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THE DRAPER COLLECTION
OF MANUSCRIPTS

BY
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LYMAN COPELAND DRAPER, LL. D.
First secretary of the Society, 1854-1886

THE DRAPER COLLECTION OF MANUSCRIPTS

JOSEPH SCHAFER

One year ago, in connection with the annual meeting of the Society, Dr. Louise Phelps Kellogg of our staff delivered an address on "The Services and Collections of Lyman Copeland Draper." The address, a thoroughly informing production, was published in the March, 1922, number of the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, and as was hoped, it doubtless has served to acquaint the younger members of the Society with the career of our distinguished first secretary, whose unique personality time has already rendered indistinct. It has served also once more to remind all members that, in the collections assembled by Draper and at his death bequeathed to this Society, the institution holds the trusteeship of one of the most valuable bodies of manuscript source material relating to American history, and doubtless the most valuable one illustrating the history of the region from the Blue Ridge to the Mississippi. The states which occupy the area of greatest interest to Draper are western New York and Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia, Piedmont North and South Carolina and Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Of that region, especially its more heroic pioneering aspects and its outstanding pioneer leaders, Draper aspired to be the historian. For, as he wrote in 1842, he was "*very* passionately devoted to the pioneer history of the romantic West."

MEMOIRS

In pursuance of that ambition he sought out, first of all, the survivors—then usually very aged men—of the pioneer era. It seems to have been Draper's original purpose to accumulate a great body of memoirs while as yet witnesses to early events and to the characters and deeds of pioneer heroes

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were to be found. His object at first being to write a book which he called *Sketches of the Pioneers*, the plan of assembling memoirs must be looked upon as highly appropriate. To that end he traversed the region in question, visiting aged men and women whom he interviewed with the skill of the trained lawyer or reporter. He always knew enough about his subject in advance to enable him to keep his witness to the desired line. If the information was given orally, Draper made notes of it and these notes he carefully preserved. In many other cases persons appealed to wrote out at his request, or dictated, statements covering their recollections. Some of his correspondents, like the venerable William Martin and Dr. Felix Robertson of Tennessee, stimulated by means of successive questionnaires, wrote for Draper a series of memoirs aggregating many pages.

DRAPER'S NOTES

Draper's notes, however, do not by any means all have the character of memoirs. He was a genuine historian, and therefore appreciated the difference in evidential value between *recollections* and *contemporary records*. It was his settled practice to examine all available records bearing upon his numerous special inquiries either before soliciting memoirs, in order to establish a foundation for his interviews, or after such interviews, by way of checking and supplementing the information they supplied. Thus Draper's notes, which fill a long series of volumes, are in large part transcripts, summaries, or extracts from contemporaneous documents examined by him, such as printed accounts of important western men or historical episodes, letters, diaries, account books, sketch maps, reports—in a word, the types of material every true investigator accumulates when he designs to treat an important historical theme.

ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

Draper also (as is inevitable when the subject of investigation is the recent history of a comparatively undeveloped community) encountered in his inquiries many sons of the pio-

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neers who were still in possession of original papers illuminating, with the white light of contemporaneity, the theme of his researches. Such papers supplemented the resources of that description which had been previously known to historians, and their discovery and preservation in some cases would certainly not have been effected but for his efforts. Sometimes he examined such papers on the spot and made notes from them, as he did from similar papers collected in libraries; again, he borrowed them to copy or summarize at his leisure, or he received them as gifts from those who were proud to assist in advancing his work. A considerable number of such original papers containing records contemporaneous with the subjects he was investigating repose in the Draper Collection. It is a popular misconception that the collection consists wholly or mainly of such original documents, given or lent to Draper by their custodians and ultimately bequeathed by him to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. As a matter of fact, the collection comprises mainly material of the other two descriptions—namely, memoirs and notes. In the assembling of these, Draper actually brought into existence new historical data most of which without his stimulation would certainly never have been written down. In some cases, even the original documents transcribed by him were afterwards lost, so that Draper's notes are now their sole representation; and some of the men who wrote most in the way of memoirs, under his guidance and inspiration, died soon after completing their manuscripts, which obviously would never have seen the light or been preserved save for Draper's agency.

Too much cannot be said in praise either of Draper's earnestness in the pursuit of exact information or of the generous manner in which his efforts were seconded by western men and women to whom he appealed for aid. One cannot read the correspondence which passed between Draper and these good people without reaching the conviction that the little historian evoked unmeasured confidence in the hearts of the big men who, with their immediate forebears, had made the

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history of the New West. They were not merely willing but eager to help; and while composition to some of the feeblest and most aged was a labor attended with much discomfort, they nevertheless wielded the pen with patient heroism and gave him the results.

PUBLISHING PLANS

As already stated, Draper began gathering these materials with the object of writing a "little book" which he spoke of as *Sketches of the Pioneers*. Later, finding that his resources mounted ever higher and that his information was broadening and deepening, like Gibbon and almost every other genuine scholar he expanded the original idea. The biographical aspect of it now took the form of a series of separate volumes, and he also planned a history of the King's Mountain campaign, the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, and perhaps other works. However, Draper was less ready in composition than expert in accumulating notes, documents, and memoirs. He disliked intensely to go to press while harboring any lingering doubts about the completeness of his investigations. Therefore, he published reluctantly, tardily, and on the whole far less voluminously than he had once hoped to do. Nevertheless, he did bring out one monumental work, the history of King's Mountain, and he also published in Appleton's *Cyclopædia* a series of biographies amply sufficient to redeem his early promise to write *Sketches of the Pioneers*.

The correspondence with pioneer families reveals that their enthusiastic support of Draper's plans was in part due to the expectation of seeing his proposed books in print, especially such of them as should treat of the histories of their ancestors. Filial piety with most of his collaborators was a motive quite as strong as historical interest. It was doubtless the chief motive prompting them to place in Draper's hands such ancestral records as had survived the usual vicissitudes of fire, mold, and other agents of destruction. But, so far as our examination of the correspondence has gone, it does not dis-

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close that any reservation was made in regard to returning such manuscripts to the donors, either on the completion of his books or in the event of his failure to complete them. Such a reservation would have been peculiarly out of place as regards memoirs given him by word of mouth or written down for his information. The written memoirs were in character simply expanded letters; and letters, unless specifically directed to be returned, are the property of the recipient. Besides, in the keenly interrogatory and historically informing letters they received from Draper, his correspondents probably felt amply repaid for the labor bestowed upon their own communications to him. However, in fairness it must be said that Draper later gathered in, from his correspondents, many of his own historically important letters and, had he been requested to do so, there is no doubt he would have returned theirs—taking pains to retain copies if he deemed them of sufficient importance.

Every collector of family manuscripts realizes how delicate are the relations between collector and donor, and especially how the sentiments of affection and veneration cause shifting and uncertainty in the attitude of such a donor. He personally may be willing to give the papers outright, but feels in duty bound to withhold title pending consultation with relatives, which process may then be long delayed or wholly neglected; he may deposit them in the expectation that he will never wish to recall them, yet retaining the right to do so in certain contingencies; he may give them outright without reservations; or he may lend them outright with a definite understanding that they shall be returned; and there are many cases between those described. Sometimes owners give, and later change the terms to a loan. Accordingly, no librarian can say with certainty at a given moment what is the exact status of specified manuscript collections in his library without consulting the records relating to their deposit, and sometimes those records leave the matter undecided. Where there is a multiplicity of collections, such as Draper accu-

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mulated, it becomes impossible to keep in mind the circumstances relating to the acquisition of all of them.

ASPERSIONS UPON DRAPER

If the collector is liable to forget the exact terms of deposit of the documents placed in his hands, the families of donors, shifting as they do with the generations, are quite certain to lose all definite information about the original transactions unless a written contemporary record of them has been preserved. This fact opens the way for possible claims of any kind that cannot be specifically disproved by means of contemporary evidence. Moreover, every historian and every lawyer knows that self-interest or desire in minds intent on a given objective colors recollections, or even substitutes one set of recollections for a forgotten set, and this without necessary implication of intentional dishonesty.

It is therefore not strange that, at this date, so far removed from the era of Draper's collecting activity—a period varying from eighty to sixty years ago—members of families from which papers were secured by Draper should occasionally protest on various grounds against the retention of such papers by this Society. The number of such protests prior to 1919 was negligible; and, so far as I have been able to ascertain from our correspondence files, all of the earlier protestants, when the circumstances under which their family papers were acquired had been explained, expressed themselves as satisfied. Recently, however, in one state, under the prompting and management of one man, a number of family representatives have filed statements, mostly attested by notaries, in which they profess to remember family traditions to the effect that Draper had secured their papers on the understanding that such papers were to be returned. In other cases the assertion is made, on traditional evidence, that Draper received the papers in order that he might be enabled to write the history of some member of the family, and since such history was not written, in justice he ought to have returned them. Some of them bluntly demand the return of "any and

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all papers" given to Draper by their ancestors or family representatives, which demand in no case discriminates between letters written to Draper and original documents contemporaneous with the events or characters he was investigating. In at least one case a different argument appears. The writer avers that Draper received a parcel of papers to enable him to write his King's Mountain history, and after that had been done (the book was published in 1881) the papers were to have been returned. Thus, as is but natural, a pretext for the demand is found, if not in Draper's failure to publish, then in the fact of his having published. It requires no discussion to show that such professed recollections of what an ancestor said another ancestor told his informant, about an understanding with Draper, does not constitute proof in any true sense.

STATE PAPERS

To the charges that Draper kept some papers which had been lent (not given) to him by private families, and that many which seemingly had been donated were given with an understanding that he was to perform a certain act—namely, write some book in which the donor was interested—which act he neglected to perform, has been added the far more serious charge that he obtained possession in one way and another of state archives which remained in his hands, and also of some county archives from the same state. We have examined the volumes cited in proof of this charge, and find it to be without foundation, the mistake apparently having arisen from the fact that the person who made it was unfamiliar with Draper's handwriting and mistook *copies* of documents for the *originals*. This leads me to repeat the remark that Draper's notes—transcripts of original documents, summaries, extracts, etc.—are often of far greater historical importance than the original papers which he salvaged from private garrets and escritaires.

The charge against Draper of having in some way abstracted state papers from the archives of the state to which they belonged cannot well be overlooked by this Society. For,

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however the harshness of such a statement may be mitigated by suggestions that the papers were doubtless lent to him by thoughtless or ignorant public custodians, their retention in itself would have been a violation of interstate comity which from our knowledge of Draper's character we are convinced he would not knowingly commit. The Society cannot but deplore the fact that a public official of a sister state, on the basis of an unverified suspicion, has seen fit to publish among the people of his state this charge, thereby creating undeserved prejudice against this Society. As is well known, the Draper Collection under our management is open to examination by any accredited investigator. When a question is raised about its contents, the collection itself is the final and only necessary exhibit. If any individual or any state is interested in proving that Draper assembled and retained material which ought not to be in the Draper Collection but ought to be somewhere else (as, for example, in the state archives of Tennessee), this Society will afford such persons every facility for making the investigations necessary to determine the point at issue. But it cannot regard with equanimity the publication of charges unsupported even by color of proof.

THE DRAPER SERVICE

Not only is the Draper Collection open to all investigators who visit our library, to whom are pointed out the indexes, calendars, and other equipment necessary to the most economical consultation of the hundreds of bound volumes of manuscripts; but this Society, ever since the collection came into its hands, has employed its own researchers to conduct without charge investigations to a reasonable extent for persons who are unable to visit the library. Also, the Society maintains a photostat service which enables it to furnish facsimiles of documents to all and sundry, the price charged being barely sufficient to pay the cost of the service, with no profit. Hundreds of requests for data from the Draper Collection—not merely the original sources, but also the memoirs and notes—are received and attended to every year, and photo-

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static reproductions of manuscripts are coming to be demanded to an increasing extent. It cannot therefore be said that Dr. Draper or this Society sequestered papers given him by any individual. Moreover, since Draper's notes and letters constitute so large and so valuable a feature of the collection, it is clear that an inquirer can derive more help from the original documents which are here, supported and supplemented as these are by the other sources, than he could derive from the original papers were they consulted in isolation or in relation to any other organized body of western material which now exists. As a matter of fact, contrary to current opinion, a large amount of such material does exist, but being in a dispersed condition scholars do not regard it as the equivalent for historical purposes of the Draper Collection, and much of it has been practically forgotten. For example, the state of Tennessee has all of the General James Robertson family papers, which were turned over by Dr. Felix Robertson to the university in Nashville and were not given to Draper at all, though numerous affiants now assume they were. But Draper in 1844 studied that collection at Nashville and filled a notebook with extracts, summaries, and exact transcripts of those papers. When Tennessee's representative in 1919 made application to the state legislature of Wisconsin to turn over by law to Tennessee a number of Draper's manuscript volumes which he had listed, this volume of Draper's notes of the Robertson papers was among them. Apparently that gentleman was then unaware that the original James Robertson papers were in Nashville, where they were consulted by Roosevelt (who had some difficulty in finding them) when he wrote his *Winning of the West*.

ATTITUDE OF SCHOLARS

All historical scholars, without exception so far as I am aware, agree with the conclusions stated. They recognize in the Draper Collection a unity which, in the interest of scholarship, must be maintained at any reasonable cost. They are convinced that the Wisconsin society's legal title to the collec-

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tion is unshakable; and while some might wish that certain of the documents were located in centers more accessible to themselves, and others, living in states from which Draper gleaned, may even believe some papers ought to have been returned to their states, I know of no historian who feels that in the interests either of scholarship or of morality should the Wisconsin collection be dispersed.

ERRONEOUS CONCLUSIONS

It is one thing, however, to stand on our legal rights, and quite another to satisfy the perfectly proper sentiments of families whose ancestral papers repose here, or the pressing needs of a growing body of research scholars interested in western history. The first can perhaps never be fully satisfied, though everything that is still possible should be done to bring about that happy result. So much has been said and published about Draper's activity in collecting, that persons whose families once had papers and now lack them are quick to make the inference that such papers are in the Draper Collection. Of course, after so many years they are hopelessly confused about the character of such papers—whether they were original documents or mere letters of some ancestor communicating information to Draper. Sometimes they infer from the fact that the Draper Collection has certain types of documents, that their ancestor must have given them to him, when in fact, as the records show, they came to him from other sources. We have already called attention to an error of this kind in connection with the General James Robertson papers. Such few James Robertson papers as Draper had, came to him not from Dr. Felix Robertson, as that worthy gentleman's descendants suppose, but from other families. The case of the Martin papers, bearing upon the career of General Joseph Martin of Virginia, is more illuminating still. General Martin's eldest son, William by name, became a distinguished and honored citizen of Tennessee. He had resided for nearly half a century at his country seat near Dixon's Spring, Smith County, when in 1842 Draper, a young man of

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twenty-seven years, made his acquaintance. A warm friendship developed between Draper and Colonel Martin, who gave the historian most generous assistance in the form of memoirs which he wrote at various times almost up to the date of his death, in November, 1846. Colonel Martin wrote Draper that he had no papers bearing on his father's career, but he inquired of his brother, Colonel Joseph Martin (a man twenty years younger, son of a different mother), who lived in Virginia, if their father's papers were preserved there.¹ He was rejoiced to learn these facts: Joseph Martin had purchased, at the sale of his mother's effects, the old "secretary," which had in it some papers. Examining it now for the first time, under the impulse of Draper's and William Martin's inquiries, he found a number of documents, some of them bearing pre-Revolutionary dates, which he sent direct to Draper at Buffalo, New York.² These Martin papers have recently been claimed as properly belonging to Tennessee, the claimant giving as authority a descendant in the third remove from Colonel William Martin—it being assumed that the papers had been the

¹ In the copy of his long letter to Draper dated Dixon's Spring, July 7, 1842, Colonel William Martin says: "I forgot to say, in the proper place, that I know of no documents, left by my father, which might be of use to you. I have a file of his letters only on business. Indeed, he seldom wrote on any other occasion; and I think he was rather loose and careless about papers. . . . If there are any such documents extant, they are, I presume, in possession of my brother, Col. Joseph Martin, who had charge of the estate; and who would take pleasure in furnishing them on application." [He wrote to his brother about the matter.]

² September 6, 1842, Colonel William Martin wrote Draper again, saying: "I told you I had written to my Br Col. Joseph Martin, Henry County, Va. respecting documents &c. To that letter I have just rec^d his reply; from which I will here give some extracts.

"Since the receipt of yr last letter, I have been engaged some part of almost every day, in examination of our Father's old documents. . . . At the sale of my mother's estate, I purchased the old desk and Bookcase, containing our Father's papers; intending at some convenient time to examine them carefully; but after storing away carefully the old family furniture, the contemplated examination never commenced, until you called my attention to the subject." [The extract gives some account of the contents of the collection, which appears to have included a considerable number of documents that were reserved when, a little later, a packet of papers was made up by Colonel Joseph Martin and sent to Draper. It would be interesting to know the fate of these reserved papers—letters of Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and others.] Colonel William Martin, after quoting what his brother said, continues: "I wish very much you had those papers. Were they here I would send them to you forthwith. . . . I will write to my Br. to try to give them a passage. He ought not to hesitate about it, he is very rich, & ought to employ someone to take them directly to you. . . . My Br is . . . just twenty years younger than I am—half-brother."

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property of that good friend of Dr. Draper, and there being, as was supposed, a clear and trustworthy tradition that he lent them to Draper on the understanding that they were to be returned. We have not the slightest doubt that the representative of the William Martin family who signed the affidavit claiming the papers did so in absolute good faith. Being an honored and trusted citizen of Tennessee, who has filled an important place in her public life, his honor and probity are of course beyond question.³ Yet the information upon which he relies is altogether at variance with the facts as these stand disclosed in the documents on file here. The Martin papers never were in Tennessee at all; they never belonged to Colonel William Martin, who in the course of his long and active life never had thought to inquire about them and did not know of their existence till Draper suggested the question; and it appears they had not been given by General Joseph Martin to any member of his family, which indicates that he placed no store by them. They were merely left in his accustomed desk, which happened to go to a member of the family instead of to a stranger, and from which, fortunately, they were rescued in consequence of Draper's inquisitive interest.

Colonel Joseph Martin, the donor, did not correspond frequently with Draper. His last letter is dated "Greenwood, Henry County, Virginia, 2d Decr 1856." This was fourteen years after he had given Draper the papers. He had won-

³ The affidavit is signed by the son of the only daughter and only child of Wilson Y. Martin, who was the son of Colonel William Martin, referred to above. The affiant has this to say of Colonel William Martin: "Accurate and methodical in his habits, he had, and preserved, many records and memoranda pertaining to that history making period during which he passed his life. As the eldest son of his father [General Joseph Martin], at the latter's death in 1808, Col. Martin came into possession of his father's large accumulation of records, memoranda and documents of like import, which, likewise, he preserved.

"Not long before Col. Martin's death, Dr. Lyman C. Draper of New York State came to Middle Tennessee with the purpose of securing data for a projected work dealing with the history of the 'West,' its pioneers and early settlements. He visited Col. Martin more than once at Belleview and spent at least several weeks in his home. In addition to oral information supplied during his stay, Col. Martin permitted him to take from his collection a number of papers containing valuable data, with the understanding and promise of Dr. Draper that they should be returned after he had availed himself of their contents. Dr. Draper later removed to Wisconsin, and for some unaccountable reason deposited these Martin papers in the Library or Historical Society of that State, where, as I am advised, they yet remain."

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dered if Draper were still "in the land of the living," and had only just heard of his removal to the "far west" [Wisconsin]. "I am very anxious," he says, "to know whether you are still engaged in completing your book of the lives of the distinguished pioneers of the S. W. of whom my father, Gen^l Joseph Martin, was one. I think the last letter I received from you, the history of Gen^l G. R. Clark was to be the first published, and then the others in regular succession." Not a word about the papers given Draper or the terms of that gift.

And now as to the manuscript furnished Draper by Colonel William Martin in the form of memoirs: *That manuscript was prepared in duplicate.* The original draft was retained by Colonel Martin, and a fair copy, a large portion of which was written in the beautiful hand of Wilson Y. Martin, was sent on.⁴ After Colonel William Martin's death this original manuscript remained in the hands of Wilson Y. Martin at least fifteen years.⁵ At the end of that period William L. Martin wrote to Draper: "My brother and myself have been consulting whether it would not be proper to present our father's manuscript to the historical society at Nashville, inasmuch as it contains facts which may be important in writing the future history of the state; this, however, we are not willing to do without your consent."⁶

We do not know whether this plan was carried out, but probably it was.⁷ If it was not, then the manuscript doubtless

⁴ Colonel Martin writes, June 4, 1842: "I expect it will be some two or three weeks before I can forward my manuscript as after I have scribbled it off it will have to be copied into a fair hand so that you [can] read it." It was sent July 7, 1842—twenty closely written foolscap pages, all in the hand of Wilson Y. Martin save a small portion of sheet 20. Most of the supplementary matter, also, was copied by the same hand.

⁵ Letter of William L. Martin, November 20, 1857, proves this. It is therein referred to, and a point of Tennessee history was settled by its means. But already in 1870 there was a tradition in the Wilson Martin family that the memoir had been taken, at Colonel William Martin's death, by his eldest son, Joseph. See letter of J. H. Young to Draper, August 31, 1870.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ At all events, when in 1870 the Colonel William Martin papers were examined at Draper's request by J. H. Young, son-in-law of Wilson Y. Martin, this manuscript was missing from the file. See letter of J. H. Young to Draper, August 31, 1870. The Martin family at that time supposed it had been taken at Colonel Martin's death in 1846 by his eldest son, Joseph Martin. This the William L. Martin letter above cited proves to have been an error.

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remained in the home of Wilson Y. Martin and its fate ought to be within the knowledge of his family, of which the affiant referred to is the present head. If, as seems probable, it was carried out, if the manuscript was sent to Nashville and there lost, the situation becomes still more interesting. For we would then have before us the peculiar case of a great commonwealth claiming, as of right, a *copy* of a manuscript narrative of its early history which has been preserved and made known, to take the place of the *original* narrative which its own officers have lost or forgotten.

In making claims for the return, or transfer to another institution, of such documents the persons making them surely overlook the equities which belong to this Society. They forget that Draper acquired these papers in perfect good faith, frequently from persons who had no inkling of their historical value and no knowledge of how such old papers must be treated in order to defy the forces of disintegration. If they could visit this library and actually see what it was necessary to do in order to preserve their now so precious mementos, a different attitude would result. Many of these papers when Draper got them were falling into the condition of the "wonderful one-hoss shay" that fated morning when the deacon risked his last ride in her; and many more were in that condition, victims of the decay incident to age, at the time they came into the Society's hands. Had not such manuscripts been mounted between strips of transparent silk—a very delicate and expensive process paid for by the Society—they would today be practically non-existent. Had not the Society published descriptive accounts of the Draper Collection—calendars, etc.—and freely administered it for the benefit of the public, doubtless many descendants of donors would be quite unaware that their families ever possessed such papers or that they had been preserved.

SUGGESTIONS

Just where is the line separating title by accidental inheritance and title by discovery, preservation, conservation, and

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use may be difficult to say; yet it would seem that fifty, sixty, or eighty years of quiet possession, with constant expenditure toward preserving and making them useful for everybody, ought to give Dr. Draper and this Society a good title to everything in the collection, unless in specific instances there should be found positive proof to the contrary. Nevertheless, we feel that the Society, in the spirit of Dr. Draper, must do what it can to merit the good will of those who represent the donors of these papers. Knowing now that the documents are here, such persons have a natural and praiseworthy desire to learn more about them. They should be furnished gratuitously any available descriptive material the Society has published; and their specific inquiries, in the future as in the past, should be answered with fullness, courtesy, and candor, despite the fact that such inquiries are becoming ever more numerous and that they cost the Society more and more in research time. Some will wish to see specimens of an ancestor's handwriting or his autograph. For such, photostatic copies will be made of characteristic documents. These families were Draper's friends, and it cannot be considered a misconstruction of the spirit of our trusteeship when we hold that the Society is under obligation to deserve their friendship, whether or not it can secure and hold it.

For the benefit of researchers several things might be added to what the Society has already done to make the collection more fully serviceable. The first of these is to publish additional calendars. Money for that purpose has hitherto not been available, and is not now available. But in view of the need, of the conditions on which this Society was entrusted with the Draper manuscripts, in view also of the natural desire of our people to respond to the reasonable demands of the people of other states, it will not be inappropriate for this Society to ask the legislature for funds to prepare and publish as rapidly as possible descriptive lists of all uncalendared Draper papers.

We have in hand one completed calendar, in manuscript, prepared at the Society's expense by Mabel C. Weaks, with the

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assistance of other staff members. It describes the manuscripts which relate chiefly to the area now occupied by the state of Kentucky. This calendar ought to be printed without loss of time, and we believe its prospective users would be glad to pay for printed copies at a rate which would reimburse the Society in large part for publication costs. Inasmuch as the Society paid the salaries of the persons who prepared the calendar—an aggregate of perhaps not less than \$3,000—and since such publications are not primarily for our own members (who receive no free copies) but for the research public, we believe it ought to be the policy to sell copies at a price which will nearly cover printing costs.

A good beginning was made, some years ago, on a calendar of the George Rogers Clark papers, one of the largest and most valuable groups in the Draper Collection. Assistance toward paying for that work was contributed by one of the Kentucky societies, which increases the obligation upon us to have the work completed and published. If the state will expand our budget sufficiently to enable the Society to employ a trained and experienced person for that work exclusively, it ought to be practicable, with what is now ready, to bring out a volume each year for several years, and in no long period to complete the undertaking.

Aside from calendars, the most important thing that could be done for the advantage of researchers would be to place a complete set of photostatic reproductions of Draper manuscripts where it would be central for the states of the Southwest. This Society could hardly be expected to tax itself, or to ask the state of Wisconsin to tax itself, for such an object. But if public institutions in the states concerned were to move in harmony, decide on a location for the collection, and secure each a small appropriation, there is no reason why the plan could not be executed to the very great convenience of a large number of investigators. And if a coöperative project should prove cumbersome, a single state ought not to find it too great a burden. This Society paid in many cases \$50 per volume for mounting original Draper papers. Some

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of those volumes could be reproduced at no greater expense, many at much less expense. The notes and memoirs could be typed. This would cost less than photostating and would make the material more legible. For much less money than this Society has invested in the care and preservation of the original Draper papers, the entire collection could be reproduced in handsome, permanent form.

We have heard from one quarter a suggestion that photostatic facsimiles of papers bearing on the history of a given state should be placed in the archives of that state. There is no obstacle in the way of doing that, though the wisdom of the plan seems doubtful. The materials in the collection were assembled regionally, not statewise. They are so interrelated that it becomes practically impossible to separate them off sharply into state compartments. Besides, such a partial collection would possess, for historical purposes, far less than a proportionate value. The Draper Collection, as is clear from the method of its assembling, is a great organic unity which cannot be made fully useful in transcripts unless that unity is preserved.

While we would not be understood as offering advice, we are convinced that if the state of Tennessee were to signalize its recently developed interest in the Draper Collection by placing at Nashville a transcript of the entire collection—not merely original documents, but also Draper's notes and his accumulated memoirs—that capital would instantly spring into importance as a center for the study of western history.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we hope to make it clear to the families of Draper's many friends in Tennessee, that if they shall experience feelings of discomfiture from the publication of the above facts, we regret deeply the necessity of publishing. By withholding names we have sought to make this exposure of the hollowness of Tennessee's claim, worked up during the past four years, as little painful to the feelings of any individual as possible. We are well convinced that practically all of the

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affidavits which are on file testifying against Draper and this Society were *solicited*, and not given spontaneously; that the ideas contained in them were, in some cases at least, the result of suggestion rather than recollection; and that the testimony was given under the powerful pressure of what was supposed to be a patriotic motive. We must remind them that patriotism is not served by aspersing the character of the patient scholar who in his lifetime did more for Tennessee history in its permanent aspects than any other man living or dead; the man whose wizardry transmuted the unformulated experiences of the Appalachian pioneers into the gold of historical memoirs; who rescued from destruction documentary relics of the earliest pioneering age, and preserved all of these stores of material as the sure means of doing justice to the characters of the pioneers themselves.

We will hardly need to remind them that this great collection of manuscripts is also the means of doing justice to the memory of Dr. Draper. No person living knows all of its secrets, because no one has read more than a small proportion of the papers contained in it. But some of us have read enough to convince us that Draper's character will emerge unscathed from any examination, by friendly or hostile eye. This Society has spent many thousands of dollars in conserving the Draper Collection and in making it available for others. We cannot afford similar sums that would be required if we were to employ experts to go through the collection for the purpose of studying the history of every separate group of papers as we have studied the history of the Robertson and Martin papers. It is only in cases where individuals have the temerity to set up and publish naked "recollections" against the witness of their own ancestors recorded in the Draper papers, that this Society as trustee for Dr. Draper feels constrained to give the collection its chance to speak.

THE DRAPER COLLECTION

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF GENERAL JAMES ROBERTSON

The *American Historical Magazine*, published by the history department of Peabody Normal College, Nashville, Tennessee, in volume I (1896), No. 1, p. 72-73, presents an account of this correspondence:

Fragments of the correspondence of this remarkable man, consisting of copies of letters written by himself, and preserved among his papers, the original letters written to him by correspondents, and copies of important contemporaneous documents, have been preserved. They are bound in manuscript in two large volumes, and are among the treasures of the library of the "University of Nashville and Peabody Normal College." Most of the copies of his own letters and of contemporaneous documents are in General Robertson's own handwriting. A few of the letters were injured before being bound in book form, and are worn in the folds, so as to be, in some places, nearly illegible. In many of the letters, the ink has faded so much that some words are indistinct. An examination of the correspondence shows that the Spaniards used better ink than the Cumberland settlers. In editing this correspondence, no liberty is taken with the originals, except in a few instances, to make them conform to the rules of modern punctuation and spelling, and to supply from the context a few words which are illegible.

These letters have been invaluable to the historians of Tennessee. They supply pictures of social, political and military life, drawn by the leading actors in the events to which they relate. Yet only two or three of them have ever been published. They will be given successively in the issues of this magazine.

The first selection given below includes the correspondence from 1784 to 1790, at which latter date Tennessee became the Southwest Territory.

Beginning with Vol. I, the manuscript title-page reads as follows:

"Correspondence of Gen'l. James Robertson.

Extending from November 4, 1784 to July 30, 1814.

Bound in Two Volumes.

Presented to the Library of The University of Nashville

by Dr. Felix Robertson, and bound and deposited

by Nathaniel Cross, 1840."

[Then comes the following certificate:]

"The Correspondence etc., of Gen. James Robertson, who has been styled the 'Father of Tennessee,' was obtained from his son, Dr. Felix Robertson of Nashville, with permission to select from it such papers as might be considered worth preserving; inasmuch however as many of those, that were of a private nature, contained the allusions to political occurrences and Indian border troubles of the day, *it was deemed best to preserve the correspondence entire* [Editor's italics]. I accordingly arranged them in chronological order and had them bound in these two volumes.

NATHL. CROSS."

Nashville University Library.

1840

I forgot to say, in the proper place, that I know of no documents, left by my father, which might be of use to you. I have a file of his letters only on business. Indeed he seldom wrote on any other occasion; and I think he was rather loose and careless about papers. His style ~~writing~~ ^{writing} was bold and ~~loose~~ and like his dress, old-fashioned. His hand legible and singular, and in that, as in every thing else, imitated no man, but was his own, entire self.

If there are any such documents extant, they are, I presume, in possession of my brother, Col. Joseph Martin, of McHenry County, Va; who, had charge of the estate; and who would take pleasure in furnishing them, on application.

FROM MANUSCRIPT OF COLONEL WILLIAM MARTIN, DATED

JULY 7, 1842; IN WILSON Y. MARTIN'S HANDWRITING

I told you, I had written to Mr. Cook
Joseph Alcott, New York County No., respecting documents
to that letter, I have just recd, his reply; from which I will
here give some extracts.

"Since the receipt of your last letter,
I have been engaged some part of almost every day, in the
examination of our Father's old documents. At the
death of my mother's estate, I purchased the old desk &
bookcase, containing our Father's papers; intending at
some convenient time to examine them carefully; but
after staying away considerably the old family furniture
the contemplated examination never commenced, until
you called my attention to the subject.

I wish very much
your kind possession of those papers. were they less, I
would send them to you for the same.

FROM LETTER OF COLONEL WILLIAM MARTIN, DATED SEPTEMBER 6,
1842

I regret it will be
some two or three weeks before I can forward my manuscript
on paper I have scribbled it off, it will have to be copied into
a fair hand, so that you need it.

FROM LETTER OF COLONEL WILLIAM MARTIN, DATED JUNE 4, 1842

Lebanon Tenn. 20th Nov 1857

Mr L G Draper

Dear Sir

I inclose you a letter from Col E L Gardinere of Spartanburg this state which will explain itself - Some months ago I recd. a letter from Col Gardinere asking information in reference to Capt Joseph Bullard who it was said was killed at the battle of Lookout Mountain. I wrote to him that my father had written for your use, his recollections of that battle; and advised him to write to my brother Wilson, who has the original manuscript, and procure from him what my father had said about Bullard if any thing - I also wrote him that you could give him more information than any living man, and promised him that if he desired it, I would drop you a line upon the subject - My brother was here a few weeks ago informed

me that my father had said but
little about Bullard, merely mention-
ing that he was killed, and that he
(my brother) had written to Garden-
hire sending him an extract from
my father's manuscript - Gardenhire's
letter to me says he has not heard
from my brother - I learn from
Gardenhire that some of Capt Bullard's
descendants live in his county -

Col Gardenhire is a gentleman and
a lawyer of fine standing, and any
assistance you may be able to afford
him will be properly appreciated

Write to him at Sparta Tennessee.

And now having dis-
posed of this matter, let me ask you,
how do you, "my friend and brother?"

How comes on the history of the
Pioneer? Will it ever see the light?

My old uncle Bruce died nearly a
year ago - I am still living at the
same place as when you were here
and still practicing law. I saw your
old friend Gov. W. Humphreys this

morning - He is in fine health. I suppose you know that he has been living near this place for several years -

My brother and myself have been consulting whether it would not be proper to present our father's manuscript to the historical society at Nashville; inasmuch as it contains facts which may be important in writing the future history of the State; this however we are not willing to do without your consent.

Your friend &c
Wm. L. Martin

Dixon's Springs Tenn
Aug 31/40

Mr Lyman C. Draper

Dear Sir

Your favor of
18th was received several days since, but
I have postponed writing that I might
better prepare myself for answering your
interrogatories.

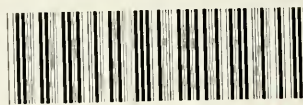
I have carefully looked through
a large number of old letters received
by Col William Martin, some labeled
and many not, and find among them
only four written by yourself, which
I enclose to you

Mrs. W. Y. Martin informs
me that ^{her} Joseph Martin, eldest
son of ^{her} Wm Martin took the manuscripts
and many letters and papers of his father
at his death, and I presume (if living)
he still has them. Yours of 12th Feb 1845





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