

Dunham Bible Museum

News

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HBU Acquires the Brake and Hellstern Collections

When the Dunham Bible Museum opened its doors in the Morris Cultural Arts Center in 2008, its expanded exhibits featured many early Bibles and manuscripts from the collections of Dr. Donald Brake and Dr. John Hellstern. Last year HBU was able to purchase a large portion of their collections, with Drs. Brake and Hellstern donating numerous other volumes. The collections include papyri, manuscript Bibles, incunabula, early European and later printed versions of the Bible and biblical commentaries from around the world. The purchase was made possible in large part through a generous donation by Archie and Linda Dunham.

DONALD BRAKE AND JOHN HELLSTERN

Dr. Brake recently retired as Dean of Multnomah Seminary, having earlier served as a missionary in Ethiopia and a seminary professor. Dr. Hellstern is a retired Air Force chaplain. Drs. Brake and Hellstern have spent 30 years collecting rare Bibles and sharing a dream of one day establishing a National Bible Museum. In 1992, the two founded the Living Word National Bible Museum as a 501 (c) (3) corporation and combined their collections for exhibit. For several years they had major exhibits in Dallas, Branson, Missouri and Tulsa, Oklahoma. The displays of the ancient texts of Scripture had a spiritual effect on people viewing the exhibits; Hellstern notes that "it is the text made visible that is a vital name of the Spirit." He believes that "there is a hunger for this assurance of the accuracy of our Scriptures, when there are so many challenges to the truth of our faith" in the present day. "The witness to the general public of the early text and its centuries of accurate transmission has an important role to play on the stage of our current history," he added.

Brake and Hellstern never built the National Bible Museum they had once envisioned, but they are delighted to have their collections now part of the Dunham Bible Museum at HBU. From President Sloan's and HBU's commitment to Christian education, Brake and Hellstern know that their valuable collection will be used

as a spiritual witness to the truth and power of the Scriptures. Hellstern recalled that David desired to build the temple, but was prevented by God from doing so; the job was left to his son Solomon. David couldn't accomplish his dream, but he

A Bible with a Courtly Connection

Among the Bibles in the collection recently acquired from Donald Brake is a 1577 Geneva Bible which belonged to Sir Richard Knightley (1533-1615) and his wife Elizabeth. Elizabeth's father, Edward Seymour, was the brother-in-law of Henry VIII and protector of his successor, Edward Seymour's nephew, Edward VI.

Emily Brown, a history major at HBU, was writing her senior honors thesis on contributors to the English Reformation when the Knightley Bible entered the Dunham Bible Museum's collection. She was delighted to read a Bible which actually belonged to a member of the Seymour family, one of the leading Protestant families in England. Even more exciting was reading Elizabeth's handwritten notes, in beautiful penmanship, on Christian doctrine and of prayers to be said reading the Scripture. Miss Brown was able to cite these inscriptions in her thesis as evidence that the Seymours were supporters of the Reformation in England.

Elizabeth carefully recorded the births of each of her children. One especially interesting record on the birth of one of Elizabeth's sons read (remembering that spelling had not been standardized and some letters were used differently in the 16th century): "My sonne Robert was borne at Norton the xv of September, being Saturday, betuayne xii and one of the cloke of nyght, 1588 her Majesty and lord tresaser, and the erle of Burmond being witnesses." Barely a month after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, Queen Elizabeth (her Majesty) and her most trusted advisor, Lord Burleigh (the Lord High Treasurer and Secretary of State) in the middle of the night were witnessing the birth of Elizabeth S. Knightley's son Robert!

Houston Genealogical Forum Publishing Family Record Transcriptions

The most recent issue of The Genealogical Record, published by The Houston Genealogical Forum, features the first of a series of transcriptions of family records from American Bibles in the Dunham Bible Museum. Background descriptions of the Bibles, photos of the inscribed pages, and transcriptions of the inscriptions provide important information for genealogists.

Publishing the transcriptions is an important phase in a project begun in 2004. Gloria Wright Russell, then president of The Houston Genealogical Forum undertook the project of photographing and transcribing the pages of Bibles from the Museum's collections which had family records recorded on them. Russell and over twenty dedicated members of The Houston Genealogical Forum have spent long hours compiling the records from nearly 100 Bibles. The ultimate goal is to make the digital files of the Bible records and their transcriptions available on the Internet for the use of genealogists and researchers. The Dunham Bible Museum is deeply grateful for the accurate and pains-taking work of Mrs. Russell and her dedicated genealogists.

It seems people began writing the births, marriages, and deaths of their family members in Bibles from the earliest days of printed personal Bibles. When the Bible was the only book a family might own, and paper was relatively rare, the Bible was the best place to keep such important information. The first pages printed specifically for family records in Bibles was in the 1802 quarto Bible published by Philadelphia printer Matthew Carey. Carey placed pages between the Old and New Testaments for the recording of births, marriages, and deaths. The last words of the Old Testament were Malachi's prophecy that God would "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." The first words of the New Testament were Matthew's genealogy of Jesus Christ. By placing the Family Record Pages between Malachi's prophecy about fathers and children and Jesus' own genealogy, each family's history became in one sense part of the Bible's story.

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