 the Library Company and the Loganian Library together held 43,884 volumes, over half of which had been acquired in collections of this sort. By 1851 the count had passed 60,000. The only American libraries comparable in size were at Harvard and Yale. The Library Company was now both a lending library of useful books and a research library of primary source material that happened to be open to the public.

In 1835 a new catalogue was printed with a new subject scheme organized under six broad headings: religion, law, arts and sciences, literature, history, and bibliography.

This was the subject scheme widely used in French auction and booksellers' catalogues at that time. It implicitly acknowledged that libraries were composed of disparate individual books in many unrelated fields, whereas the 1789 Memory-Reason-Imagination scheme had assumed that books were organically related embodiments of different types of mental activity. In the 1789 catalogue each book was listed just once under its essential subject, but in the 1835 catalogue an author/title/subject index provided multiple access points.

In the second half of the 19th century the Library Company acquired still more collections, but increasingly they were concerned with local history, and they were more likely to consist of pamphlets, newspapers, or historical prints and photographs. The largest of these collections was formed by the antiquary John A. McAllister, roughly 50,000 items, much of which was Civil War ephemera he got from job printers right off the press, just as Du Simitière had done a century before. Librarian Lloyd P. Smith was McAllister's co-conspirator in collecting local history; he gave or bequeathed about 750 bound volumes of pamphlets. This sort of collecting had been the province of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania since its founding in 1824, but now the Library Company was becoming an historical society too, partly because men like Smith and McAllister were anti-slavery unionists, while the Historical Society's more blue-blooded supporters had more family ties with the South.[8]

Even before the arrival of the McAllister collection the Library Company had run out of space and the collections had grown beyond its capacity to assimilate them. All pretense of integrating the lending library with the European historical collections and the

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[8] Gary B. Nash, *First City : Philadelphia and the forging of historical memory*, Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002

growing local history collection had been abandoned. What proved to be the last printed subject catalogue was issued in 1856. In the 1870s librarian Lloyd P. Smith compiled a card catalogue to the whole collection and rearranged all the books on the shelves by subject according to a scheme similar to but far more complicated than the one used in the printed catalogues. It was published as an alternative to the Dewey Decimal System, but no one else adopted it.[9] The Smith system allowed readers to browse the shelves by subject for the first time, but subject access in the new card catalogue was minimal, exactly the reverse of the previous regime where subject access in the catalogue was highly developed but the books were shelved in a relatively meaningless order. The card catalogue was a mere finding aid, not a rationale for the collection.

In 1869 Benjamin Rush's son James bequeathed his and his father's library and papers, another huge collection, along with nearly a million dollars with the stipulation that it be used to build a new building. This windfall seemed to come just in the nick of time. But because the library was growing in so many different directions, the Rush bequest exacerbated internal divisions. He added several codicils to his will designed to perpetuate the Library Company as a haven for the learned and a dispenser of improving books, whereas most of the shareholders just wanted to borrow the latest novels and biographies. Ultimately this led to a literal division of the library into two branches, one in the center of town for new books and one in South Philadelphia for the historical collections. By the 1890s it was clear to all that the Library Company was not capable of serving as a modern urban public library, and progressive city fathers founded the Free

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[9] Lloyd P. Smith, *On the classification of books: a paper read before the American Library Association, May, 1882,* Boston: Library Bureau, 1882. Smith assigned a vowel to each of the six broad headings used in the printed catalogues of 1835 and 1856: A for religion, E for law, I for arts and sciences, O for

Library, the city's first "true" public library in the sense of being tax-supported. From then on the Library Company was relegated to being an historical attraction, an underused research library, and a lending library for the families of its members. During the 1930s Depression the center city branch was closed, and the building demolished to make way for a parking lot. All the books were moved to the larger South Philadelphia building. During the Second World War it became a branch of the Free Library System, and the old books were literally locked away. Meanwhile that parking lot was proving to be unexpectedly profitable, so at the end of the War, the Library Company found itself comparatively wealthy with all its collections intact, but lacking any *raison d'être* that would make them coherent and useful.

At this point the Library Company was reconceived yet again, but more radically and more cogently than at any time since the 1790s. Under the leadership of Edwin Wolf 2nd, the lending library function was phased out and all resources were devoted to becoming a research library for the study of American history and its European background from early colonial times until roughly 1880, the period during which the Library Company was the nation's major public library. This strategy for the first time united both the current collecting of that period with the many collections acquired en bloc. A Mackenzie incunable was thus made contemporary with an American edition of a Walter Scott novel, each providing a context for the other. Based on this dynamic relation between current books and retrospective collections, between American books and imported ones, between learned books and popular reading, the Library Company

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literature, U for history, and Y for bibliography. Each letter was subdivided by more letters and then by numbers and in some cases even more minutely by plus or delta signs.

was conceived as an accurate and authentic representation of the intellectual world of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Wolf, a consummate bookman, naturally began to add to the collection book by book, according to this new conception. Initially he was most interested in the era of the Library's founding, and he spent decades patiently reconstructing the libraries of Logan, Franklin, and other early Philadelphians, even acquiring books he thought they might have owned or should have owned. During the 1960s, however, as recataloging of the core collection proceeded chronologically, the wealth of the nineteenth-century collections emerged, and unsuspected new subject strengths were discovered. We were then in the midst of the civil rights movement, and Wolf began to look for African-American historical materials in the collection. He was amazed by how much he found: European accounts of Africa and the Atlantic slave trade, antislavery and abolition literature, apologies for slavery, the antebellum politics of slavery, slave narratives, documents of urban free black communities, especially Philadelphia's, materials relating to Reconstruction and the "Negro question," and literature by and about black Americans. Most of this material had been classified in other ways: travels, politics, autobiography, etc. By seeing it in a new way, by recovering the common thread that linked these diverse books, a subject collection of surprising strength was discovered. This was virtually a newly acquired collection. It was made accessible in 1973 in a printed catalogue with 16,500 entries. Since then several thousand more books have been added, and that part of the collection has attracted more scholars than any other. It was also the first part of the library to be cataloged in machine-readable form in the 1980s.[10] In succeeding years

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[10] *Afro-Americana 1553-1906: Author catalog of the Library Company of Philadelphia and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania,* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1973.

other “special collections” were discovered by this same process in such areas as women’s history, philanthropy and reform, publisher’s book bindings, and most recently in economic history.

This process of discovering hidden collections and building them up is not confined to the book collections. In the 1970s the Library’s old prints and photographs were gathered into a separate collection with its own curator. This uncovered a great strength in early Philadelphia photography. John McAllister, as it happened, was a manufacturer of optical instruments, and thus he was intimately involved with the development of photography, knew all the early local practitioners, and collected their works. He was especially interested in using the new medium to record buildings and landscapes that were about to vanish as his city grew in its paleotechnic age. Since the 1970s dozens of photographic collections have been added, including archives of important photographers like George Bacon Wood and photographic companies like the Aero Service Corporation. Most of these recently acquired collections extend far into the 20th century. Since the chronological scope of the book collection is supposed to end at 1880, this exerts pressure to move that cut-off date forward in time, not such a bad idea you might say. The print and photograph collection is one of the most heavily used at the Library Company, but integrating it with the book collection continues to be a challenge.

This process of reinterpreting the inherited collections continues alongside the acquisition of new collections, and the changes they provoke are still profound. In a sense the first such collection the Library “acquired” in the Wolf years was the pre-1820 imprints of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, which were placed on deposit in 1965 when a new building was erected next door to it. Since the Library Company did not

collect American books in the colonial period, its early American imprints were spotty. The Historical Society had been acquiring Pennsylvania imprints since its foundation. The two collections were perfectly complementary. Even the duplication is an asset, because the so-called duplicates are often in different states or bindings or have provenance that makes them useful.

Once the new building was ready, other collections quickly filled the shelves: the historical libraries of Christ Church, St. Peter's Church, Girard College, and the Wagner Free Institute of Science were placed on deposit. Wolf purchased major collections of German Americana from bookseller George Allen and collector Wilbur Oda. These collections have been supplemented in recent years by generous gifts of German Americana from Roger Stoddard and from the Roughwood Collection of Don Yoder and William Woys Weaver. Among the many other collections acquired by gift in the last quarter century were the Chew family library from Cliveden, the technology collection of Penrose Hoopes, the superb ornithological collections of Louise Sinkler and Francis R. Cope, Jr., and Edwin Wolf's own collection of early American Judaica. In addition, significant portions of the immensely important popular medicine collections of our President Bill Helfand and our Vice-President Charles Rosenberg have been given over the past few years, and we certainly hope that there will be many more similar gifts in the future.

Of all the collections we have acquired over the past 275 years, the Zinman collection may be the largest and the most important. It is the largest collection of pre-1801 American imprints formed in the 20th century by any private or institutional collector. It increased our pre-1801 American holdings by 40%, to 17,500, plus about

4,000 duplicates, a total of nearly 21,500 individual books, pamphlets, and broadsides. This is a little less than half of all known pre-1801 American imprints. Now the only other comparable collection is the American Antiquarian Society's with 22,000 imprints. In addition Michael gave over 3,000 of his 19th century American bookbindings and his 18th-century American magazine collection, but I am not even counting those in this total.

The size of the Zinman collection only begins to suggest the impact it is having on the library. Until now the only serious deficiency in our claim to have a representative sample of the reading of early Americans was a long-standing inherited local bias in the 18th century. In the 19th century our collecting was comprehensive, but in the colonial period we were collecting mainly imported books. The Historical Society's collection is very strong in 18th century imprints but only from the mid-Atlantic area. We were weak in 18th century New England printing, precisely the greatest strength of the Zinman collection. This acquisition has made our collections both more consistently representative of early American reading and more national in scope.

This acquisition comes at a time of renewed interest in the history of books as material objects, and it offers many opportunities for research in this area, since it includes a high proportion of imprints in their original state as issued, whereas many institutional copies have been rebound. Interest is also strong on the history of reading, and here again these books provide important evidence in ownership inscriptions and other marks indicative of the reception of the text.

Finally, the Zinman collection adds considerably to the canon of early American printing. The Library Company now holds nearly 750 pre-1801 imprints that are unrecorded, in the sense of not located in standard bibliographies at a public institution,

as well as hundreds more that are more complete or in variant states or bindings, or simply more accessible in the Library Company than other copies located in smaller collections scattered across the country. The Zinman collection opens the national printed archive to expansion, revision, and reinterpretation.

Most of the major collections we have acquired over the last 275 years have sparked a reinterpretation of the Library Company's mission, and the Zinman collection is no exception. Not only has it made the collections more national in scope and more important nationally, it has also reoriented our chronological focus. For at least the last 20 years that focus has been drifting forward into the 19th and even the 20th centuries. We will not abandon those eras, but the 18th century is now once again in the center of the picture and not at the edges. We are already seeing the effect of this in our fellowship application pool and in the interests of other readers who come to Locust Street.

The exhibition that has just opened in our gallery is an example of how the Zinman collection can provoke a new reading of the early American printed archive and its role in society. I had thought of mounting an exhibition of "Treasures of the Zinman Collection," but that seemed too easy and not in the spirit of Michael's collecting. Instead I approached the collection in the spirit of what he calls "the critical mess theory" -- if you get a lot of stuff together and start messing around with it, patterns begin to emerge. Michael was always attracted to quirky books, slightly disreputable publications, printed ephemera, and what might be called street literature, and I knew the collection was rich in that material. I went through every book, pamphlet and broadside in the Zinman Collection, pulling out these quirky things, and then I looked them all over and asked myself what they amounted to. I had a vague idea of an exhibition about

popular print culture in early America, but these imprints were not kind usually thought of as popular in the sense of books most commonly printed: sermons, devotional books, school books, Psalm books, political pamphlets, and the like. Those books tended to be written by ministers and other elite authority figures and imposed on ordinary people from the top down. What I was looking at was writing that ordinary people chose to read for pleasure, without any prompting from teachers, ministers, parents, or governors. This was popular culture that rose from the bottom up. So the critical mess began to make sense.

Of course there is no such thing as purely "bottom up" popular culture, since it always incorporates aspects of elite culture, just as elite culture always appropriates elements of popular culture. This is even more the case when you are talking about popular print culture, since reading and writing were skills imparted by the elite. Nevertheless some kinds of print were definitely more "bottom up" than others. They included ballads, joke books, songsters, dream books, elegies, political ephemera, pornography, and deviltry, as well as sensational accounts of disasters, crimes, executions, atrocities, and abductions. All these genres of popular print are represented in the exhibition, along with print that captures aspects of oral or non-literate popular culture in taverns, theatres, pleasure gardens, and race courses, as well as evidence of reading and writing by people on the margins of society.

Most of these imprints were issued in the form of broadsides, pamphlets, or small flimsily bound booklets called chapbooks. Much of this writing is eerily familiar to modern consumer of pop culture, except of course that it was not nearly as ubiquitous or commercialized. These imprints were sold by hawkers and peddlers, or if they were in

books stores, they were often under the counter. And they tended to be read to pieces or thrown away when they had served their purpose, so that today they are invariably rare, and not well known or much studied by cultural historians. Of the nearly 120 items in the exhibition, over half are unique, in the sense that the only known copy is in the Zinman collection, and many of the others are known in only one or two other copies.

Michael's ability to find imprints of this sort is amazing. I still don't know how he does it. A few years ago he got interested in stud posters, that is broadsides advertising that a stallion of proven reliability and impeccable pedigree will be available to "cover" (as they said) the local mares this season at a stated price per "leap." Obviously this is Michael's kind of imprint, but these posters also fit into our popular culture theme, because they are evidence of a cultural activity (that is horse racing) where the classes mixed freely, and they are also examples of popular writing. They show real ingenuity in combining the vocabulary of the subculture ("cover," "leap," and the like) with the vigorous common language of advertising. Before Michael got interested in stud posters, nine of them were known to exist in public and private collections. Somehow he managed to unearth 18 more of them, twice as many as were previously known. Many of them have powerful woodcuts of horses and grooms in the Stubbs manner, which make them all the more wonderful. But there is even more.

Reading a history of racing in early America, I learned that most modern thoroughbred horses can trace their descent back to the 18th century. Could there be any connection, I wondered, between our studs of the 1790s and any modern Derby winners, for example, just to pick a horse at random, Smarty Jones? It turns out that one of them, the thorough bred Virginia horse Melzar, has among his descendants the famous mid-19th

century Kentucky horse Lexington, and from Lexington we can trace a clear line right to Smarty. In more ways than one, modern American pop culture has its roots in the broadsides and pamphlets in the Zinman Collection.

It almost goes without saying that when a library acquires a collection it also embraces the vision, mission, idiosyncrasy, unpredictable creativity of the collector. In some cases, the library also acquires the collector. For example when we acquired James Rush's collection in 1869, we also acquired his mortal remains, and those of his wife. When we moved from South Broad to Locust Street in 1965, we brought them along, and they are buried just on the other side of that wall. In the case of Michael Zinman we seem to have acquired the collector while he is still alive. He is still buying more early American imprints than any other collector, private or institutional, but the difference is that now he buys them for us. Sometimes he barely glances at his new acquisitions before bunging them in the mail to us. In the Logan Room is a case of books and broadsides that arrived in the last two weeks, an almost random sample of the flow of material he continues to direct to the Library Company. Since the formal acquisition of Michael's collection in 2000, he has added nearly 500 imprints by gift, deposit, or by the gift of funds for their acquisition. Though I have been trying to show how the acquisition of the Zinman collection is part of a pattern of building the library by collecting collections that stretches back almost to our founding, I have to admit we have never even come close to acquiring a collector like Michael. In that sense he breaks the mold.

The acquisition of his early American imprints has already had a major impact on the Library Company, but it is too soon to know what all the consequences will be. We have prospered under John's direction, and so in 2000 we found ourselves in a position to

acquire a collection that would have been beyond our reach only a few years before. But acquiring it is just the beginning. The means must be found to sustain this aggressive collecting, to conserve these new acquisitions, to make them available online and digitally, and most importantly to integrate them with the other half-million rare books and graphics in our stacks. We are even beginning to worry about where to put all these books, because our stacks are nearly full. In order to live up to this collection the Library Company will have to grow and change in unforeseen ways. History seems to indicate that change is inevitable when you collect collections, but it is the type of change that keeps us alive. The Library Company is a great library precisely because it is constantly reinventing itself from the inside out – or if you will, from the bottom up -- in response to the impact of collecting collections.