

ENGLISH-SPEAKING COLLECTORS OF AMERICANA PRIOR TO 1650

The English bibliographical discovery of America preceded the reality, although the evidence documenting the early British collectors of Americana is almost as difficult to identify and assemble as that for the early voyages themselves. Until the beginning of English book auction sales in 1676 information relating to personal libraries has to be derived from such sources as wills, probates, marginalia, manuscript catalogues, textual references, etc.¹ Nevertheless such information as is available provides important evidence not only on personal tastes and beliefs but also on the general cultural and intellectual background of a particular period.² Within such a period the same library catalogues can also be used to trace the development of different subjects. Thus, for the Tudor period, Professor E.G.R. Taylor's history of Tudor geography owed much to the evidence contained in the book catalogues of Sir Thomas Smith, Dr John Dee and John, Lord Lumley, while A. McLean has used booklists for a similar survey of the development of education.³ Professors Jayne and Johnson have commented in their introduction to the 1609 library catalogue of John, Lord Lumley that 'A large and careful English library catalogue is... the shortest and most accurate route to a knowledge of what was known in renaissance England about any subject'.⁴ An analysis of reading habits and book production has enabled such scholars as Louis B. Wright and Edwin H. Miller to document the taste of the Elizabethan reader.⁵ In a similar way it is the intention of this brief essay to attempt to establish the identity of some of the leading early collectors of Americana and the range of the material in their libraries.

The collecting of Americana for most of the sixteenth century was like the actual exploration, restricted to a small committed body of enthusiasts. It was a far cry from the early eighteenth century, when the third earl of Shaftesbury could bemoan 'Our Relish or Taste must of necessity grow barbarous, whilst Barbarian Customs, Savage Manners, Indian Wars and Wonders of the Terra Incognita, employ our leisure Hours and are the chief materials to furnish out a Library'.⁶ In the early sixteenth century Sir Thomas More (1478–1535) had read of the Florentine Amérgo Vespucci's voyages to South America and the Caribbean, and he and his brother-in-law John Rastell (1475–1536) tried to keep abreast of information on the New World.⁷ The inspiration, however, was Continental and the group surrounding More and Rastell were well in advance of general English interest in the New World. Indeed such was to be the case for the first half of the sixteenth century. As Professor D.B. Quinn has written, 'English knowledge of North America in 1505 had been greater than that of any other European country; by 1560 England knew little more than she had fifty-five years before'.⁸

Libraries, as the store-houses of such knowledge, had fared badly over this period owing to deliberate destruction and general neglect. Cambridge University Library had between 500 and 600 books in 1528 but by 1556 the number of books had dropped to 175.⁹ The University Library at Oxford fell into total disarray and had to await Sir Thomas Bodley's refounding at the end of the century. At Eton College in July 1552 a workman named Trodd was paid 'for ii dayes workynge and a halfe aboute the Cariage of Rubbish out of the liberarye'.¹⁰ These few examples illustrate a decline

of the major institutional libraries, so that one must turn to private individuals at this time rather than libraries for any major collecting of Americana.

A key figure to emerge in this respect in the middle of the sixteenth century was Richard Eden (1521–1576), who has been termed England's first literary imperialist. Eden was educated at Cambridge from 1535 to 1544, where he read the *De orbe novo* of Pietro Martire d'Anghiera in the Alcalá edition. In 1555 Eden translated the first three *Decades* of d'Anghiera, which detail the history of the Spanish discovery and exploration in the Caribbean to 1516. Eden supplemented d'Anghiera with extracts from other important Spanish sources such as Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, *De la natural hystoria de las Indias* (Toledo, 1526), which included Oviedo's own experiences in the New World. Eden probably took some of his Spanish accounts of the New World via the Italian travel compendium of Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Delle navigationi et viaggi* (Venice, 1550).¹¹ With Eden's *Decades of the newe worlde* English readers now had access to a fairly wide range of authorities on the New World and Eden's own library was presumably accessible to those who wished to consult it. Eden had established close links with explorers such as Sebastian Cabot, Richard Chancellor and Stephen Borough, while in 1554 he met in London Agustín de Zárate, whose book *Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Perú* (Antwerp, 1555) was one of the most important on early Spanish America and was probably added to Eden's library. Eden unfortunately turned his attention away from the publication of narratives during a stay in France from 1562 to 1572, and no record remains of the eventual fate of his library.

Eden's old tutor at Cambridge, Sir Thomas Smith (1513–1577), had a library of over 1,000 books according to a listing of 1 August 1566.¹² He had, as might be expected, Eden's *Decades* (which he subsequently left to the parson of his parish), Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia* (first published Basle, 1544), a portion of which Eden translated in 1553, and João de Barros's *Asia* (Lisbon, 1552–3). Smith's geographical collection obviously owed much to the influence of Eden for, otherwise representing the interests of an erstwhile principal secretary of the state, it had its educational and geographical roots in the reign of Henry VIII. Other notables, such as Henry, Lord Stafford (1501–1563), had even less than Smith. In 1556 Stafford had 300 books and the total lack of Americana provides the necessary reminder that books on the New World figured at this time only in the library of the committed enthusiast.¹³ Theology dominated the output of books throughout the period under discussion, as Edith L. Klotz has shown.¹⁴

Gabriel Harvey (1550–1630) also had Sir Thomas Smith as friend and patron. The Smith mansion was near the Harvey home and Gabriel's letters and marginalia indicate that Sir Thomas played a significant part in his education. Virginia Stern's recent listing of the 'Bibliotheca' (157 books and 10 MSS) of Harvey reveals that he annotated a copy of Richard Hakluyt's edition of Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, *De orbe novo Petri Martyris* (Paris, 1587).¹⁵ Gabriel and his brother Richard (d.1623) were both friends of Richard Hakluyt, the greatest propagandist of Elizabethan exploration, and Gabriel's library list probably does not reflect the full extent of his geographical collection.

Richard Hakluyt's own travel collection, the *Principal navigations* (London, 1589 & 1598–1600), was often taken on board ship by explorers as a practical guide to the areas of discovery, but earlier in the century no such compendium had existed in English. Sir Martin Frobisher's 1576 expedition in search of the northwest passage

had a small ship's library, which contained two publications of the French cosmographer royal, André Thevet: *The new found worlde, or Antarctike* (London, 1568) and his *Cosmographie* (Paris, 1576). Thevet's *New found worlde* was however more authoritative on South America and the Caribbean than on North America. Sir Humphrey Gilbert's *A discourse of a discoverie for a new passage to Cataia* (London, 1576) revealed a knowledge of modern geography, although occasionally presented in a somewhat disjointed manner. Gilbert was advised, as was Frobisher, on his northwest passage and New World colonial ventures by Dr John Dee (1527–1608), whose library on travel and exploration was probably second only to that of Richard Hakluyt in Elizabethan England.

A list of Dee's library was drawn up on 6 September 1583, only three days before Gilbert's ship, the *Squirrel*, sank with all hands after an abortive trip to Newfoundland. By this time however a momentum for exploration had been established and Gilbert's death brought no serious interruption to the plans for a colonial settlement in America. Dee for his part continued to make his library available to friends such as Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Drake, Richard Hakluyt and Thomas Harriot. Dee's library list of 1583 reveals that he had 'in all neere 4,000 the fourth part of which were written bookes'.¹⁶ His collection of Spanish material on the New World was outstanding and has been documented elsewhere by the present writer.¹⁷ In English Dee had the published texts on the northwest passage such as Gilbert's *Discourse*, George Best's *A true discourse of the late voyages of discoverie* (London, 1578), a first hand account of Frobisher's three voyages 1576–8, and D. Settle, *A true reporte of the laste voyage by Capteine Frobisher* (London, 1577). In French Dee had Jean de Léry's, *Histoire d'un voyage. . . Amérique* (La Rochelle, 1578), which recounted Léry's experiences with Villegaignon in Brazil 1556–58, Bartolomé de las Casas, *Tyrannie des espagnols* (Antwerp, 1579), one of the many editions of the classic indictment of Spanish conduct towards the natives of the New World, Thevet's *Cosmographie* (Paris, 1576), and the 1580 English translation of Jacques Cartier's accounts of his first two voyages to Canada, *A shorte and briefe narration. . . to the northweast partes called Newe France*. In Italian Dee had Ramusio's *Navigazioni* and the second edition of Girolamo Benzoni's *Historia del mondo nuovo* (Venice, 1572). The above does not even take into account the material Dee added between 1583 and 1608, the year of his death. In the later part of his life Dee, like Eden before him, turned his attention away from exploration, but he did continue to receive material on America, as in 1590 when Thomas Harriot gave him a copy of the 1586 Paris edition of Antonio de Espejo's travels in Mexico, *El viaie que hizo Antonio de Espejo en el anno de ochenta y tres*.¹⁸ The apparent dispersal of Dee's library at his death meant that an important centre of knowledge was withdrawn when English colonisation in Virginia began.

Dee's library list had been drawn up in 1583 and in the following year a similar exercise was conducted for Francis, 2nd earl of Bedford (1527–1585). Bedford's list contained only 221 books and 4 MSS – much less than Dee's massive collection. Nevertheless it did include Richard Willes's 'second edition' of Eden's *Decades* published in 1577 (with the dedication to Lady Bedford), entitled *The history of travayle in the West and East Indies*, George Best's *A true discourse* (1578), and Richard Hakluyt's *Divers voyages* (London, 1582), the first publication of the great proponent of English maritime exploration and colonisation.¹⁹

This is not the place to document the life and importance of Richard Hakluyt

(1552–1616) since this has already been done by Professors G.B. Parks, E.G.R. Taylor and D.B. Quinn.²⁰ Hakluyt undoubtedly assembled the most comprehensive collection of printed material, MSS, maps, etc. on the New World in Elizabethan England, in addition to extensive personal knowledge derived from interviews with many of the leading figures involved in exploration. Many owed their New World knowledge and books to friendship with Hakluyt – for example Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586), who ‘always felt the call of the New World.’²¹ Sir Francis Walsingham (1530–1590) was also a friend and patron of Hakluyt’s and the first edition of Hakluyt’s *Principall navigations* (1589) was dedicated to him. The late Conyers Read has described Walsingham as a ‘bookish person’, but unfortunately no listing of his library remains.²² Nevertheless a survey of the dedications to Walsingham reveals a keen interest in the publications of the New World, notably in Thomas Nicholas’s 1578 translation of Francisco López de Gómara, *The pleasant historie of the conquest of Weast India* and Sir George Peckham’s 1583 publication, *A true reporte, of the late discoveries, and possession, . . . of the new-found landes*.

Walsingham was Hakluyt’s main patron between 1580 and 1590, after which the mantle fell on the Cecil family, first Lord Burghley (1520–98) and then Sir Robert Cecil (1563–1612), with the latter receiving the dedication of volumes two and three of the enlarged edition of the *Principal navigations* (1598–1600). Burghley was a notable bibliophile and it is possible to document his library from a 1687 sales catalogue, whose preface stated that it comprised ‘the main part of the Library of that Famous Secretary William Cecil, Lord Burleigh’.²³ Richard Eden had been William Cecil’s secretary under Northumberland and introduced him to John Dee. Cecil was purchasing Spanish items in the 1550s and by the end of his life had amassed what Dr Gustav Ungerer has termed ‘the largest private library of Spanish books in Tudor England.’²⁴ Material on the New World included Pedro de Cieza de León’s *Parte primera de la chronica del Perú* and Francisco López de Gómara’s *Historia general de las Indias y la conquista de Mexico*, both published in Antwerp in 1554, the latter being purchased shortly after publication for 3/6d from the bookseller William Seres.²⁵ The medical treatise of Nicolás Monardes was sent to Cecil in 1574–5 by Roger Bodenham, an English Catholic in Seville, in the conviction that it contained the best remedy for gout!²⁶

Sir Walter Raleigh (1554–1618) possessed an even deeper interest than Cecil in the New World. His library list of just over 500 volumes drawn up c.1610–12 does not reflect, however, his total collecting, let alone his reading on the area.²⁷ Richard Hakluyt had earlier assumed the role of book-agent for Raleigh. For example, in 1585 Hakluyt reported to Sir Francis Walsingham ‘how careful I have bin to advertise S^r Walter Rawley from tyme to tyme, and to send him discourses both in printe and written hand, concerning his voyage.’²⁸ In return it may well be true that between 1584 and 1589 Hakluyt obtained materials from Raleigh for the first edition of the *Principall navigations* and perhaps had the run of his library.²⁹ Raleigh’s library can only now be reconstituted from the 1610–12 list and the references in such books as his *Discoverie of the large, rich and bewtiful empire of Guiana. . . performed in the yeare 1595* (London, 1596), which reveal that he had a deep knowledge of all available sources on the area, including the Spanish. Raleigh’s imprisonment in the Tower from late 1603 to March 1616 may help explain the relatively small number of items on the New World in the 1610–12 library list. This contains only the 1552 Zaragoza edition of López de Gómara; an undated edition of José de Acosta’s *Historia natural*

y moral de las Indias, first published in Seville in 1590; Hakluyt's *Principal navigations*; parts of Theodore de Bry's superb travel collection, *America*, of the 1590s; and Thomas Harriot's *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia* (London, 1588).

Thomas Harriot (1560–1621) is now usually recognised as the first modern mathematical experimental scientist.³⁰ He was a member of Raleigh's household by late 1582 or early 1583 and was working with Raleigh on the Virginia expeditions by 1584. Professor John Shirley has indicated that Harriot's role in Raleigh's household was largely that of scientist, mathematical tutor and navigational expert.³¹ Harriot's library is now difficult to document, but he presumably had many of the standard works on the New World. He possessed in either the 1574 Spanish original or the 1577 English translation, the medical survey of the West Indies of Nicolás Monardes, while, in a letter of 11 July 1596 to Sir Robert Cecil, Harriot mentioned 'the Spanish booke of Acosta, which. . . I have seene'.³² This is a reference to José de Acosta's important descriptive and philosophical *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (Seville, 1590), which Hakluyt also knew in the Spanish and was translated into English from the French by Edward Grimston in 1604. Harriot's possession of Spanish works is indicated by his purchase, probably in 1602, of Antonio Herrera y Tordesillas's *Historia general de los hechos de los Castellanos en las islas i tierra firme del mar oceano* published in Madrid, 1601.³³ In January of the same year Harriot had recommended that Hakluyt's *Principal navigations* be carried by Samuel Mace on his forthcoming North American voyage.³⁴ The contacts between voyagers, scientists and propagandists remained strong at this stage of English exploration.

This close-knit intellectual involvement is clearly illustrated by the association of the so-called 'School of Night', which included Dee, Raleigh and the ninth earl of Northumberland, Henry Percy.³⁵ In 1605 Northumberland joined Raleigh in the Tower as a result of the Percy involvement in the Gunpowder Treason. Nicknamed the 'Wizard Earl', Northumberland took Harriot into his employment in 1598 and by 1601 Harriot had settled at Northumberland's house at Syon. Apart from his contacts with such American enthusiasts as Dee, Raleigh and Harriot, Northumberland's own brother George Percy (1580–1632) sailed for Virginia with Captain Christopher Newport in December 1606, not returning until 1612 and serving part of the time as deputy governor of Virginia.³⁶ Northumberland himself is on record as putting up £20 towards the cost of a voyage to Virginia in 1611.³⁷ It is not possible however to determine exactly the extent of Northumberland's library at his death in 1632. The earliest catalogue of the library at Petworth dates from the 1690s and records a total of 2,873 volumes, of which 2,339 were published in 1632 or earlier.³⁸ The extent of Northumberland's English Americana can however be documented from a Sotheby sale catalogue of 1928, which reveals a considerable collection on the subject.³⁹ Of the printed works on Virginia, Northumberland had Richard Rich's *Newes from Virginia* (1610) (lot 123); Captain John Smith's *True relation* (1608) (lots 134 and 135, variant issues); and the anonymous *True declarations* (1610) (lots 164, 165, and 166). On New England he had Brereton's *Briefe and true relation* (1602), the first English publication relating to New England (lots 21 and 22, two issues); James Rosier's *True relation* of Captain Weymouth's voyage (1605) (lots 127 and 128, two issues) – this and Brereton's work have been described as 'The verie two eyes of New-England historie'; and William Wood's *New Englands prospect* (1634), the first detailed account of Massachusetts (lot 172).

It was to Northumberland, moreover, that the colonist William Strachey, in search of further support for Virginian interests, dedicated what appears to be the earliest of the three extant manuscripts of his *Historie of travel into Virginia Britania*. This treatise, in some ways the best of all early accounts of the colony, was not printed until modern times, while similarly unpublished until the twentieth century was lot 115, George Percy's *A trewe relatyon of the proceedings and occurrentes of memento which have happened in Virginia*, an eye-witness account of the early years and an attack on his enemy, Captain John Smith. The Northumberland collection also included a number of manuscript maps of exceptional consequence. Foremost among these were Sir Humphrey Gilbert's chart of North America and the Arctic regions (lot 78), bearing his signature and the cabalistical symbol affected by John Dee, by whom it was drawn up, and the only known manuscript copy of Raleigh's map of Guiana (lot 79). The depth of material in Northumberland's possession made his library one of the richest collections on English America at the time.

An examination of the library of another member of the aristocracy reminds us however that the languages of learning and culture in Elizabethan England were not English. Thus 88% of the 2,800 volume library of John, Lord Lumley (1534–1609) was in Latin, Greek or Hebrew.⁴⁰ Lumley had Raleigh's 1596 Guiana narrative and Hakluyt's *Principal navigations* (1598–1600), but relatively little else on the New World except general world compendiums. Richard Hakluyt had been admitted to use Lord Lumley's library in 1596–7 but this was primarily to use the material on the East.⁴¹ Professors Jayne and Johnson, who edited Lumley's library catalogue, believed that Lumley's 'collection of works on the subject (i.e. geography) was, so far as we know, the finest and most complete in England', which indicates the difficulties even general bibliographers have in assessing the evidence when it comes to a particular subject.⁴² Better libraries belonged for example to Dee, Hakluyt, Raleigh (at one stage of his career) and Samuel Purchas.

The Reverend Samuel Purchas (1577–1626) assumed Hakluyt's mantle in the publishing and collecting of travel narratives, activities which I have described in detail elsewhere.⁴³ Purchas acquired Hakluyt's manuscripts after the latter's death in 1616, although it is not clear whether he obtained the printed books as well. In any case Purchas had presumably acquired for himself most of the standard printed works before he met Hakluyt in 1613, since the research for his first work, *Purchas his pilgrimage* (London, 1613), dates from the early 1600's. Purchas acknowledged that his *Pilgrimage* 'hath made mee indebted to seven hundred Authors, of one or other kind, in I know not how many hundreds of their Treatises, Epistles, Relations and Histories, of divers subjects and Languages.'⁴⁴ Purchas like Hakluyt was aided by many of the leading figures of exploration, such as Raleigh and Captain John Smith.⁴⁵ Purchas's library passed to his son Samuel but its fate after the latter's death in late 1658 is unknown.

Hakluyt's and Purchas's folio publications however, more than any others, enabled the New World to enter the libraries of the literate during the first half of the seventeenth century. Purchas's *Pilgrimage*, which went through four editions (1613–1626), and his four-volume *Pilgrimes* (1625), with their religious orientation, were particularly successful in the theologically dominated book market. Purchas's *Pilgrimage* was the only New World travel item in the collection that the poet Lady Anne Southwell (d.1636) left to her soldier-husband Captain Henry Sibthorpe.⁴⁶ When Dudley Digges (1613–1643) bequeathed his library of 1300 items to his Oxford

college, All Souls, it included the four-volume *Pilgrimes* and an undated edition, probably the fourth (1626), of the *Pilgrimage*.⁴⁷ George Abbot (1562–1633), Archbishop of Canterbury and one of Purchas's main patrons, left four sets of Purchas's *Pilgrimes* in his large collection of Americana.⁴⁸ Sir Edward Coke (1552–1634) had both the *Pilgrimes* and the 1614 *Pilgrimage*, in addition to Benzoni's *Historia del mondo nuovo* (Venice, 1572) and Fernando Colón's *Vita e fatti dell' ammiraglia d. Chr. Colombo* (Venice, 1571), one of the prime sources on the life of Christopher Columbus.⁴⁹ There is more Americana in the library at Holkham, dating from 1608 onwards, most probably Coke's, though not positively ascribable to him.⁵⁰ William Freke, the sixth son of a Dorset squire, who entered the Middle Temple from Oxford in 1622, bought Purchas's *Pilgrimes* for £2/11/– in September 1626.⁵¹ In the previous month he had paid a deposit of 18/– for Hakluyt's *Principal navigations*, which was refundable, less a shilling, if the volumes were returned before Christmas.

Institutional libraries, too, saw the volumes of Hakluyt and Purchas as necessary reference sources, whether they acquired them by donation or purchase. Christ Church, Oxford, Hakluyt's old college, benefited much from the former practice. Both Raleigh and Purchas presented volumes to Christ Church in 1615 and 1617 respectively.⁵² In 1617 Purchas gave five Latin books and the third edition of his *Pilgrimage*.⁵³ Christ Church also received the four-volume *Pilgrimes* after its publication in 1625, but Corpus Christi College, Oxford paid £3/6/8d for their copy.⁵⁴ The Bodleian Library at Oxford, the largest institutional library of the age, received its copies of Purchas under its 1610 'copyright' arrangement with the Stationers' Company. These regulations enabled the Bodleian to amass an excellent collection of English Americana, which it supplemented with judicious purchasing in Spain. Nevertheless items were missed from time to time as an analysis of Robert Burton's library list reveals. Burton (1577–1640), the author of *The anatomy of melancholy*, left 2,000 books at his death, of which 581 went to the Bodleian and 473 to Christ Church Library.⁵⁵ About a third of the books which went to the Bodleian were of a theological nature, but the total collection did include the following items which had evaded the Bodleian copyright net: Richard Hakluyt's 1609 translation of the chronicle of the 'Gentleman of Elvas', *Virginia richly valued; a declaration of the state of the colonie and affaires in Virginia* (London, 1620); John Smith, *The true travels, adventures and observations of Captaine J. Smith* (London, 1630); and Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan. . . containing an abstract of New England* (Amsterdam, 1637). To Christ Church went the following, which the Bodleian already had: Hakluyt's 1589 *Principall navigations*; Ralph Hamor, *A true discourse of the present estate of Virginia* (London, 1615), a company-sponsored account of four years in Virginia; and Francis Higginson, *New-England's plantation* (London, 1630).

Brian Twyne (1580–1644), the first Keeper of the University Archives, was another who left his books to the University of Oxford.⁵⁶ His tastes were largely catholic but the relatively large amount of travel in his library indicates the beginning of the arrival of the 'disinterested' armchair traveller. On the New World he had Nicholas Le Challeux, *A true and perfect description of the last voyage of Captaine John Rybaut into Terra Florida* (London, 1566), the account of the carpenter survivor of the Spanish massacre of the Huguenot settlement in Florida in 1565; Thomas Churchyard, *A prayse, and reporte of Maister Martyne Forboishers voyage to Meta Incognita* (London, 1578), the account of Frobisher's second voyage in search of the

northwest passage in 1577; and Robert Johnson, *The new life of Virginea* (London, 1612), an official publication of the Virginia Company.

The English settlement of North America in general and Virginia in particular was a slow, hard process with no easy riches to be won in the style of the Spanish in Mexico and Peru. The English publications often reflect this background in needing official Virginia Company sponsorship and providing no real excitement for the general reader. As Dr John Parker has shown, the decline in the number of publications relating to Virginia after its establishment indicates that whatever amount of support the people of England gave to the colony, it was not a subject for which book-sellers found a ready audience.⁵⁷ The Virginia Company for its part seems to have realised the value of books both for recreation and instruction.⁵⁸ Professor D.B. Quinn, using the Ferrar Papers in Magdalene College, Cambridge, has brought to light a number of books which were purchased for the Virginia Company from 1620 or 1621 to early 1623.⁵⁹ These books may have been intended as part of a reference collection for the use of the Company in London or Jamestown. The list included Thomas Harriot's *Briefe and true report of... Virginia* (1588), bought for one shilling, which although somewhat outdated was obviously still of value; the 1598–1600 edition of Hakluyt's *Principal navigations* (bought for £1/16/-); and John Breerton's *A briefe and true relation of the discoverie of the north part of Virginia* (London, 1602), relating to the voyage of Bartholomew Gosnold. Captain John Smith was represented by his 1612 *Map of Virginia* and by no less than three copies of his *Description of New England*, which one can perhaps assume was used for practical as well as reference purposes. The nature of the available evidence however means that for other prominent members of the Virginia Company no such analysis can be made. Thus George Sandys (1578–1644), Treasurer of the Virginia Colony from 1621 to 1625, no doubt had a collection of Americana but no evidence now remains as to its nature and size.⁶⁰

As the seventeenth century progressed and English attention was turned inwards by domestic strife, the Civil War disrupted the general growth of both public and private libraries.⁶¹ Nevertheless the major works on the New World had now been established and by nature of their folio format survived more easily than octavos or pamphlets. Those in positions of responsibility needed no reminder of the power of the Spanish crown in Europe and the financial impact of its New World treasures. Oliver Cromwell's attack on the Spanish in the Caribbean in 1655 was based to some extent on a too enthusiastic interpretation of the existing literature, with Thomas Gage's *The English American* (London, 1648) bearing principal responsibility. James Ussher (1581–1656), Archbishop of Armagh, had copies of Hakluyt, Purchas's *Pilgrimes* and John Smith's *A map of Virginia* (1612) in his library, which was eventually deposited in 1660 in Trinity College, Dublin, after Cromwell had intended it for a new second college in Dublin.⁶² Scipio le Squyer (1579–1659), Deputy Chamberlain of the Exchequer, had begun compiling a list of his books and MSS as a result of moving house in the spring of 1632. His 487 books included Eden's *Decades* (1555), Thevet's *The new found worlde* (1568), Raleigh's *Guiana* (1596), James Rosier's *Virginia* (1605), and Robert Harcourt's *A relation of a voyage to Guiana* (1613).⁶³ He also had two copies of either the *Pilgrimes* or *Pilgrimage* of Samuel Purchas, reaffirming its importance as a source of information well into the seventeenth century.

The New World was increasingly reflected in the imaginative literature of the

period. For example, Robert Burton's *The anatomy of melancholy* (Oxford, 1621) has numerous references to the New World, while his library, as has been shown, contained much relevant material. William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585–1649), the Scottish poet; collected some 1600 titles in the first quarter of the seventeenth century.⁶⁴ In Spanish he had Pedro de Cieza de León's history of Peru in the 1554 Antwerp edition, while he had in English William Alexander's *An encouragement to colonies* (London, 1624) and John Smith's *Map of Virginia* and *Description of New England*. John Milton (1608–74), the poet, also made extensive borrowings from the travel literature of the period, notably from Purchas.⁶⁵ He also had Raleigh's *Guiana* and had read Eden and Willes, while the 1656 translation of Bartolomé de las Casas entitled *The tears of the Indians* was translated by his nephew, John Phillips.⁶⁶ The reproduction in this latter work, albeit in reduced size, of a few of the famous de Bry engravings of Spanish cruelties towards the native Indian population was an astute move by Nathaniel Brooke the publisher, for few English books on the New World reinforced their points visually although this was an era of limited reading ability. America as depicted by Las Casas and de Bry was in more ways 'Paradise Lost' than 'Paradise Regained'.

To many an early English colonist America was certainly no paradise. Disease, native hostility, lack of easy economic success and the rigours of the climate proved effective enemies to all the settlements. Since lack of space on board ship precluded the taking of many luxuries to the New World, it is interesting to see how often books were regarded as necessities. Professor Louis B. Wright has indicated the quandary 'of many a pioneer, pondering the relative importance of an extra pair of boots or a stout folio as he chose his indispensables for the Great Venture'.⁶⁷ A study of early American wills, inventories, etc. reveals that the early colonists did not lack for books, particularly utilitarian books.⁶⁸ The relatively high death rate among the early colonists also meant a constant circulation of books in addition to those being imported. William Brewster (1560–1644), one of the chief founders of the Plymouth colony, who left nearly 400 books at his death, was one who made such regular additions to his library that it contained English publications for every year from 1620 to 1643, excepting 1639 and 1641.⁶⁹

Books were sent out to colonists by friends, booksellers and official bodies. Many instances of book transportation are found in the Winthrop Papers, for example on 22 June 1633, when Edward Howes wrote to John Winthrop Jr: 'in a bundle of clothes for your cosen Mary. . . you shall find from him a cattalogue of the last marte books; and from your poore friend an exact and large and the latest discovery of the North west passage, made by a painfull and industrious gent, Capt. James, as a remembrance of my obliged love'.⁷⁰ Winthrop lent his books freely to his friends and in turn borrowed from them. With the number of books in America relatively small the circulation of books and information was all the more necessary, although this did have the disadvantage of possible loss, even in institutional libraries. By the early eighteenth century Thomas Hollis, writing from England, could complain of Harvard's library that it was 'reckoned here to be ill managed, by the account I have of some that know it, you want seats to sett and read, and chains to your valuable books like our Bodleian. . . You let your books be taken at pleasure home to Mens houses, and many are lost, your (boyish) Students take them to their chambers, and tear out pictures and maps to adorne their Walls, such things are not good'.⁷¹

The initial stock of 400 volumes at Harvard was basically theological, but this

reflected the professional interests of the Reverend John Harvard. The same was true of the library of William Brewster, the spiritual leader of the Plymouth Colony, but his collection did include Hakluyt's *Principal navigations*, Rich's *Newes from Virginia* (1610), and John Smith's *Description of New England* (1616). No detailed record remains of the library of Richard Mather (1596–1669), who arrived in Boston on 17 August 1635, but one of his sons, Increase (1639–1723), had about 1,000 volumes by 1664. These included the 1617 edition of Purchas's *Pilgrimage*, an undated edition of Johann de Laet's *Novus orbis*, the well known travel compendium, and Thomas Morton's *New English Canaan* (Amsterdam, 1637).⁷²

These brief references to American libraries indicate that the collecting of Americana was not extensive, but it must be remembered that libraries were not large and that output of direct relevance to the colonist was low, for the contents of books soon passed from practical to historical value. Thus the numerous pamphlets on silkworms which were shipped out in bulk by the Virginia Company were of more immediate importance to the colonists than say the *Decades* of Pietro Martire d'Anghiera. To the colonists in English America survival and prosperity were the watchwords, not posterity.⁷³ Theirs was the realisation of the 'westward enterprise', whose documentation would increasingly attract the armchair public in England from the seventeenth century to the present day.⁷⁴

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20. See especially D.B. Quinn, *The Hakluyt handbook* (London, 1974).
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22. C. Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the policy of Queen Elizabeth* (Oxford, 1925), vol. 3, p.432.
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