

New books are really old

Two unique publications have been obtained by the Texas A&M University Libraries with income from the Bonner H. Barnes fund.

The items, published by Basilisk Press of London, are "The Kelmscott Chaucer" and "The Red Books of Humphry Repton."

Selection of the Basilisk Press items was made because of their application in English and landscape architecture programs at Texas A&M. The London publisher, devoted to fine bookmaking and design, publishes only three titles annually. Each is limited to 500 copies, according to Evelyn King, assistant director for special collections.

Examined in Dr. R. W. Barzak's senior level Chaucer course, the Kelmscott Chaucer is an exact recreation of William Morris' 19th century collection of the works of Geoffrey Chaucer. It was published at Morris' Kelmscott Press in Hammersmith in 1894. The volume including Sir Edward Burne-Jones' illustrations was hailed as the noblest book then achieved by an English printer. Morris died shortly after its publication.

The Kelmscott Chaucer tells us much about Morris' 19th century as well as Chaucer's 14th century," observed Don Dyal, head of the library's special collections.

The acquisition includes a volume of 100 Burne-Jones preliminary sketches and pencil drawings from which illustrations and woodcuts for the Kelmscott Chaucer were made. The Basilisk volumes, as with the original, are printed on hand-made rag paper. They are bound in boards covered with specially printed Belgian linen.

The "Red Books," published by Basilisk Press last year, consist of three Red Books and an explanatory volume in a specially designed case. They were chosen from 150 Red



An exact replica of William Morris' 1894-printed "Collected Works of Geoffrey Chaucer" undergoes scrutiny in an English class at Texas A&M. Dr. Bill Barzak (left) explains a point to Leslie Denton, Diedra Goulding,

Jerry Kiker, Bob Shield and Valerie Tamble. The Chaucer set is one of two Basilisk Press items acquired by the University Library through the Bonner H. Barnes endowment fund.

Books prepared by Repton, a well known English landscape gardener of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The exact reproductions include overlays Repton used to give patrons a before-and-after view of their property.

No Red Book has ever been published before due to problems in reproducing the watercolor paintings and sepia handwritten text, and reproducing the intricate hand-cut

overlays and fitting them to the paintings, King noted.

The Red Books were prepared originally for Antony House, Cornwall; Attingham Park, Shropshire; and Sheringham Hall, Norfolk.

Retired and a Bryan resident, Bonner H. Barnes, who donated funds for the books, is a Texas A&M alumnus. He received a degree in chemical engineering in 1921.

Texas farmers are happy; big cotton crop is expected

LUBBOCK — Drive in any direction across this dusty flatland and you'll see plenty of what farmers are bragging about this year — cotton.

As farmers amble along the highways to the local gins with the cotton-laden trailers in tow, experts are predicting this year's crop will nudge among the biggest in recent years.

"I don't think it will be a record," said Vern Highley, director of communications for the Plains Cotton Co-operative Association in Lubbock. "I think it will be one of the better crops in the last three years."

The estimated cotton production in Texas is 4.8 million bales, compared to 3.3 million bales harvested last year. In the 25 counties of the High Plains alone, farmers will grow about 3 million bales. The High Plains record was 2.8 million bales in 1973.

One factor accounting for the large number of bales is a greater yield per acre stimulated by favorable weather. Statewide, in 1976, the average yield was 353 pounds of cotton per acre. This year the average yield is estimated at 391 pounds.

But farmers, encouraged by the 67 cents per pound the fiber brought in the spring, also planted more cotton. In 1976, Texas farmers

planted 8 million acres. This year they planted 6.2 million acres.

What happened, however, is that the enthusiastic farmers responding to a demand in the market planted so much cotton they drove the high prices down to the current 42-45 cents range.

"In reference to other years, we've had some better prices," said Clyde Day, executive vice president of the Lubbock Cotton Exchange. "It's not as good as other prices we've had. It's still a real good price."

Although some farmers sold their crop on the futures market when the prices paid well, many on the High Plains gambled that the prices would climb higher. They lost up to \$100 a bale.

"Because of the projected low carryover, a lot of cotton was planted," said Bob Poteet, executive vice president of the Texas Cotton Association in Dallas. "We were looking at the lowest carryover we've had since the early 50s."

"The high prices of last spring started moving downward because our prospective supply was going up due to heavy planting and consumers were not consuming because of the high price."

"When the price goes up that tells the consumer to consume less and the producers to produce more," said Poteet. Conversely, he said,

when the price drops, the consumer buys more and the producer plants less.

What helped drive the prices up — and the supplies down — last year was a demand for cotton products. The 27 percent jump in cotton prices in 1976 caused textile mills to reduce cotton usage.

But Cotton Incorporated, a Raleigh, N.C., producers' organization, said retail sales of cotton apparel and home furnishings the first half of 1977 were 4 percent above the same period in 1976.

The apparent discrepancy between the decline of mill use of cotton and the increase in consumer demand is explained partially by the fact that imported textile products are taking a larger share of the American market.

The net import of cotton has shifted from about half cotton and half synthetics in 1972 to three-quarters cotton in 1976, according to Cotton Incorporated. This means that the American demand for cotton products is being filled by foreign-made goods.

Similarly, two-thirds to three-fourths of the cotton produced in Texas is exported, and much of it returns later to the United States in the form of textiles.

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