

INTRODUCTION

This volume is a catalogue of the rich and extensive collection of maps in the Library of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. It contains information on some 1,750 printed maps, over 1,000 manuscript maps, 136 atlases, two globes, and one model.¹

This project was begun in 1985 shortly after my retirement as Associate Librarian of the Society, when Librarian Edward C. Carter II named me Andrew W. Mellon Senior Research Fellow. The map collection had been catalogued by Mrs. Doris E. Broomall, but it was decided by Associate Librarian Hildegard Stephans and Cataloguer Marian Christ that more complete descriptions of the maps and a far more comprehensive index were essential for the better use of the collection. We determined that all maps in the Manuscript Collection as well as all printed maps, certain atlases, globes, and the terrestrial model would be listed, but that no microform maps would be included. Restrikes, reprints, and facsimiles of maps also are included. Occasionally maps which once belonged to a volume had been removed and placed in the map collection, and these, too, are listed in this catalogue.

The only maps in published works which are included in this catalogue are those listed in James Clement Wheat and Christian F. Brun's *Maps and Charts Published in America before 1800. A bibliography* (New Haven: Yale University Press: 1969). Finally, I have included in the catalogue the three engraved copper plates owned by the Society. One is the copper plate of the first published map of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (*History of the Expedition under the Command of Lewis and Clark . . .* Philadelphia: Bradford and Inskeep; New York: Abrm. H. Inskeep, J. Maxwell: 1814), which was recently repulped for the first time (see no. 566). Also, there are two huge copper plates pertaining to the port of Philadelphia which were used in the publication of the *Atlantic Neptune* (see no. 1659).²

The origin of the Library's map collection may be traced ultimately to Benjamin Franklin, who founded the American Philosophical Society, the oldest learned society in the United States, in 1743. In that year Franklin published a prospectus for the Society, *A proposal for promoting useful knowledge among the British plantations in America*, which specified that there be at least seven members from Philadelphia, one of them a geographer. Further, he added that the subjects of correspondence among the members should include
Surveys, Maps and Charts of particular Parts of the Sea-coasts, or Inland Countries;
Course and Junction of Rivers and great Roads, Situation of Lakes and Mountains,
Nature of the Soil and Productions; &c.

Franklin himself was keenly interested in maps, and in 1785 on his return to America he made thermometrical observations and sketched a chart of the Gulf Stream, which was published in the second volume of the Society's *Transactions* in 1786 (see nos. 1622-1626).

¹The number of manuscript maps is perhaps misleadingly large because it includes maps, however small, from notebooks in the collections of J. Peter Lesley (ca. 300 maps), Richard Joel Russell (40), Elsie Clews Parsons (37), and Robert Cushman Murphy (35). Aside from these, there are some 600 manuscript maps described in this catalogue.

²Numbers given for maps are entry numbers. Manuscript maps are denoted by two numbers: an entry number for the collection, followed by a number in parentheses for the individual map within that collection.

Few, if any, maps were acquired in this early period, for by 1746 the American Philosophical Society had lapsed into inactivity. In 1769, however, the Society was revived and united with the American Society for Promoting Useful Knowledge to form the "American Philosophical Society, held at Philadelphia, for Promoting Useful Knowledge." Two years later the Library of the Society was begun when the Society published its first volume of *Transactions* and commenced a system of exchange of publications with sister institutions which continues to this day. Initially, maps were considered part of the Cabinet of Curiosities, or Museum, rather than the Library. However, by 1850 maps had become part of the Library and were no longer included as part of the Cabinet. The collection grew through gifts, purchases, and exchange of publications.

The bulk of the American Philosophical Society Library's map collection is more or less evenly distributed among four fifty-year periods: 1751-1800 includes 532 maps; 1801-1850 includes 326 maps; 1851-1900 includes 472 maps; and 1901-date includes 430 maps.

The earliest individual map (excluding facsimiles) is *Le pais de Brie* by Guillemus Blaeu, published ca. 1644 (no. 245). Even older maps may be found in the atlases, such as the *Theatrum orbis terrarum* by Ortelius, ca. 1569-70. The most recent map is the *General highway map of Oconee County, South Carolina*, published in 1983 (no. 1169a).

For the period subsequent to 1850 many of the maps acquired were government publications, both state and federal. Two prominent members of the Society, Alexander Dallas Bache and Ferdinand Rudolph Hassler of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey (as it came to be known), forwarded many maps as they were issued, as did some of the outstanding geologists as they explored the West. The geology maps continue to arrive to this date, but most of them are not included in this catalogue, for they are in book form or in hard boxes for storage, and are filed with the publications they illustrate.

Not surprisingly, North America is the principal geographical area represented in the collection. Maps of North America, principally the United States, make up two-thirds of the printed maps. Over one-half of the manuscript maps are of North American locations, of which three-fourths are Pennsylvania sites. The next best represented area of the world is Europe, which accounts for about 15 percent of the printed maps and 8 percent of the manuscript maps.

Of course, quantity is not necessarily a measure of inherent interest or uniqueness. For instance, while there are only 33 manuscript maps of the Arctic region, they include maps from the papers of Elisha Kent Kane (1820-1857; APS 1851), who made two voyages in the 1850s searching for the lost Arctic explorer Sir John Franklin [nos. 23 (1-12) and 32 (79)]. Another small but interesting group of Arctic maps are those made or gathered by the noted anthropologist Franz Boas (1858-1942; APS 1903) during his studies of Baffin Island Eskimos in the early 1880s [no. 6 (1-6)]. There is also a stunning series of 38 colored manuscript maps, dated 1800-1801, of Cuba, St. Domingue (Haiti), and Puerto Rico, made by Georges Joseph de Bois St. Lys and others [no. 32 (25-29, 32-53, 55-64)].

Indeed, there is a wealth of manuscript maps in the APS Library, of which the following are a few of the outstanding examples:

* Although poorly delineated, the map of the Appalachian Mountains made by John Bartram ca. 1750 is noteworthy for showing the areas where fossil sea shells had been found; it was presented to the Society by Benjamin Franklin, who wrote on the back: "Mr. Bartram's Map very curious" [no. 32 (3)].

* By contrast, one of the loveliest eighteenth-century maps in the collection was drawn by John Bartram's son, William Bartram. It is of "The Great Alachua Savana, in east Florida," showing the drainage of the "Savana" [no. 4 (1)].

* All the maps in the journals from the Lewis and Clark expedition are of great historical interest, but the one of the Great Falls and Portage of the Missouri River is particularly beautiful [no. 28 (2)].

* A map of the British fortifications of Boston Neck is of importance because it was presented with the Richard Henry Lee Papers [no. 25 (1)].

* A map drawn by Thomas Jefferson is based on his survey of 400 acres of Virginia land which devolved upon him through his wife. His conveyance of the land to Nicholas Lewis is with the map [no. 22 (1)].

* A map by Frederick Ridgely, "An Eye-Draught of the Mammoth-Cave in Warren County, Kentucky," was done by eye, for "the [compass] needle does not traverse" the cave [no. 2 (5)].

* A map of New York City drawn ca. 1776 by Charles Willson Peale shows the British and American army positions [no. 38 (2)].

* The War of 1812 found the nation unprepared, so General Jonathan Williams (nephew of Benjamin Franklin, the first Superintendent of West Point, and an active member of the American Philosophical Society) ordered William Strickland to make a map of "the country nine miles west of the city of Philadelphia" for the "sub-committee of defence" [no. 32 (68)]. Strickland, a famous architect, also was a member of the Society.

* APS member James Wilkinson sketched the "Muscle Shoals of the Tennessee [sic] River" in 1802 [no. 32 (66)].

* Sebastian Bauman made three preliminary drafts, dated 22-28 October 1781, of the "Plan of Yorktown, Virginia, depicting the armies when Cornwallis surrendered" [no. 32 (9)]. Although the pencil sketches are blurred, they are magnificent.

* General Henry Dearborn and Henry de Berniere made a map of the "action on the heights of Charles Town 17 June 1775, between his majestys troops under the command of M. Genl. Howe & a large body of American rebels," and the "parts in red are corrections of the original by Maj. Gen. Dearborn" [no. 32 (6)].

Among the many treasures found in the printed maps are the following:

* One of the oldest maps in the collection (and certainly the largest, measuring approximately eight feet by eight feet) is Henry Popple and Clement Lempriere's 1733 "Map of the British empire in America with the French and Spanish settlements adjacent thereto" (no. 449). Presented to the Society in 1834, it is probably one of the great maps which hung in Independence Hall in July 1776. The map has been deacidified, repaired, and remounted, and was a prominent feature of the 1976 bicentennial exhibition, *A Rising People*, organized by the Library Company of Philadelphia, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and the American Philosophical Society. It was also displayed in the 1988 *Legacies of Genius* exhibition organized by the Society and fifteen other members of the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries.

* Another printed map with unique associations is the "Plan of the city of Washington in the territory of Columbia, ceded by the states of Virginia and Maryland to the United States of America," published in 1792 by James Thackara (no. 1078). It was presented by George Washington on 22 April 1793 to the Earl of Buchan, an avid Scots republican and a member of the American Philosophical Society, who in turn gave it to the Society on 17 July 1793.

The two most outstanding maps the American Philosophical Society ever published were:

* The 1771 map by Thomas Fisher (reprinted 1789) of a proposed canal across the Delmarva Peninsula connecting the Chesapeake and Delaware bays (nos. 760 and 760a), and

* William Maclure's geological map of the United States, published in 1818 (no. 570). Both maps appeared in the Society's *Transactions*.

The uses to which the maps have been put have varied over the years. The most common is reference and research. Some maps have been borrowed for exhibitions, such as the Popple map noted above. Perhaps the most important use of the maps concerned the Northeast Boundary Dispute with Great Britain of 1828-29. Two maps were borrowed by Albert Gallatin and were bound in the volume to be placed before the arbiter, the king of The Netherlands (nos. 453 and 550). They were not returned until 1852.

Over the centuries a few maps have been lost and never recovered. For the sake of completeness, and with the hope that they someday may be found, they are listed as follows:

1. On 20 July 1769 a draft from actual surveys of the Mississippi River to Fort Chartres was received, as was another draft of the Mobile River to Fort "Tombeebe, a length of 96 leagues, taken from the survey made by Philip Pilman in 1767." These were presented by D. Clark through Hugh Williamson.

2. John J. Hawkins sent a sketch of a proposed city which was received 19 September 1800. The description runs four large pages of small script, but the plat has disappeared. The members of the Society took this sketch seriously, for towns were being founded all along the frontier, and the committee's report was comprehensive.

3. Ambroise Tardieu presented "*Cartes des États Unis*" in four sheets, the same in smaller size, and "*Carte des Indes Occidentales*," both of which arrived 4 November 1808.

4. Around 5 November 1824 Gaspard Deabatte presented a map of Turin, Italy.

5. Prior to 1826 Henry Schwenk Tanner presented his map of Mexico which he had published the previous year.

6. P. W. Sheafer sent on 7 April 1865 a manuscript sketch showing the tidewater area "relative to the various coal and oil regions of the U.S." Eli Bowen used this "in publishing his late work on coal and oil fields."

7. Archibald Campbell gave on 20 September 1867 two sheets of a photographic copy of the Northwest Boundary Survey.

8. The preliminary map of Ohio, prepared by the chief geologist of the state, J. S. Newberry, was received 16 December 1870 as a gift from the State of Ohio.

9. The (California?) Commission on Irrigation presented 6 November 1874 a "fine map of California" and a map of the delta of Canvery(?).