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Lumières, Spring 1981

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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LUMIÈRES

Profile of a Bibliophile —James S. Noel

The name "NOEL" is one of the best known in Shreveport, Louisiana. Noel roots in Caddo Parish date back to the early part of the last century, and Noel family members have long left marks of their influence there—as planters, industrialists, businessmen, and community leaders. The name is virtually concomitant with oil and gas development, with philanthropy, and with civic improvement.

The James S. Noel, Jr., Memorial United Methodist Church—dedicated by a father in memory of a son who died in 1901—is one of the handsomest and most famous buildings in Shreveport.

Traditionally, Noels have tended to be politically conservative, with a bit of the maverick and the iconoclast thrown in.

The grandson of the man who built the church is one of today's leading Shreveport citizens and fits his ancestral mold well.

James S. Noel—a successful businessman not quite 70 who looks 20 years younger, founder and president of the Noel Estate Foundation, president of Ark-La-Tex Salvage Pool, owner of some 4,000 Caddo and Bossier Parish acres, chess aficionado, former educator and athlete—has recently bought the abandoned Texas and Pacific Railroad Station on Market Street in Shreveport. The three-story depot, still in a state of renovation, is intended as the future home of approximately 80,000 books that Mr. Noel has collected over the past 50 years.

An eighteenth-century scholar, Mr. Noel reveres books, especially biography, and especially Samuel Johnson. (He is one of last year's founding members of the LSU Johnson Society.) Going back a century earlier, Mr. Noel is a lover of Shakespeare, and in the

current century an admirer of the late Winston Churchill.

But his literary tastes are wide and varied: A thick book of quotations titled *Words that Burn* and purchased in 1930 launched Mr. Noel's library, which subsequently led him where his interests tugged. And because those interests range greatly, the volumes he has bought cover many subjects, from art to acting to architecture to anthropology; from philosophy to psychology to politics; from religion to war; from fact to fiction to fantasy. He has categorized his collection into 125 different subject areas, and unlike some people who purchase merely to possess, Mr. Noel fondly reads many of his books, often several times and often engrossed in several at once.

Mr. Noel holds a bachelor's degree from Centenary College, conducted graduate study at the University of Oklahoma, and founded the Caddo Teachers' Association before he left that profession in 1950.

Meanwhile, back at the railroad station where trains no longer run, there are some problems. Cataloging tens of thousands of books is a monumental chore, even with some experienced assistance that Mr. Noel has recruited. Simply assembling the shelves and arranging their contents in order is hardly less arduous. Moreover, renovating an early-1940s building is an expensive proposition, and the Noel Foundation can allocate only so much money per year for the project.

Mr. Noel, however, is a particularly dedicated bibliophile, determined to turn his private library into a public research facility for serious scholars—like himself.

Loyce J. McIlhenny
LSU Publications

Captain Salmon White Entertains: The Friends' Annual Banquet

The LSU Faculty Club was the setting for the *Friends'* annual banquet on February 16. A record attendance of over eighty persons, including several out-of-town guests, mingled for aperitifs before sitting down to dinner.

Guests of the *Friends* for the evening included Major General and Mrs. O. J. Daigle and Professor and Mrs. Walton J.



Examining a copy of *Sherwood Anderson and Other Creoles* are, left to right, Mr. John Cole, Center for the Book, Library of Congress; Miss Sallie Farrell, board member; Mr. Marcus A. McCorison, guest speaker; and Dean Henry L. Snyder, president.

Patrick, all of whom received life memberships in the *Friends* in recognition of their gifts to the Middleton Library. General and Mrs. Daigle were honored for their gift of ten Knute Heldner paintings, including a self-portrait and several landscapes Heldner painted prior to his move to Louisiana. Professor and Mrs. Patrick were recognized for the gift of over 200 volumes in the field of American literature. The most notable of the books in the Patrick collection is *Sherwood Anderson and Other Creoles* with drawings by William Spratling, arranged by William Faulkner. It is the first publication of the Pelican Bookshop Press done while Faulkner was living in the New Orleans French Quarter in the 1920s. Professor Patrick, retired dean of English at Auburn University, is the first person to have received a Ph.D. in English at LSU. Chancellor Emeritus Cecil G. Taylor presented the Daigles and the Patricks plaques from the *Friends*.

The after-dinner address was delivered by Marcus Allen McCorison, director and librarian of the American Antiquarian Society. His "speech" was a spritely discourse on the adventures and misadventures of one Captain Salmon White, a fictitious New England book collector. The talk, accompanied by humorous slides, was replete with literary and library allusions. The stormy seas of Captain White's bibliographical sailings were greeted with gales of laughter from an appreciative audience.

William Morris and the Kelmscott Press: The Bookmaker's Art

A collection of private-press limited editions relating to William Morris and the Kelmscott Press was exhibited in the second-floor hallway of the Middleton Library during the month of March. The exhibit was sponsored by the *Friends of the LSU Library* assisted by a grant from the Louisiana Committee for the Humanities, the state arm of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The William Morris collection is the private collection of John J. Walsdorf, an employee of the bookselling firm of B. H. Blackwell, Ltd.

William Morris, a designer and craftsman in the decorative arts, founded the Kelmscott Press in England in the 1890s. He is credited with the inauguration of the modern fine-press movement in which finely designed and printed books are produced by small printing establishments in limited quantities. After Morris' death many typographic admirers of his work produced books imitating the Kelmscott style. The collection exhibited in the Middleton Library contained over 125 books, including original Kelmscott Press editions and modern fine-press works relating to William Morris.

In connection with the exhibit, a lecture by Mr. Walsdorf was given on March 10. Mr. Walsdorf spoke of his experiences in becoming a knowledgeable book collector to an audience of William Morris enthusiasts and bibliophiles. The lecture was followed by a wine-and-cheese reception in the Library staff lounge. The text of the lecture has been printed as a supplement to this issue of *Lumières*.



Mr. John J. Walsdorf and his copy of the Basilisk Press Kelmscott Chaucer facsimile.

Gifts

A set of the 1861 letterpress of John James Audubon's *Birds of America* was presented to the *Friends of the LSU Library* by former Chancellor Paul Murrill and his wife, Nancy. The 1861 edition is referred to as the "Bien" edition.

John Woodhouse Audubon, the son of the naturalist, planned with J. Bien, a New York lithographer, to issue a second edition of the double elephant folio of the *Birds of America*. The edition was never completed because of the outbreak of the Civil War. However, the text was printed before the project had to be abandoned. This edition of the text was acquired by the Murrills, who had the bindings restored and presented the set to the Library as an expression of their love and appreciation for the University.

A resolution was passed by the *Friends of the LSU Library* Board commending Dr. Murrill for his support of the Library during his years as chancellor. The Board thanked the Murrills for their interest in the Library collection and gave them life memberships in the *Friends'* organization.

In memory of:

- Mr. J. Andrew Bahlinger*
by Mr. and Mrs. John J. Capdevielle
- Mr. Orlow M. Boies*
by Mr. and Mrs. John J. Capdevielle
- Mr. Willie F. Castle*
by Cecilia M. Landry; Mary B. Mills; G. Caroline Wire
- Mr. L. W. Eaton, Jr.*
by Mrs. George F. Kirby
- Mrs. David Ellison*
by Ms. Renee Nesbitt
- Mrs. L. H. Flint*
by Social Science Club
- Major Fred C. Frey, Sr.*
by the Board of Regents; Mrs. George F. Kirby;
Dr. and Mrs. Paul K. Rees
- Mr. Patrick A. Hebert*
by Mr. and Mrs. John J. Capdevielle
- Mrs. Vera Powell Hubbell*
by Chancellor Emeritus and Mrs. Cecil G. Taylor
- Mrs. Ethel Barkdull Kahao*
by Mr. and Mrs. Louis D. Curet
- Mr. George F. Kirby*
by Dr. and Mrs. Max Goodrich
- Mr. Kevin Paul Larousse*
by Ms. Renee Nesbitt; Arthur Roberts; Robert Wooten
- Mr. Davis G. Lunsford*
by Mr. and Mrs. M. Stone Miller; Mrs. Joseph A. Perrault, Jr.
- Professor H. A. Major*
by Dr. William A. McKnight; Chancellor Emeritus
and Mrs. Cecil G. Taylor

- Mrs. Gladys R. Merrill*
by Mr. and Mrs. Joe Richard, Sr.
- Mrs. Troy H. Middleton, Sr.*
by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Arbour
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- Mrs. Thomas Alvin Ward*
by Judge and Mrs. Minos D. Miller, Jr.
- Dr. Alva Burl Watts*
by Dr. and Mrs. James W. Reddoch
- Mrs. Gerald C. Williams*
by Chancellor Emeritus and Mrs. Cecil G. Taylor
- Dr. T. Harry Williams*
by Mrs. George F. Kirby

Purchases

The *Friends of the LSU Library* honored two board members this spring with purchases made for the Middleton Library. A presentation in honor of Chancellor Emeritus Cecil G. Taylor of a rare volume on French proverbs was made on the occasion of the rededication of *La Maison Française*.

The book, published in 1789 in Paris, is *Matinées Sénonaises* by the Abbé Jean Charles Francois Tuet.

The gift to the Library in Chancellor Taylor's honor was made in recognition of his work in the revitalization of the *Friends'* organization and his role in the renovation of the French House.

Another special presentation was made at the Golden Jubilee celebration of the LSU School of Library and Information Science in May. Tribute was paid to Mrs. Florinell F. Morton, professor emeritus of library science and director of the Library School, 1944-70, for her support of the Library during her years as director and since as an officer and board member of the *Friends*.

The purchase is *A Collection of Bookbindings: The Henry Davis Gift* by Mirjam M. Foot, published by the British Library. This set contains discussions, descriptions, and illustrations from one of the finest collections of book bindings in the world.

LUMIÈRES

Published by the Friends of the LSU Library
131 Pleasant Hall, Louisiana State University, Anna Perrault, editor

Volume 6 Number 1

Literally "lights" in French, lumières is frequently used to denote enlightenment or knowledge. As such, it illustrates the purpose of the newsletter: to enlighten members of the Friends of the LSU Library with news of the organization and with needs of the LSU Library. The cover design is based on an exquisite hand-illuminated border from a 15th century French religious manuscript.

Financial Statement

November 1980-March 1981

Balance in LSU Foundation Account
September 30, 1980 \$51,296.01

Income:

Memberships, Memorials,	
Gifts in Honor of Individuals	\$ 3,956.55
Book Bazaar	22,000.00

TOTAL	\$25,956.55
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Expenditures:

October	No expenditures	
November	Authorized book purchases for Middleton Library	\$ 7,000.00
	Printing work completed by Printing, Inc.	319.06
December	No expenditures	
January	No expenditures	
February	Debit by Foundation	25.00
March	No expenditures	
TOTAL		\$ 7,344.06

Balance in LSU Foundation Account
March 31, 1981 \$69,908.50

Library Endowment Fund	
March 31, 1981	\$57,907.82

Ellinor H. Behre Fund	
March 31, 1981	\$ 1,265.00

Fred B. Kniffen Fund	
March 31, 1981	\$ 1,655.00

H. C. Sanders Fund	
March 31, 1981	\$ 1,763.50

Officers

President Henry Snyder
Vice-President Edith Kirkpatrick
Treasurer Caroline Wire
Secretary Anna Perrault

Classes of Membership

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A. Student Member (annually) | \$2.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B. Regular Member (annually) | \$10.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C. Contributing Member (annually) | \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D. Sustaining Member (annually) | \$50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E. Patron Member (annually) | \$100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> F. Life Member | \$1000.00 or more
or the donation of unusual and distinctive material valued at \$1000 or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> G. Institutional or Corporate Member (annually) | \$500.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> H. Honorary Life Member | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check payable to LSU Foundation for Friends of the Library | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to pay as follows: | |

Member's signature _____

Address _____

City and State _____

Date _____

Friends of the LSU Library
LSU Foundation
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803

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