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## Lumières, Fall 1987

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# LUMIÈRES

## An Historical Overview

### How Printing Became an Art



William Morris was a Victorian artist and craftsman who, more than anyone, was the moving force in the Arts and Crafts Movement in England that flourished during the last half of the nineteenth century. Morris' reaction to the mass-produced, factory-made goods of the Industrial Revolution was to insist on the importance and virtue of the handcrafted product. Morris & Company was a firm of artist-craftsmen who designed and produced furniture, stained glass, tiles, carpets, wallpaper, and textiles. Following Morris' golden rule, "Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful," the wealthy in Britain purchased this artwork to embellish their homes.

Eventually, perhaps inevitably, Morris' lives as a designer, author, and art reformer came together in his last artistic endeavor: he became a printer. His fascination with the book began when he discovered the illuminated medieval manuscripts in the Bodleian Library while attending Oxford University. For many years it was the hand-written rather than the printed word that held his interest. As he studied those early manuscripts, his sense of beauty and design was influenced by the decorative motifs of 15th century French and Italian illuminators. He began to practice a calligraphic hand, having studied the romanesque calligraphy and the lovely cursive writing of the Italians.

Morris immersed himself in learning the technicalities of printing in order to become a craftsman of the art. In 1891, he set up the Kelmscott Press in a cottage near his home in Hammersmith, a London borough. The press produced fifty-three titles and other miscellaneous items during the next seven years. Morris was involved in all phases of bookmaking including selecting handmade papers,

experimenting with various kinds of inks, and designing typefaces. Although the books produced by the press were by no means the foundation of modern book design (their style was medieval and in the manuscript tradition), William Morris had shown that printing could be great art, and its details could be worth taking great pains to achieve. As a result of the Kelmscott Press, book design had been taken apart and stripped to its essentials, then restructured in a new and different way. The great revival in printing which had begun was stimulated by the example of William Morris, and it continues today in the fine printing that abounds in this country and abroad.

"William Morris and the Kelmscott Press: the Bookmaker's Art" was the first exhibit and reception sponsored by the Friends of the LSU Library. Since this exhibit in 1981, these earlier associations with the subjects of William Morris and the Kelmscott Press have been recently continued through purchases for the Rare Book Collection.

No rare book collection would be complete without representative examples from the Kelmscott Press. One of the first purchases made by the Friends of the LSU Library was the Basilisk Press facsimile of the Kelmscott Press *Chaucer*, the most outstanding work issued with the Kelmscott imprint and now the most expensive item to collect.

Recently, the Rare Book Collection has been substantially enriched with the purchase by the Friends of nineteen original Kelmscott volumes including the first product of the press, Morris' own *The Story of the Glittering Plain*. Many of the titles purchased are bound in the lovely limp vellum which is characteristic of the Kelmscott Press, while some are bound in linen-backed boards.

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# Became an Art . . .

From page 1

One volume, *The Defense of Guenevere*, is bound in limp vellum and placed in a slipcase covered with fabric designed by William Morris. This title and one other, *The Nature of Gothic* by John Ruskin, bear the bookplate of the famous book collector, A. Edward Newton. A number of the titles are works authored by Morris, while others are by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Percy Bysshe Shelley. Both individually and as a body, these books add a great measure to the prestige and research value of the LSU Libraries' growing collection of fine printing.

In the spring, the Friends will sponsor a workshop on the subject of modern fine printing. There will be lectures and demonstrations on the making of special editions accompanied by an exhibit showing the Kelmscott Press items recently purchased and other examples of special press imprints from the LSU special collections.

Kathryn Morgan  
Head, McIlhenny and Rare Book Collections

## Modern Fine Printing

Friends and library staff were treated to a preview of the workshop to be held next spring when Charlene Garry, proprietor of the Basilisk Press in London, gave an informal lecture in Hill Memorial Library, Friday, October 16, on modern fine printing.

American-born, Garry went to England for a doctorate at the Courtauld Institute and, after a stint in advertising, stayed to found the Basilisk Press in 1974. The Press publishes one or two fine limited editions per year, and in addition, acts as a clearinghouse for a large number of fine presses and limited edition publishers.

Ms. Garry's talk was lively and informative, having the added attraction of "show and tell." Books printed by Basilisk and other presses were exhibited in conjunction with the lecture, and were available afterwards for examination by members of the audience. During a reception provided by the Library Staff Association, Ms. Garry mingled with guests, answering questions and providing price information for prospective collectors.

A small exhibition at the back of the lecture room featured several limited editions from the Rare Book Collections at LSU published by the Basilisk Press. Notable among these is one of the early purchases made by the Friends for the Rare Book Collection and one of the first products of the Basilisk Press, the facsimile of the Kelmscott *Chaucer* bound in a striking William Morris fabric design.

Another title exhibited was *The Redbooks of Humphrey Repton*, a gift to the McIlhenny Collection from an anonymous donor. This red leather bound set follows the technique used in the original notebooks in which a base (before) landscape drawing has an overlay of how the landscape will look after the work has been finished. Other titles exhibited were volumes of natural history drawings.

The lecture provided an excellent opportunity for members of the Friends and library staff to become informed about the craft of modern fine printing and the reasons such editions are purchased for special collections at LSU.



Kathy Morgan and Charlene Garry compare prints from *Parrots and Cockatoos* published by the Basilisk Press.



Dr. and Mrs. Charles Prosser talk after the lecture with Charlene Garry of the Basilisk Press.

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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 the news of the organization and with the needs of the LSU Library. The cover design is based on an exquisite hand-illuminated border from a 15th century French religious manuscript.

Photographs by Don Morrison



# 12th Annual Book Bazaar

The annual book bazaar has become a veritable circus of attractions. Entertainment before the 1987 sale was live and exciting. The Baton Rouge Zoomobile was on the scene with zookeepers showing a melange of species to the crowd of buyers who came early for the first day opening. There was a colorful parrot, an albino ferret, and—just to make sure the crowd was well-behaved—a friendly boa constrictor. For those who prefer their entertainment to be of the human species, there was a mime from the LSU Drama Department.

The grand opening this year was less formal but more festive. Instead of a ribbon cutting, there were balloons to be released signaling the opening of the show. Participating in the opening events for the first time was LSU Athletic Director Joe Dean.

Combined gross sales from the book bazaar and textbook sales was over \$41,000, another new record total. The stock offered for sale was the highest quality of any book bazaar. New book categories this year were a giftables section with like new recent hardback books priced a fraction of list price; an old mysteries section from the 1920's-1940's; and a large print section. There was a silent auction on a copy of the first LSU *Gumbo*, volume 1, 1900.

Another new feature this year was a raffle of autographed editions of new books by Louisiana authors: David King Gleason's *Antebellum Homes of Georgia*; Neil Odenwald and James Turner, *Identification, Selection, and Use for Southern Plants*; Rex Reed's *Personal Effects: A Novel of Hollywood*; Mary Alice Fontenot's *Clovis Crawfish and the Spinning Spider*. Also in the raffle was a copy of the Friend's own publication, *Nature Classics: A Catalogue of the E. A. McIlhenny Natural History Collection at Louisiana State University*. And for Tiger fans, there was a framed

photograph of the 1958 national champions, the LSU Fighting Tigers.

Should anyone need something sturdier than a plastic bag to carry home bargains, gold tote-bags with a purple book bazaar tiger logo were sold for the first time. The tote-bags are available in two sizes, a standard tote-bag size and an extra large bag just right for carrying a load of books.

Although the sale runs for just three days, the work of pricing and sorting goes on year round in the book barn in the basement of Middleton Library. The pre-event publicity begins several weeks before the sale with local merchants and news media helping to spread the word. This year a video prepared by the LSU Office of Public Relations from film of the 1986 bazaar, was made available to local television stations for 30-second public relations spots.

Maison Blanche/Goudchaux's sponsored "Cakes Open Doors:" a Girl Scout cake bake for collecting books from school outside reading lists to help stock the bazaar young people's table. Each troop entered a cake with three \$25 gift certificates for scouting merchandise as prizes. The *Sunday Advocate Magazine* featured special and rare books which have been purchased with the funds the sale has raised. Leo Honeycutt came to moving day on Tuesday before the sale and featured it on that day's news. Friend's board member, T. O. Perry, appeared on "Tune In" early in the morning showing items purchased with book sale funds. Local radio stations plugged the sale throughout the three days. The Friends appreciate the good will of these local businesses and news media in publicizing and supporting the Book Bazaar.



As buyers wait, the chairman of the 1987 Book Bazaar, Julie Hamilton, gathers with University representatives for the balloon launching to officially open the sale. Left to right, D. W. Schneider, LSU Libraries; Robert Walker,

LSU Agricultural Center; Mrs. Hamilton; H. Rouse Caffey, Chancellor of the Agricultural Center; LSU Athletic Director Joe Dean; Chancellor Jim Wharton, LSU Baton Rouge campus.





A new book bazaar volunteer, Gwen Ebersbaker, prepares her table for the opening onslaught as Glenda Long models the large economy-size tote bag with the Book Bazaar logo. The tote bags were introduced for sale at the book bazaar.

The chairman of the 1987 Book Bazaar was Mrs. Ben C. Hamilton, Jr. She was aided by the Book Bazaar committee consisting of Mrs. John H. Keenon, secretary, Mrs. Raymie Edmonds, treasurer, and Mrs. Warren Dixon Millican, assistant treasurer. The daily cashier chairmen for the sale were, Thursday, Mrs. William E. Edrington; Friday, Mrs. Hubert J. Waguespack and Mrs. John S. Campbell, Jr.; and Saturday, Mrs. Willard Fruehan.

In charge of securing volunteer staffing for the three days were Mrs. Louis Thibodeaux and Mrs. Roland Domert. Sales chairman was Mrs. James F. McDowell. Mr. Trent James served as arrangements chairman with co-chairman, Mrs. Kenneth Carpenter. Publicity chairman was Mrs. Douglas P. Harrison with Mrs. Cary Long in charge of campus publicity. Mrs. Chauvin Wilkinson staffed the information table. Mrs. Norman David and Mrs. Donald Woodland provided hospitality for the volunteer workers. Moving day and transportation were coordinated by Mrs. John M. West, III and Mrs. Delroy Spann. Keeping the tables stocked throughout the three-day sale were Mrs. John Gonce and Mrs. T. O. Perry assisted by LSU students.

The year-round book barn operation was chaired by Mrs. R. Gordon Kean with Mrs. Eugene Owen as co-chair. Also a year-round job is book collection chaired by Mrs. Warren Green; co-chaired by Mrs. Wylie Barrow, Sr. and Mrs. Leighton Ewell. Serving as liaisons were Carolin Wire and Mrs. Charles Bryant Smith. Recording the events was Mrs. Don Bell, scrapbook chair.

Thanks are extended to all of the volunteers who contributed to the success of the 1987 Book Bazaar and its record setting proceeds.

## Christmas Gifts

Searching for gifts for those people who seem to have everything? The Friends have a few suggestions to save hours of searching in crowded shopping malls. First of these is an elegant gift for a lover of fine books. A gift of a copy of the Friend's first publication, *Nature Classics: A Catalogue of the E. A. McIlhenny Natural History Collection at Louisiana State University* would please any person of discriminating taste.

*Nature Classics* contains an illustrated essay on the development of natural history illustration and printing techniques. The essay is very informative to the person who would like to learn more about fine printing. There is also a color section of examples of rare natural history illustrations from the McIlhenny Collection. *Nature Classics* is available from the Louisiana State University Press or local bookstores at \$39.95.

The gold tote-bags with the purple Tiger Book Bazaar logo are another pleasing gift idea. These are available from the Book Barn in the basement of Middleton Library in two sizes: a regular size tote for \$7.50 and a large economy size for \$9.00. These gifts provide advertisement for the Friends whenever carried.

A tax-deductible donation may be made to the Friends in the name of or in honor of that person who has everything. A contribution to the Goodrich-Taylor Assistantship Award goes to an endowment which will fund a student internship in the LSU Libraries' Special Collections. A person honored by a donation can feel that his/her "present" will form a portion of a continuum to provide education for library science graduate students and assistance to the library rare collections.

Contributions to the Friends of the LSU Library may be sent to Treasurer of Friends, Middleton Library, Room 295, Louisiana State University; Baton Rouge, LA 70803. To inquire about items for sale, call 388-2217.

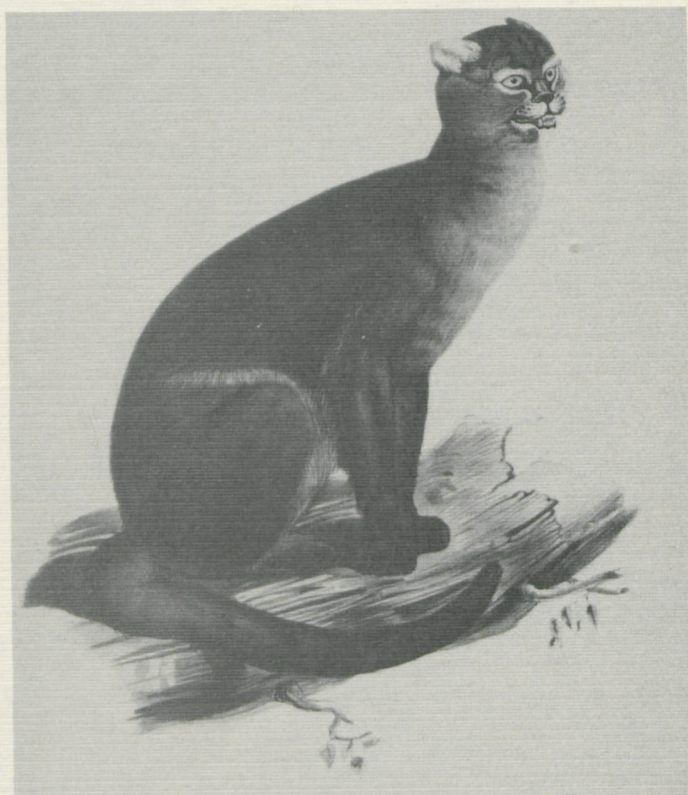


Illustration of a leopard by Edward Lear, reproduced in *Nature Classics*.



## Domesday Exhibit Opening



*Dr. Geoffrey Martin, Keeper of Public Records, poses with Baton Rouge hosts Jack Armstrong of the LSU Law Cen-*

*ter and Randy Rice, president of the English Speaking Union.*

On Monday, October 12, 1987, the Friends of the LSU Library, the LSU Libraries, and the Paul M. Herbert Law Center co-hosted an event in Hill Memorial Library commemorating the 900th anniversary of William the Conqueror's *Domesday Book*. The evening consisted of a lecture and reception, and also marked the formal opening of an exhibition on the *Domesday Book*.

A standing-room-only audience greeted the guest speaker, Dr. Geoffrey Martin, who is the Keeper of Public Records at the Public Record Office in London, in which capacity he has custody of the original *Domesday Book* dating from 1086. Dr. Martin's appearance was sponsored by the English-Speaking Union.

Following Dr. Martin's lecture, in which he spoke with wit and erudition on the history of *Domesday*, guests mingled about the library enjoying refreshments and viewing the exhibition located in the first and second floor lobbies of Hill.

The original *Domesday Book* manuscript is one of the world's best known and most important documents. Begun in 1086, twenty years after William the Conqueror's reign began, *Domesday Book* is a meticulous survey of William's realm. Its pages record in minute detail the holdings, whether land, animal or human, of 11th century English landowners. In essence, *Domesday* provides a glimpse of an entire medieval kingdom—for a moment in time. On the occasion of *Domesday's* anniversary, the decision was made to disbind and restore *Domesday Book* to its original format. At the same time, it was agreed that an authorized facsimile should be published. Alecto Historical Editions, experienced in historical publications such as their monumental *Banks Florilegium* and Audubon plates, undertook this difficult task, which is as yet, incomplete.

The result, as Geoffrey Martin said is, "An uncannily, almost indecently, accurate reproduction for which it is possible on occasion to mistake for the original." This facsimile edition, which was purchased for the Rare Book Collections, consists of complete translations of the book, detailed glosses on the translations, maps of the thirty-one counties surveyed, a complete set of indexes, and a computer data-base to aid in research. The facsimile itself has now been published and LSU's copy is housed in Hill Memorial Library where it is part of the current exhibition. The remaining sections are expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Interest in the *Domesday* facsimile project has been so great that Alecto Historical Editions produced an exhibition to answer the need for information on the subject. In the summer of 1986, this exhibition was mounted at the Grolier Club in New York, coinciding with the American Library Association Conference held in New York that year.

Through the Libraries' connection with Alecto Historical Editions, and with the financial support of the Friends of the Library, the exhibition was acquired permanently for Special Collections. It was scheduled to open at the time of Dr. Martin's visit to Baton Rouge. Once the exhibition closes at Hill Memorial Library, it will be prepared to travel to institutions throughout the country.

In the meantime, however, "William the Conqueror's *Domesday Book: 1086-1986*," is located in Hill Memorial Library, where it can be viewed by the public weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Kathryn Morgan**  
Head, McIlhenny and Rare Book Collections



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from Vermont/New Hampshire Chapter of the  
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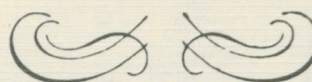
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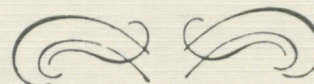
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