

Dr. Preyer's  
letter.

## Harrell Special Collections Room

At the time the Special Collections Room was established a Collections Policy was drawn up to guide its use. Since the report dealing with future Collections Policy seems unaware of this policy, let me state it for I was on the committee that drew it up.

It was decided that the center and particular interest of the collection was to center geographically on the area of Mecklenburg County and chronologically to emphasize the 18th century and early 19th century, beginning in 1750.\* The reasons for this decision were fivefold: 1) this is the period when the first Queens College was founded, 2) this is when the first Presbyterian churches were established in this region, 3) that also makes it the time that Scots-Irish Presbyterians were first settling Mecklenburg County, 4) these are the areas in which the library already had the strongest resource collections, and 5) there is a natural unity and interrelatedness between Queens College, Presbyterianism, the Scotch-Irish settlers, and the strengths of the collection which would be valuable for visiting scholars, alumnae, faculty, and students wanting to do research.

To elaborate a little on the collection. There are histories, a Ph.D. dissertation, student research papers, and many artifacts, manuscripts, records, yearbooks and other memorabilia dealing with Queens College. There is also a strong body of knowledge dealing with the early Scots-Irish settlers and the Presbyterian church in this area, and of the areas from which they migrated. We have out-of-print histories of these early churches. histories of Charlotte and Mecklenburg, and other

early histories and travel accounts which cast light on what was happening in Mecklenburg. In this regard, the great interest pro and con on the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, whatever else it has done, has served to preserve much early Mecklenburg history that otherwise would have been lost. Our early maps are valuable tools in giving insights into trading routes and sometimes actual locations of homes, gristmills, and taverns. We have in Charlotte the graveyards of these early churches whose tombstones and church records give information about their members, and there are the county court minutes, deeds, and wills and census returns which provide a wealth of information which can be used in conjunction with the Queens Collection to give scholars important insights. In our rare book room are collections of contemporary documents such as Fries, Records of the Moravians in North Carolina; Saunders, (The Colonial Records of North Carolina; Clark, The State Records of North Carolina; Boyd, Some Eighteenth Century Tracts Concerning North Carolina; and on microfilm the Francis Lister Hawks Collection, early North Carolina newspapers, etc.

It would be a tragedy if such a useful and valuable collection was broken up. The history of Presbyterianism and Queens College can not be fully told without these early histories, manuscripts, maps, and records. To stress Myers Park would be a useful 20th century supplement to the Queens Collection, but certainly should not be used to destroy a logical and long-developed existing research source. The items in this collection will steadily increase in value as time goes on; strictly from an economic point of view, it seems short-sighted to dispose of this collection for so little, and then have to spend so much to create a largely new collection from scratch.

\* There were also other secondary collection goals based on what already existed. These were, as I recall, examples of the art of bookmaking (based on rare examples collected by Margaret Chapman, librarian), and preservation of rare and outstanding books held by the library in Fine Arts and English literature. This paper argues only for the primary goal, but a case might be made for these secondary objectives as well. *Though Mecklenburg was the specific focus, broader works of the period dealing with N.C. and S.C. that would put Mecklenburg events in proper context were also judged to be needed.*

TO: Members of Queens College

FROM: Norris Preyer, Professor of History, Emeritus 334-5022

DATE: September 24, 1990.