Books are the legacies that a great genius leaves to mankind, which are delivered down from generation to generation, as presents to the posterity of those yet unborn. 

John Addison

This exhibition is a sampling of the more than eight thousand books and manuscripts dating from the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that the Folger Library has acquired during the past ten years. It will readily be seen that we do not buy just Shakespeare, although Shakespeare is represented by the first attempt at a collected edition of his works in Danish translation published in the late eighteenth century, and the handsome edition of Hazelt printed by Count Henry Keatsler at his private press in Weimar, 1830. The literature and history of Tudor and Stuart England and early English printed books are priority acquisitions, and include works by the poet Henry Vaughan, John Milton, and Henry VIII, as well as a manuscript letter written by Queen Elizabeth's chief minister of state, Lord Burghley, during the threat of the Spanish Armada, and a manuscript book on education by an Elizabethan schoolmaster. A high proportion of the books acquired covers the continental backgrounds that influenced English life and thought. There is a substantive text of Montaigne's Essais, edited by a female protege, and an early Italian play printed in a noted early italic type face, as well as a French jurist's concept of utopian laws. Books on natural history include an early work on comparative anatomy, Edward Tyson's Orang-outang, a book on mushrooms, and a book on breeds of dogs and their care. Among the scientific books and books on technology are a primary source for the physical sciences, Newton's Principia Mathematica, a work on mining and metallurgy dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, and an early Spanish work on navigation, as well as a book on wrought iron. Books on the decorative arts include a book of lace designs and an early work reflecting the influence of the Orient on English interior design.

Important public occasions such as royal visits are represented by several lavishly illustrated volumes, one with illustrations by the Flemish artist, Peter Paul Rubens. One particular group of books concentrates on books written by women, or pertaining to them. Among the books is a copy of an Englishman's diary recording the first known purchase of a book by Shakespeare, a rare poem celebrating a Frost Fair on the river Thames, a group of French Old Testament mysteries, and a beautifully illustrated early book on the passion of Christ, as well as a letter of Nathaniel Hawthorne from a large collection of the works of Delia Bacon, one of the earliest anti-Slavery documents. There is also a letter from the English artist Sir Thomas Lawrence representing the collection of Fanny Kemble.

Although some of our books have been acquired at major auctions, such as books and manuscripts from the collection of Sir Thomas Phillips, the omnivorous English book collector of the nineteenth century, and travel books from the collection of Boles Pennine, by and large, most of our books have been purchased from the catalogs of booksellers, or by visiting their shops in the United States, England, and Europe. One of the largest collections purchased was a group of Reformation books and pamphlets offered us by a Swiss book firm. To the booksellers we owe many thanks for their great knowledge of books and their help in strengthening our collection through that knowledge. In spite of the ever-inflating price of books, we would agree with Dr. Johnson's statement:

The booksellers are generous liberal minded men.

Elizabeth Niemeier
Acquisitions Librarian

CASE 1: Bindings

Augustinus, Aurelius, Saint, Regula In p. In p. 1951
Bible. English. The Holy Bible. Amsterdam, 1644
Gowurit, Jean, Sammalle, de, de teume medecine, In p. n. d. 1
Lury, Jean de, Histoire memorabile de la ville de Sancerre, La Rochelle, 1774.
Zwingle, Ulrich, Articul. Zurich 1529

CASE 2: WomanKind:

Books by and about women

(Bufford, Samuel) A discourse against unequal marriages.
London, 1596.
(Collam, George, ed. Lamp oil for eminent ladies. London, 1575.
Le Laboureur, Jean, Relation du voyage de la Reine de Pologne.
Paris, 1647.
The Mens answer to the womens petition against coffee. London, 1724.
(Passe, Jean) Le vieux rustre pourtrait... des plus grandes dames de la Christiante. Amsterdam, 1640.
Piazza, Daphne III. Academia di enigmi in soventi. Vinegia, 1552.
(Shirley, John) The accomplished ladies rich closet of rarities.
London, 1687.
Ward, Ann. The maiden's prize or The bateliers puzzle. In p. ca. 17001
Women's work or A treatise proving by sundry reasons that women doe excel men. Late 17th century.

CASE 3: Science and Technology

Agricola, Georg. Opera... de arte de metalli partita in XII libri. Basilea, 1563.
Cortes, Martin. Serece compendio de la sphera y de la arte de navegar. Sevilla, 1530.
(Dubreuil, Jean) Perspective practical. London, 1672.
Joussie, Mathurin. La fillole ouverte l'arthe de sertirier.
La Fille, 1627.
Savery, Thomas. The miners friend, or an engine to raise water by fire, described. London, 1702.

CASE 4: Natural History

Cirino, Andrea, De natura et solertia canum. Liber singularis. Padovani, 1657.
Fouch, Leonhard. Plantarum etrig... ac quingue diaries. lingui redacte. Lugduni, 1551.
Herbarius, Franciscus. Testitit de virtutibus herbarum. Impressum Venetis per Alexandrum de Rominita, 1583.
Remmelin, Johann. Cartographiae microcosmicae. Franciscati ad Aenam, 1600.
CASE 5. Reformation and Religious Thought

Bible. English, 1540. Great Bible. The Bible in English.
London, 1540.
Bible. French, 1868. La Bible. Geneve, 1888.
Catholic church. Liturgy and Ritual. Hours. Inclined hour
Church of England. Book of common prayer. The book of the
Erasmus, Desiderius. Ad R. cardinalii Magnolinitum epistola.
[Coloniae, 1591]
[Basel, 1521]
Luther, Martin. Ad Leonem X. ... resolutions disputatationum.
[Basel, 1517]
Luther, Martin. De captivitate babilonica ecclesiae. [Basel, 1520]

CASE 6. History and Political Theory

Cambridge University. Illustrissimi principis ducis Cornubiæ ...
genethelis, Cambriæ, 1668.
[Chamberlain, Peter]. The power mains advocate. London, 1669.
[Kruterius, Samuell]. Fudenciae Mariae Reginae. Amsterdam, 1695.
Passe, Crespin van de. Regiae Angliae majestatis pictura.
[Colonii, 1604].
A representation of the Persian Plot in 20 figures. London, ca. 1681.
[Spilame, Raculli]. Dicarchiae Henrici regis ... propugnaculata.
[Paris, ca. 1596]

CASE 7. Manuscripts

Hilsey, Mary Hettoni. Letter. March 27, 1655.
Scott, John. The Foundation of the University of Cambridge.
July 4, 1623.
Warbleton, Sussex. Parish Poor Book. 1693-1708.

CASE 8. Theatre and Literature

[Congreve, William]. A song sung by Mr. Diggott in the comedy
call’d Love for Love set to music by Mr. John Eccles. London, 1651.
Montaigne, Michel Eyquem de. Les Essais. Lyon, 1595.
Shakespeare, William. All’s well that ends well. Knobloch ...
[Paris, 1888].
[Smal book containing twenty-five half-length oval paintings of
Fanny Kemble, n.p., d.l.]
Trissino, Giovanni Gregorio. La Sophonisbe. [Rome, 1534].
Vaughan, Henry. Omer I. n.o. A collection of some select poems,
Wright, William. Theatrical set designs, possibly for the Amsterdam
Schouwburg, Amsterdam, 1674-1739.

CASE 9. Engravings

Catalis distichia. Celio. Basel, ca. 1500 or ca. 1501.
Dieiterich, Wenzel. Architectura de constitutione, symmetria, ac
proprietate. Thornburg, 1558.
Faida, Giovanni Battista. Pintura intitolis hominum ... et invenitur de
Pappi Trientini. Roma, 1670.
Gevers, Jan Caspar. Pintura intitolis hominum ... Ferdinandi
Austriaci a Anvers. Antwerp, 1640.
Holter, Vinzenz. Antiquariarum turris ecclesiae cathedralis.
Antwerpæ 1647.
Holter, Vinzenz. The kingdom of England & principality of
Wales exactly described. London, 1644.
La Salle, Jean. Puy du Fou. Histoire de l’entière de la Roye Mère ...
[Paris, 1736].
Parkier, George. A treatise of painting and varnish. Oxford,
1688.
Preussinus, Urbanus. Oratio nuptialis. [Strassburg, ca. 1500].
Sterri, Jan van der. Verulus sericus. [Antwerp? 1609].
Vascelli, Cesare. Corone delle nobili e virtuose donne. Venetia,
1601.

CASE 10. Gifts

Androuet du Cerceau, Jacques. Le second volume des plus
excelents batiments de France. Paris, 1574.
Lawrence, Sir Thomas. Letter to Mrs. Charles Kemble.
October 3, 1829.
Pinder, Ulrich. Speculum passionum domini nostri Ihesu Christi.
[Nuremberg, 1507].
Thomasi’s advice to the painter. London, 1664.
[Le livre du pare-ville et des fables mysteres du vieil testament.
Paris, 1542.]
Veer, Gerrit de. Warhaftige Relatie. Der trene ... Schifff ...
[Die Mittelalterlichen und Saalischen Schiff ...]. Amo.
1944, 1945, and 1946. (Amerique, 1941.

NOVEMBER - APRIL