

Notes and Comments

The Redpath Family and the McGill Libraries' Collections

By Martin Cohen

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In celebrating the centenary of the Redpath Library, we also celebrate the role of Peter Redpath as benefactor, since it was his donation of money that made the construction of the building possible. However, it behoves us at this time as well to mark the Redpath family's donations and influence upon the subsequent growth of the McGill collections - both Peter Redpath's donation of over 3,000 carefully selected books purchased by him on McGill's behalf, together with another 2,000 plus bequeathed to McGill by his widow, and the subsequent creation of the Peter Whiteford and Jocelyn Clifford Redpath Memorial Fund, an endowment existing for the benefit of the McGill Libraries which has enabled the purchase of a number of fine and scarce items since its establishment in 1903; the W.W. Redpath Fund, which was used for much of the early building up of McGill's engineering collections; and the Sir Thomas and Lady Roddick Fund, used from its establishment in 1954 until today for the purchase of rare books.

Peter Redpath began donating books to McGill in 1866. His method of donation then, in which he persevered in subsequent years, was not to give McGill a sum of money earmarked for the purchase of books; rather, what he did was to choose volumes from his own shelves, and to add to them large quantities of books that he had purchased for the express purpose of donation (mostly from the firm of Macmillan & Bowes in Cambridge), and have them shipped to McGill. His first major donation, in 1866, was of 544 volumes, concentrating at that point on history;¹ later in the year, he had printed a catalogue, eight pages long and in pamphlet form, to serve as a finding-aid for (and probably also to publicize) his donation.² This catalogue is here reproduced as Figure 1.

It must be conceded that, for all his concentration on British history, Redpath cast his net pretty wide. Works in French, Italian³ and German take their places in the "Redpath Historical Collection;" and, in a gift which antedated the major donation by a year, a selection of classical authors is listed, witness no doubt Redpath's feelings that McGill should be able to provide a good, sound middle-class education. In later shipments, the diversity becomes even greater; a shipment from Macmillan & Bowes, detailed on an invoice found in file RG40 c15 1711 in the McGill Archives (shown here as Figure 2), shows Redpath as donating in 1893 a couple of hundred volumes ranging from a complete Rousseau to the publications of the Chaucer Society to a number of reference works that are standard even today. In the meantime, with the aid of the distinguished historian Henry Morley, Redpath was building up a magnificent collection of historical tracts and pamphlets which he also donated over the years (these are treated in Allan Bell's article in this volume). The accessions books of the McGill University Library⁴ show that number 1 to 2,608, let alone others further on, all represent titles donated by Redpath. The value of his gifts was estimated at about \$12,000 in 1894 dollars.⁵

The P.W. and J.C. Redpath Memorial Fund, thus named in memory of two nephews of Peter Redpath, was established in 1903 by the agreement of Grace Redpath, Peter's widow, to donate an initial \$5,000, then an annual sum of \$4,000 - very substantial at that time - for the purchase of books for what was then the Redpath Library.⁶ These donations continued for six years. At her death in 1908, Mrs. Redpath left no money for books, but instead "such books and manuscripts as the librarian of the University of McGill College, Montreal, shall choose to said library"⁷ from her late husband's shelves. These consisted of over 2,000 volumes, largely of English literature - such things as sets of Thackeray, Irving, Scott, Macaulay, and Carlyle, and also of Bullen's edition of the British dramatists and Bell's of the British poets - two omnium-gatherum sets which enjoyed a reputation for completeness, if not for scholarly accuracy, in their day.

From then on, the donations of books obviously ceased, and the Redpath Fund lay dormant, collecting interest, until it was revived by Lady Roddick, Peter Redpath's niece and the sister of Peter W. and Jocelyn Redpath, in

A CATALOGUE OF
HISTORICAL WORKS

Presented to the University of McGill College, Montreal.

By PETER REDPATH, Esq.

1866.

COLLECTIONS, &c.

Annual Register, from the beginning in 1758 to the year 1865.
With Index. 109 vols.

ENGLISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S PUBLICATIONS, 29 vols.
bound in 27:—

Adami Murimuthensis Chronicon, ed. T. Hog.

Chronicon Florentii Wigorniensis, ed. B. Thorpe. 2 vols.

Chronicon Walteri de Hemingburgh, ed. H. C. Hamilton.
2 vols.

Chronicque de la Traison et Mort de Richart Deux, ed. B.
Williams.

Codex Diplomaticus Anglo-Saxonum, ed. J. M. Kemble. 6 vols.
Henrici Quinti Gesta, ed. B. Williams.

Nennii Historia Britonum, ed. J. Stevenson. Gildas de Excidio
Britanniae, ed. J. Stevenson.

Nicholai Triveti Annales, ed. T. Hog.

Ricardi Divisiensis Chronicon, ed. J. Stevenson. Gesta Stephani.

Rogeri de Wendover Chronica, ed. H. O. Coxe. 5 vols.

Ven. Bedae Historia Ecclesiastica, ed. J. Stevenson.

Ven. Bedae Opera Historica minora, ed. J. Stevenson.

Willelmi Malmesburiensis Gesta Regum Anglorum, ed. T. D.
Hardy. 2 vols.

Willelmi de Newburgh Historia, ed. H. C. Hamilton. 2 vols.

Figure 1. The first catalogue of the Redpath Historical Collection, 1866. (Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University Libraries)

1927. The only highlight of that nineteen-year interval was the publication in the *McGill News* in 1922 of the following comment on the collection:

The Redpath Historical Collection was begun by the late Mr. Peter Redpath soon after he became a Governor of the University. It received substantial yearly additions from him up to the year of his death. It is now large and valuable, and affords excellent opportunities for the study of history. Its most striking feature - a series of political, religious, and social tracts, for which the first selections were made by the late Professor Henry Morley - was greatly enriched by the late Mrs. Redpath, and at present comprises about 10,000 brochures, dating from 1600 A.D. to the end of the nineteenth century.⁸

The tale resumes in 1927. In that year, Lady Roddick embarked upon an active plan of increasing the amount of the P.W. and J.C. Redpath Memorial Fund; her gifts were of varying sizes, but added up, from 1927 to her death in 1954, to \$43,100 plus an "anonymous" \$8,000 in Victory Bonds. Simultaneously, over the period 1930-1951, John R. Redpath donated \$14,850 in cash and bequeathed \$25,000 in bonds upon his death. All this money was designated for the purchase of books. Upon her death in 1954, Lady Roddick's will provided for a bequest of \$125,000, distributed between the Redpath Memorial Fund and the Sir Thomas and Lady Roddick Fund, and more gifts were subsequently given by Mr. James B. Redpath, starting in 1956 and ending with his death in 1992. The total capital of the P.W. and J.C. Redpath Memorial Fund (April 1993) now stands at about \$280,000.⁹

In accordance with what were known to be Lady Roddick's stated wishes, the Redpath Fund has been used largely for the purchase of rare and fine books. For example, in 1935, funds were drawn from it toward the purchase of Luther's *Enarrationes epistolarum et evangeliorum* (1521); some sixteenth-century (i.e. first) editions of Italian *novelle* were purchased in 1951, as were the three sets of the *Lettres cabalistiques* (7 vols.), *Lettres juives* (8 vols.), and *Lettres chinoises* (6 vols.) of the Marquis de Boyer d'Argens, dating from 1766-69, and Rousseau's *Correspondence originale et inédite de J. J. Rousseau avec Mme Latour de Franqueville et M. de Peyrou*, 2 vols. (1803). The cost of the Boyer d'Argens and Rousseau sets together totaled FF 10,000 - no mean sum in 1951.¹⁰ This is not to say that smaller pieces, which can only be described as general antiquarian purchases, were not paid for out of the Redpath Fund.

The scope widened yet further in the 1960s, with the fund being used to purchase material for the Rare Book Department that extended beyond the traditional book with two covers. Thus, in 1961 we find that a collection of twenty-eight "photographs of Napoleon," priced at "approximately \$25" - a bargain indeed! - was bought from R. Viollet, 6, rue de Seine, Paris, and that two Japanese prints were bought only days later from a New York dealer, the Redpath Fund paying for both acquisitions. A Mercator map of the Greater Antilles (Amsterdam, 1607), together with a collection of English-made maps of roughly the same period, were acquired thanks to Redpath money in 1966; and so it goes in this vein. The current use of the Redpath fund is, as mentioned, as supplementary funding for the purchase of rare books and examples of fine printing.

It would be invidious to single out one "major contributor" to the collections of McGill University Libraries. However, if we count his own personal donations together with his "posthumous" ones bought out of the funds established by his family, Peter Redpath would certainly have to be a very strong contender. On this hundredth anniversary of the Library that was his major gift to McGill, we can contemplate with pride his actions, and those of his descendants, in providing materials to fill that library and its successors.

Notes

1. *Scrapbooks*, McGill University Archives, no. 1, p. 22. Provenance not indicated, but probably from *The Gazette* at some time in 1866.
2. McGill University Archives, file RG40 c2 1452.
3. For an interesting example, see Dionysios Hatzopoulos and Richard Virr, "The Voyage of Giovanni da Verrazzano: A Newly Discovered Manuscript," *Fontanus V* (1992), 7-32.
4. Preserved in the Retrospective Conversion Unit, Central Technical Services, McGill University Libraries.
5. *Scrapbooks*, no. 1, p. 220, (*Gazette*, 7th July 1894).
6. *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, p. 34 (*Gazette*, 4th July, 1903).
7. *Scrapbooks*, no. 2, p. 261 (*Montreal Star*, 28 May 1908).
8. *McGill News*, 3, 3 (1921/22), 4.
9. Financial information from the files of the Secretariat of McGill University now lodged in the University Archives, and oral information from Mr. Calvin D. Evans, Area Librarian, Humanities and Social Sciences Area Library, and Mr. Matthew Collier, Treasurer's Department.
10. Information from the order books of the Redpath and McLennan Libraries, now housed in the Monograph Acquisitions Unit, Central Technical Services. Further order information provided is drawn from the same source.

Redpath Hall and the Faculty of Music

By John Grew

Dean, Faculty of Music

Over the years Redpath Hall has played a major role in the life of the Faculty of Music, and prior to the construction of Pollack Concert Hall it served as the Faculty's main concert hall. The sixties were especially significant for the growth of the Faculty of Music, and under the leadership of Dean Helmut Blume the concert life in Redpath Hall took on a new dimension. Hundreds of CBC broadcasts originated from this hall, and the "Faculty Fridays" were heard from coast to coast.

With the opening of Pollack Concert Hall in the spring of 1975, Redpath Hall was temporarily lost to the Faculty of Music. However, the gift of the University Organ gave new life to this great hall, and eventually returned it to the Faculty of Music as a concert venue. As part of our academic exercise the Faculty presents over 400 concerts a year, and well over 100 of these take place in Redpath Hall. In addition, the organ is the main teaching instrument for what has become one of the most flourishing programmes of organ study in North America. And the concert-going public of Montreal has rediscovered the splendid acoustics of this hall as it has become home to organizations such as Musica Camerata, Allegra, Le Clavier d'autrefois, and Ensemble Arion.

The University Organ (see illustration on page 34) was inaugurated in May 1981 with a four day symposium entitled "The Organ in Our Time." Subsequently, the papers and proceedings of this symposium were edited by