



THE BOSTON ATHENÆUM *News Release*

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For Immediate Release

LORING GIFT TO FUND SECOND PHASE OF DIGITIZATION OF BOSTON ATHENÆUM'S CONFEDERATE STATES COLLECTION

(Boston, Massachusetts, July 31, 2012): A gift of \$150,000 from Trustee Emeritus Caleb Loring, Jr., will fund the second phase of the Boston Athenæum's "Confederate Access Project." The gift will allow the Athenæum to conserve and digitize nearly 4,000 books and archival documents printed in the Confederate States of America during the Civil War and make them available to the public through the internet.

The Athenæum completed the first phase of the Confederate Access Project, also funded by Caleb Loring, Jr., in the summer of 2012. During the first year of the project, the Athenæum cataloged, conserved, and digitized Confederate paper currency, financial documents, and postage stamps; improved existing cataloging for more than 1600 books and documents; and acquired a scanner custom-designed to safely scan bound books. All of those digitized documents are already available on the Athenæum's website at

www.bostonathenaeum.org.

The second phase of the project will create the largest and most accessible collection of Confederate materials available to the public anywhere in the world. James Reid-Cunningham, Associate Director for Preservation and Digitization, is directing the project.

“We are so pleased that Caleb Loring has agreed to fund a second year of our access project,” said Paula D. Matthews, Stanford Calderwood Director and Librarian. “The Confederate States of America Collection is one of the great treasures of the Boston Athenæum, an essential resource for scholars, students, and interested amateurs around the world. Two hundred items in our collection are not in any published bibliography, and may well be unique. Before this project, only a few hundred Confederate documents had ever been made available on line anywhere.”

The Athenæum began to assemble its Confederate Imprints Collection in 1865, immediately following the end of hostilities in the American Civil War.

Francis Parkman, the famous American historian and an Athenæum Trustee, traveled the war-ravaged southern states with funds to purchase Confederate printed material before it was lost to history. Librarian William F. Poole continued the search by actively advertising in the region and buying heavily. His goal was to acquire “everything printed in the South during the war that goes to illustrate the state and action of the Southern mind.”

The original collection was enlarged with the purchase of Confederate imprints from Judge Raymond S. Wilkins. In 1969, the Honorable George W. Ball, former U.S. Undersecretary of State and Ambassador

to the United Nations, and his son, Douglas Ball, gave the Athenæum an extraordinary collection of Confederate currency, including about 6,200 examples of paper money and 500 CSA bonds and treasury certificates. The Ball gift contained many rarities and fine examples of the various types of engraved and lithographed designs used for bills issued by the individual states and the government.

The entire Confederate Imprints Collection numbers almost 12,000 items, including books, pamphlets, broadsides, newspapers, stamps, paper currency, government bonds, and maps printed during the Civil War.

The Athenæum has set up a new webpage, “Digital Collections at the Boston Athenæum,” <http://cdm.bostonathenaeum.org/cdm>, as a public access point for digital collections, including the Confederate Imprints Collection, via the internet. Developed over nine months, the project is part of the Athenæum’s “seamless method” approach to cataloguing and digitization.

Founded in 1807, the Boston Athenæum is Boston’s first cultural institution. It combines an art museum, with a public exhibition gallery and collections of paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, photographs, and decorative arts; a leading research and membership library; and a civic forum including lectures, readings, panel discussions, and other events. An innovator and catalyst for more than two centuries, the Athenæum was one of the three founders of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the inspiration for the Boston Public Library, the first municipally supported library in North America.

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