

## Friends' Library, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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This Library is under the management of a joint committee of the Monthly Meetings in Philadelphia, the first appointment being made in 1817, although the Library existed many years before that date. The cost of conducting it is supplied by appropriations of the Monthly Meetings.

The enterprise owes its origin to a bequest made by Thomas Chalkley, by his will, dated 2nd mo. 19th, 1741. He died in Tortola when on religious service to that Island and was buried there. The words of his bequest are as follows :—

Having spent most of my days and strength in the work and service of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and having been joined as a member of the Monthly Meeting of Philadelphia for above these forty years, to them, as a token of my love, I give my small Library of books.

In 1742, a transcript of the clause of his will was presented to the Monthly Meeting of Philadelphia. The number of volumes included in this bequest was one hundred and eleven. Soon after, Anthony Benezet was appointed Librarian, and the books were deposited in his house, where they remained until about 1765, when they were removed to a room provided for the purpose in a new Meeting House which had just then been erected at Fourth and Chestnut Streets.

In the same year, the attention of the Monthly Meeting seems to have been drawn to the importance of preserving a collection of the writings of our early Friends, and other suitable books, and a committee was appointed to devise means for rendering the Library more useful.

The collection was gradually increased by donations of interested Friends, among whom were David Barclay and Dr. John Fothergill, of London. Some purchases were also made, but there was no material enlargement of the collection until after the decease of John Pemberton, a leading minister in Philadelphia. This Friend died in 1795, in Pymont, Germany, when on religious service in that country, and

was buried in Friends' Burial Ground there, where it is said his grave stone can still be seen.

By the will of John Pemberton, a large number of valuable volumes were added to the Library, and the following extract from his will shows the broad interest which he took in the object:—

I give and bequeath unto my aforesaid friends, John Field and William Wilson, and the survivor of them, after the decease of my wife, one half of my Library of books, in trust for the use and benefit and perusal of Friends of the three Monthly Meetings in this City; and to be placed in the Library for that purpose; wishing the beloved youth were more willing to read and become acquainted with the trials, sufferings, and religious experiences of our worthy ancestors.

When the new Meeting House was built on the Burial Ground in Arch Street, in 1804, a room was specially provided for the use and accommodation of the Library. My first recollection of it is in 1843, when it was contained in that room, and the whole filled only a small number of cases, though it was then considered to comprise the most complete collection in America of the early writings of Friends.

In 1844, new quarters were provided for the Library on the second floor of a building just then erected on the same premises for Friends' Book Store and Tract Repository, where improved accommodations were afforded it, and it remained in that location until removed in 1887 to its present site, on 16th Street above Arch.

In 1817, the whole number of books had been estimated at about twenty-three hundred, but in 1843 it must have been considerably increased, and in 1853 the number was estimated at about five thousand. At the present time, the Library contains over sixteen thousand volumes, of which number about eighteen hundred are Friends' books, a large proportion of which are the writings of early Friends. There is also a copy of Cromwell's Great Bible of 1539,<sup>1</sup> and a splendid manuscript copy on vellum of a part of the Commentary of St. Ambrose on the Scriptures, executed as early as the tenth century. In addition to the above there is a Latin Bible printed in Venice in 1478, which is deposited in the Library as a part of a collection of rare editions of the Bible

<sup>1</sup> Also known as "Cranmer Version." See Darlow and Moule's *Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of Holy Scripture in the Library of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, vol. 1., 1903 (presented to D. by Caleb Rickman Kemp, of Lewes, the Society's chairman of committees), which quotes Francis Fry's *A Description of the Great Bibles of 1539-41*, etc., 1865.—EDS.

belonging to the Bible Association of Friends in America. The Library further possesses a small collection of manuscripts, including a number of original diaries of prominent Friends.

The collection of Friends' books which belonged to our late Friend, Charles Roberts, has recently been deposited in the Library by his wife, Lucy B. Roberts, and forms a very important addition to the collection previously on its shelves, and undoubtedly makes the whole by far the most extensive and valuable of such collections in America. It embraces upwards of two thousand volumes and tracts, nearly all of which are bound, and the remainder will be shortly. About two-thirds of the whole number are publications made before 1710, and include many of the rarest and most interesting documents of the kind which have been issued. The gathering of this large and valuable collection was a part of the life work of our late Friend, covering the period of many years. The design is that it shall be a special section of the Library, to afford the opportunity for research in relation to the Society of Friends, and facilities are to be provided for freely consulting it.

The value of the Library as a depository for the ancient writings of Friends, as heretofore mentioned, was early recognised, and has given to the Institution a semi-historical character, which has throughout its whole existence been kept steadily in view, and has had an important bearing in shaping its policy and management. About fifteen years ago, this policy developed a new feature in the establishment of the department of records, by which a place was provided for the deposit and safe keeping of such records as Meetings might feel disposed to place in the care of the Committee. The records so deposited are classified and systematically arranged, and easy access is thus afforded for officers and committees of the depositing Meetings to make any required examination of them. Special arrangements are also made for access to them, under reasonable restrictions, for persons engaged in historical research, and information bearing on pedigrees is furnished by the Librarian upon written applications. The results of these searches are all carefully copied, and form in themselves a valuable addition in facilitating further investigations. Over seven hundred volumes are now deposited in the record department.

The present Library building is located on 16th Street, above Arch, on a part of Friends' disused Burial Ground

and in the same enclosure with Friends' Select School. The structure, which is fire-proof, and mainly built of brick and iron, is forty feet square. The main Library room is thirty-seven by twenty-six feet in its interior, with a ceiling twenty feet in height. An iron gallery runs around its four sides, and the room is amply lighted on three sides, there being no buildings near enough to obstruct the light. There is also a small room, nine by nineteen feet, which is devoted to the storage of the most valuable books, and such others as are not esteemed suitable for general circulation but which may be important in the line of historical research. The vault allotted to the record department is thirty-seven feet long and ten feet broad, with a ceiling nine and one half feet high, and is fitted up with steel and iron shelving arranged for the books to be laid on their broadest sides.

GEORGE VAUX.

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### *Friends' Historical Society of America.*

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A circular, signed by Isaac Sharpless, Joshua L. Baily, Jonathan Evans, George Vaux, and James Emlen, has recently been issued, as follows:—

Believing that there is much of historical interest in connection with the history of the Society of Friends in America that should be collected and preserved, some Friends have thought it would be desirable to form a Historical Society for the purpose of collecting material for the elucidation of the history of Friends in America. With this end in view there has been formed "Friends' Historical Society in America."

We desire thy co-operation and assistance in furthering the object for which said Society has been organized, and also to present to, or deposit with it, any manuscripts, books, pictures, personal effects, etc., which may aid the work by illustration or otherwise.

If thou desires to become a member, or wishes further information, please communicate with Isaac Sharpless, president, Haverford College, Pa., or Helen Hopkins Jones, secretary, Lansdowne, Pa.