

NO.55 SPRING 2000
BENE LEGERE
 NEWSLETTER OF THE
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The Library Associates

Join more than 6,000 other friends, book lovers, alumni, and faculty who recognize that the influence of a great research library reaches beyond the university it serves to the many communities of which it is a part.

Library Associates receive complimentary copies of the quarterly newsletter *Bene Legere*, as well as invitations to special occasions at the Library. For more information on the Library Associates program, please write or telephone: The Library Development Office, Room 188 Doe Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720-6000; telephone (510) 642-9377. Or, [check our website](#).

LIBRARY MAKES A NINE MILLIONTH ACQUISITION

In summer 1999 a committee was formed to select the Library's nine millionth acquisition, which would take place in approximately six months.

Everyone on the committee agreed that this was a significant milestone—only three other American university libraries have more than nine million volumes, and two of those have been around for a century longer than Cal has.

For the eight millionth acquisition, the Library had decided to celebrate the diversity of the Library's collections with eight different works, many of them not in traditional book format. This time it seemed appropriate to choose a volume that would make a statement that books in a traditional format are very important, are sought after, and offer an experience, both tactile and intellectual, that the computer screen does not.

According to Anthony Bliss, rare book curator at the Bancroft Library, the volume that the selection committee decided on, *Aboriginal Port Folio*, by James O. Lewis (1836), represents this country's first attempt at a true-to-life depiction of the American Indian. "While it may not be 'great art,' it is free of the fantasies, clichés, conventions, and sensationalism that characterized earlier depictions. It is the first book entirely devoted to the depiction of the indigenous peoples of North America and sets the stage for subsequent works by McKenney and Hall, Catlin, and Bodmer."

With the volume selected, there was the obvious question of how to pay for it. The book would be presented at auction, where we could not know exactly how much it would fetch (or even that we would be successful in securing it), especially given today's volatile prices at auction.

We were naturally delighted when the *Fanny and Leo Koerner Charitable Trust* agreed to provide a nucleus gift that would match, two-to-one, all first-time gifts from Cal alumni to the Library. Our solicitation to this population was mailed out in December and resulted in an astonishing 681 new donors to the Library. Their gifts, when combined with the match, assured our success at the auction.



From James O. Lewis' *Aboriginal Port Folio* (1836). *Ta-Ma-Kake-Toke*, "Woman That Spoke First." Portrait of a Chippewa squaw in mourning taken at the Treaty of Fond du Lac in 1827.



From James O. Lewis' *Aboriginal Port Folio* (1836). Brewett, Portrait of a celebrated Miami Chief taken at the Treaty of Massinewa in 1827.

A word about the book itself: It includes 72 hand-colored lithographs that portray Indian chiefs, mostly in their ceremonial garb. When the volume arrived, it was evident that some preservation treatment would be necessary. Gillian Boal and Nancy Harris, conservators in the Library's Preservation Laboratory, methodically separated each leave of the book, removed scotch tape, and repaired tears using cooked Japanese wheat paste and Japanese handmade paper. The volume was reassembled after the original black leather binding was repaired.

Acquisition of the volume was celebrated at *Cal Day* on April 15, 2000, at a reception in the Morrison Library, to which all Library donors, including the 681 new ones, were invited. The volume was on display, and Professor Hertha D. Sweet Wong, a specialist in Native American literature, made an interesting presentation on Native North American visual self-representation.

In fall 2000 the Bancroft Library will present an exhibition on the pictorial representation of the North American Indian, featuring all four of the great color-plate books mentioned above as well as works dating back to the 16th century and as recent as C. Hart Merriam's photographs of the 1920s.

The Library is most appreciative of the **Fanny and Leo Koerner Charitable Trust** and the 681 donors for their generous response to our appeal--another indication, we think, that the University community clearly recognizes that the strength of the Library reflects the strength of the University.

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