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Letter from the Chair

LOOKING BACK on my three years as FABS Chair, I am grateful for all the people and organizations who support bibliophily, including our wonderful member societies and international affiliates. My goals have been to help more people recognize the FABS name and to enhance the value we provide for dues received. In the current, swiftly changing social and political environment, nonprofit organizations devoted to the humanities, arts and sciences have an important new role to play. Higher education is in crisis because of demographic change and funding cuts. Disciplines like Classics and Medieval Studies (including paleography) are in danger of disappearing, as is currently happening at my own university. Collectors, librarians, publishers and book artisans have always fostered the transmission of cultural knowledge through formal and informal networks. More than ever, we are called now to continue our work as mentors and to share our knowledge in person and online. The Republic of Books has no borders, and by welcoming newcomers, we benefit ourselves.

I owe great thanks to my fellow officers Gretchen Hause, Gary Simons and Mary Warnement, to our devoted *consiliarius* Bruce McKittrick, and to our wonderful cadre of FABS volunteers. Our webmaster Samuel Lemley and our FABS *Journal* designer Scott Vile have been FABS mainstays, and I am grateful to all our bookish colleagues who advertise in the *Journal*. Next time you see them, please acknowledge their generous support. Last but not least I thank those who have agreed to stand for election as officers at our Annual Meeting, donating their valuable time and expertise to FABS: Gretchen Hause, Sharon Gee, Howard Schwartz, and Paul Heyde. You guys are the best.

Jennifer Larson
FABS Chair



BROELMANN, Stephan.

Epileptima, Sive Specimen Historiae (...)

Cologne, Gerard Grevenbruch, 1608

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A Bibliographer's Adventures in Wonderland: Rewriting the Bibliography of Lewis Carroll

CHARLIE LOVETT

ANYONE FOOLISH enough to undertake writing an entirely new bibliography of a popular Victorian figure who has been the subject of multiple bibliographical studies over 125 years had better be familiar with those previous works. So, before looking at how I wrote and rewrote the bibliography of Lewis Carroll, let's look backwards.

The first "bibliography" of the works of Charles L. Dodgson (better known to the world as Lewis Carroll, author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*) appeared as an appendix to the 1898 biography written by Dodgson's nephew, Stuart Dodgson Collingwood. This twelve-page checklist included about 130 separately published items. It described books and pamphlets in the merest wisp of detail (title, publisher, and date), missed large numbers of items, did not include whole sections like contributions to periodicals, had factual errors, and included items that demonstrably never existed. Despite all this, Collingwood's list is the starting point to which all Carroll bibliographers must return. His list includes some items that do not survive and are only known because of his brief description, and he also includes some facts (such as names of printers) not available anywhere else.

One hundred years ago, Carroll scholar and collector Sydney Herbert Williams published *A Bibliography of the Writings of Lewis Carroll* (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, M.A.). At 142 pages, it added significant bibliographical description and expanded to include periodicals and other items not in Collingwood's list. Williams rewrote, expanded, and updated his book in 1931 with help from Falconer Madan, a former Bodleian librarian who had known Lewis Carroll personally and was able to add much in the way of discursive notes. The new volume bore the title *The Lewis Carroll Handbook* and under this title (and in more or less the same form) it was updated in 1962 by the scholar and editor Roger Lancelyn Green and in 1979 by collector and bookseller Denis Crutch. The *Handbook* came to include much that was lacking from the original 1898 checklist, but also expanded much beyond

Charlie Lovett is a collector and scholar whose previous works on Carroll include *Lewis Carroll: Formed by Faith* and *Lewis Carroll Among His Books*. He is also the *New York Times* bestselling author of several novels that feature rare books including *The Bookman's Tale* and *The Lost Book of the Grail*.

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a standard author bibliography. It included some (but of course not all) articles about Carroll and his work published after his death; some (but of course not all) editions of the *Alice* books published after his death; some (but of course not all) manuscript material produced by Carroll but never published; and even some items previously thought to have been written by Carroll but now known to be by other hands. The *Handbook*, in its various editions, was indispensable to Carroll collectors and scholars, including myself, but over the years errors and lacunae were noted by its readers and by the late 2010s the time had come to consider an update. In 2019, the publications committee of the Lewis Carroll Society of North America asked if I would undertake the task and, with some trepidation, I agreed.

Much work had already been done by scholars such as Jeffrey Stern, Selwyn Goodacre, Edward Wakeling, Catherine Richards, Clare Imholtz, Byron Sewell and others—their articles published in the pages of scholarly journals over several decades. I had done significant work on Carroll's periodical contributions (in *Lewis Carroll and the Press*, published in 1999 by Oak Knoll Press and the British Library). All this could be incorporated into a new work. But before I began, I needed to define what sort of book this would be. Would it simply be an updating of the 1979 *Lewis Carroll Handbook*, adding missing items and attempting to correct errors? As one with a traditional view of author bibliographies, I decided it would not. The *Handbook* was simply too quirky in its arrangement and scope. Though it would serve as my guide on this journey, I would start over—arranging Dodgson's works in the traditional manner of a single author bibliography and limiting myself to items printed during his lifetime.

The book would be in six sections: separately printed items, contributions to books, contributions to periodicals, items reproduced from manuscript by electric pen or other duplicating device, authorized translations, and miscellaneous. In every section I would discover items missing from previous studies. The digital revolution assisted my work in so many ways. The ability to search vast archives of digitized newspapers, books, and magazines uncovered previously unknown material. The fact that I could easily take digital pictures of rare items allowed me to make side-by-side comparisons and discover variants. Online catalogues led me to locations of books and pamphlets. None of these tools had been available in 1979.

One other advantage I had over previous bibliographers is that they were all British and all the major institutional Carroll collections were in North America (in particular Harvard, Princeton, NYU, Morgan Library, Texas, and University of Toronto). This meant I would be able to examine many items in person that they had only read about in catalogues. The fact that I also live near Oxford for part of the year would give me easy access to items at the Bodleian, Christ Church Library, and the Christ Church Archives, all of which had significant Carroll hold-

ings. I also knew all the major private collectors personally and could contact them with questions or for scans of rare pieces.

With hope that the entire process would take a year or so, I began with a two-day visit to Princeton in October 2019. After my daughter's wedding in early 2020, I planned to hit the road, visiting both public and private collections. Then COVID struck, libraries closed, and I was stuck at home. It would be more than two years before I visited England and had access to collections in Oxford. Even private collections in the US would be closed to me for more than a year. Luckily, I had a mountain of information from Princeton, access to all the aforementioned digital archives and published articles, and my own substantial collection. I set to work.

Nothing is more helpful to the bibliographer than to have a personal collection to consult. My library contains first or early editions of more than eighty of Dodgson's writings as well as examples of his contributions from nearly two dozen different periodicals and a vast amount of supporting material, including the rare catalogues of the M. L. Parrish collection and the Harcourt Amory collection. While working on this project, not a day went by when I did not consult my own holdings. Without that collection, my work would have quickly ground to a halt with the COVID closures. As it was, after a few months I had to set the project aside.

In May of 2021, with two vaccinations in my arm, I drove to Cleveland, Ohio to visit Carroll collector Jon Lindseth. He checked my temperature and my Pulse Ox and I spent the next two days combing through his remarkable collection, photographing every page of every item relevant to my work. Still, it would be another year before I returned to institutional collections. In 2022 I finally got into the Bodleian and the collections at Dodgson's college, Christ Church. In the archives (in spite of the significant work done there by Edward Wakeling in preparing the first volume of the now completed six-volume edition of *The Pamphlets of Lewis Carroll*), I found several previously unrecorded items. I was able to return to Princeton and visit NYU in 2023 and sent representatives to examine items in Texas, Harvard and elsewhere. Not all items I needed to examine are preserved in the great Carroll collections. I found one of the only surviving copies of the third edition of one of Dodgson's books on Euclid in a university library thirty miles from my house; a later edition of the same book turned up at the National Library of Israel.

The ability to examine and photograph items at all these collections (plus several additional private ones) and then to compare different editions page by page led to many discoveries and gave me the opportunity to expand the bibliography of Carroll in new ways. The *Handbook*, for instance, rarely mentioned proof materials, but I was able to describe scores of proof copies, noting their differences from published versions so scholars can have a window into Carroll's editorial



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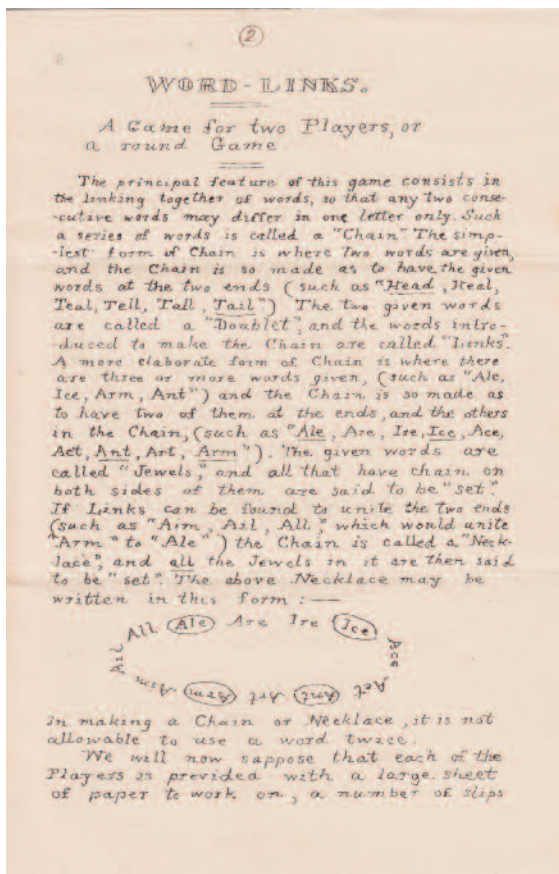
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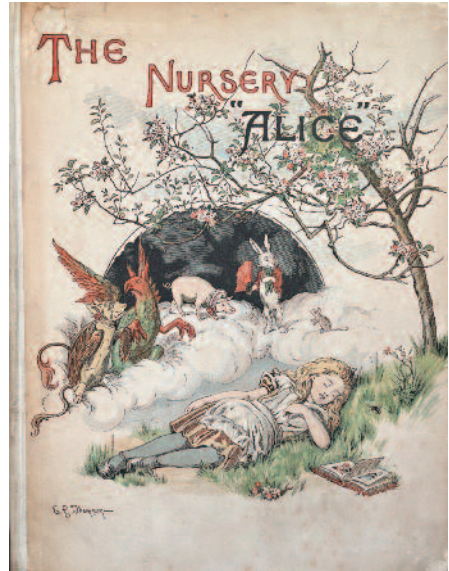
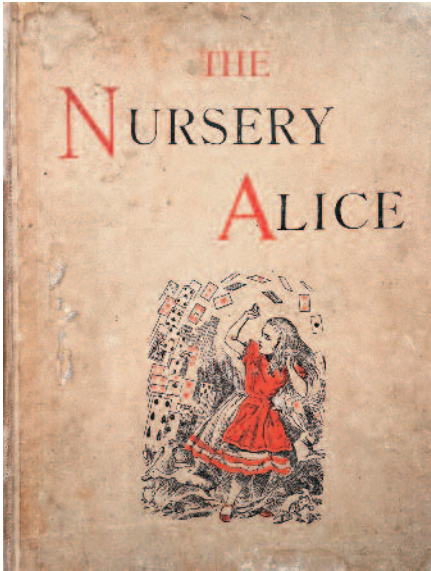
process. In carefully comparing subsequent editions of books, I was able to reveal more about his revision process. In some cases, Dodgson completely rewrote a book in a later edition. Any scholar studying Dodgson's work on *Euclid Books I, II*, for instance, will need to know of quite significant changes to his text especially in the second and third editions. At times the combination of proof copies and later descriptions created an amazingly full picture of Dodgson's work on a piece over time. His pamphlet *8 or 9 Wise Words about Letter-Writing I* described in five published editions and seven different proof versions.

With access to so many different editions and variants I was able to sort out (perhaps once and for all, though one never knows) bibliographic confusion around some of Dodgson's much reprinted or reissued items such as *The Nursery "Alice"* (of which I describe nineteen variants) and *An Easter Greeting*. I discovered that some items are rarer than once thought, but more often (and perhaps for collectors and dealers more importantly) some items are much less rare than previously believed. I was chuffed to discover that my copy of the Oxford squib *Endowment of the Greek Professorship* seems to be one of only four survivors—the rest in library collections. On the other hand, evidence proves, for instance, that the suppressed 1886 edition of *The Game of Logic*, long thought to be limited to



I included a separate section for more than two dozen items produced by Dodgson using Thomas Edison's Electric Pen and other desktop duplicating devices.

50 copies, originally existed in closer to 300 copies—explaining the significant number of extant copies. The first edition of *An Easter Greeting*, still often catalogued as "rare," is not only quite common, it is much *more* common than the subsequent editions.



Binding variants complicate an already complicated bibliographical history for Carroll's adaptation *The Nursery "Alice."*

To assist scholars, I listed locations for each of the separately published items (including public and private collections) and pointed the way to reliable reprints. I was pleasantly surprised to discover (in those digital archives) hundreds of reprints of Dodgson's lesser-known works published during his lifetime. The pervasiveness of some of this material will surely cause scholars to reevaluate its importance.

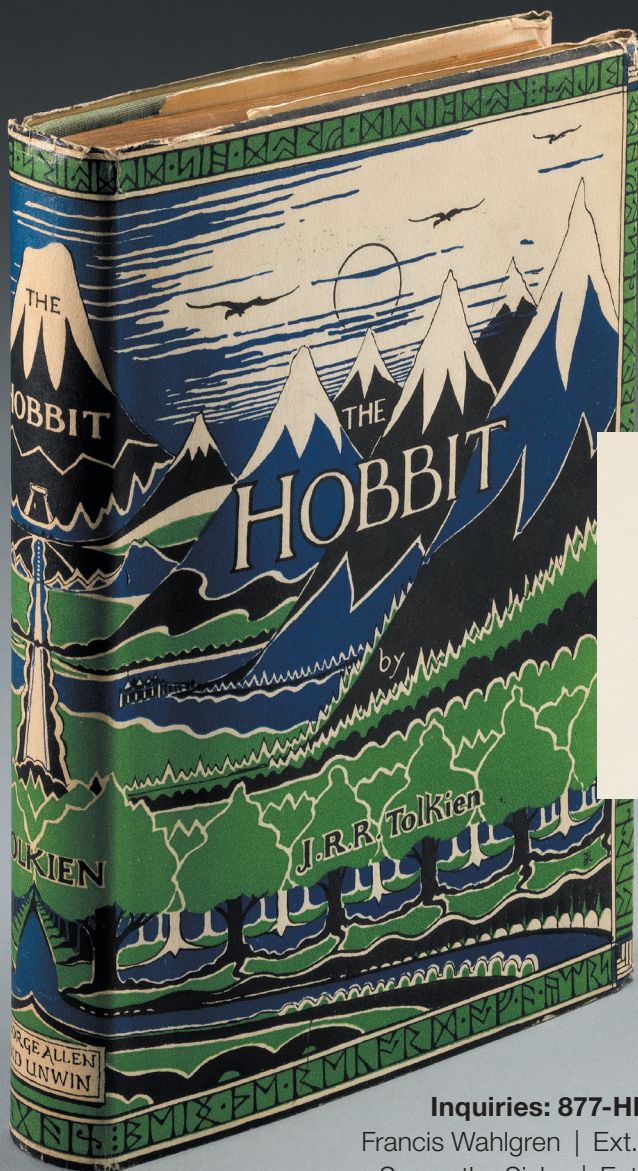
In the preface to his *A Bibliography of the Writings of Lewis Carroll*, Sydney Herbert Williams wrote, "With regard to how far my book is complete, I do not suppose the perfect bibliography has ever been written. . . . I can only say that as far as possible I have included all the works of Mr. Dodgson, whether issued under his own name, or that of Lewis Carroll, or anonymously." The same could be said of my new bibliography, issued by the Lewis Carroll Society of North America and distributed by University of Virginia Press under the title *Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) A Bibliography of Works Published in his Lifetime*.

Bibliography is a living science, and the list always grows. I hope that my inclusion of lost items will spur dealers, librarians, and collectors to find some of those Dodgson materials which I recorded as no longer extant.

I can say, however, that though my book certainly conforms to Williams's definition of bibliography as imperfect, it does include a vast amount of material not found in previous studies and employs a method of description and organization which I hope will aid the user in their quest for a deeper understanding of the voluminous and varied work of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson.

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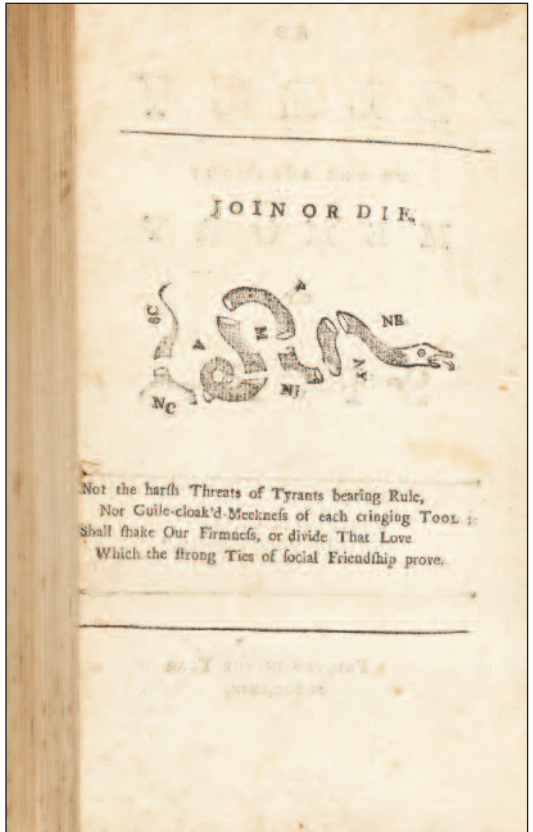
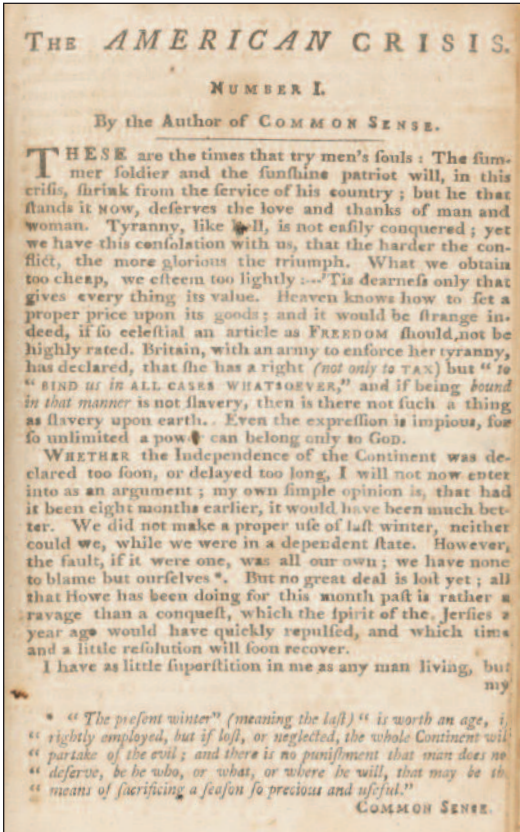
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The Annals of American Bibliophilic Clubs and Societies

GARY SIMONS

THE DOZENS of bibliophilic clubs and societies which are spread across America have long served as havens and gathering points for American book collectors and book admirers. The activities of those clubs, however, are distinct from book collecting. While book collecting can be solitary, bibliophilic clubbing is inherently social. Members join together to embrace the role and significance of books and book arts in their own lives and as an aspect of contemporary society. Book clubbing is about connection and sharing, and sometimes also about a little showing off. Although much has been written regarding prominent book sellers, book collectors, and book collections, little has been written about the inner workings of bibliophilic clubbing *per se*.

The history and cultural practices of book clubbing are embodied in the details—the whos, whats, wheres, and whens—of club or society start-up; membership; governance; meetings; speakers and presentations; publications; exhibitions; travel; establishment and maintenance of club libraries; and other activities. Fortunately, many clubs and societies have published records of their activities. Even if these publications were initially distributed solely to club or society members, time and the associated diffusion of materials from private hands into the book trade have made these annals generally accessible.

This article identifies and delineates some of the primary source published records that might constitute a personal library of the annals of American bibliophilic clubs and societies. Although digital versions of some of these items are accessible, the focus here is on material originally issued and still surviving on paper. The inquiry has been restricted to those generalist clubs (both FABS members and non-FABS organizations) which embrace a variety of book interests.

Yearbooks

In the years preceding World War I four foundational American bibliophilic clubs—The Grolier Club (New York), The Caxton Club (Chicago), The Rowfant Club (Cleveland), and The Club of Odd Volumes (Boston)—regularly issued an-

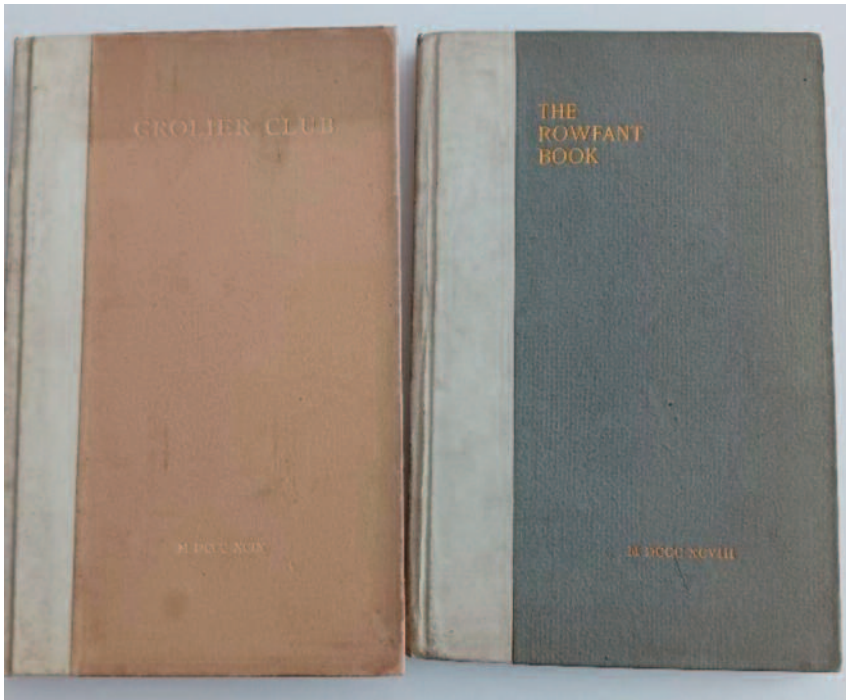
Gary Simons' professional career was bookended by PhDs in 1971 (Quantum Chemistry) and in 2011 (English Literature). He has published over 40 papers. From 2013 to 2020 he was the editor of the *Curran Index*, sponsored by the *Research Society for Victorian Periodicals*. He has been Secretary of the *Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies* and is active in the Florida Bibliophile Society. His collecting interests include literary annuals and silver-fork novels; the publications of American bibliophilic clubs and societies; and books and ephemera printed by John Henry Nash.

nual reports detailing their activities. These reports were published as small, elegantly designed and well-made hardcover books, printed on handmade paper, sometimes half-or quarter bound in vellum, distinguished by gilt decorations, and sometimes issued in slipcases.

These books generally contained lists of officers, members, and publications, as well as information on meetings and speakers, finances, and sometimes a copy of the club's constitution and bylaws or other material. The Rowfant Club yearbooks, for example, included a frontispiece of the club president, a President's Report or Address, and separate reports from the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Librarian, and sometimes committee reports.

The Rowfant Club issued limited *Codes of Regulations* in 1892 and 1896, and followed with its first true yearbook in 1897. The Club has continued issuing annual yearbooks up to the present day. As one might expect, there have been stylistic modernizations along the way: vellum disappeared; different styles for board decorations came and went, gilt identifiers on spines changed to paper labels and then back to gilt identifiers, slip cases gave way to dust jackets, and the typography has changed. Nevertheless, the nature of the content has remained remarkably consistent and remarkably informative.

Starting in 1884 The Grolier Club likewise issued annual yearbooks, except



Early bibliophilic club Yearbooks: 1899 Grolier Club and 1898 Rowfant Club.

that during the years 1979/1980 -1997/1998 they were issued bi-annually. The complete run of Grolier yearbooks to date exceeds 125 volumes. The earliest volumes had tan colored boards with vellum spines; in 1918 vellum disappeared and the boards were printed with the Club arms; and in 1931 hardcover gave way to paperback. Here the collector must be aware of two complications. First, the Grolier Club has not used the term “yearbook” to label these volumes; instead title pages just present the name of the club, summarize contents with verbiage such as “Officers, Committees, Constitution and House Rules, Members, Reports,” and a publication date. A search for “Grolier Club yearbook” might not find these volumes. Secondly, the volume published in, say, 1965, contains reports of club activities that were conducted during 1964, and thus might be presented to market as either the 1964 Yearbook or the 1965 Yearbook.

With a few exceptions, Caxton Club yearbooks were issued annually from 1895 up to 1914, and then were issued irregularly in 1916, 1921, 1937, 1945, 1950, 1958, 1965, 1971, 1977, and 1985. Styles changed over time: early yearbooks had textured brown boards, but from the 1930s on the boards were more colorful. The 1958, 1965, and 1971 volumes had, respectively, blue, green, and red covered spines and boards; the 1977 and 1985 volumes were in soft cover. All told 25 Caxton Club yearbooks have been identified, but supplements to previous yearbooks were also issued in 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1952, and 1962.

The Club of Odd Volumes issued only a few yearbooks before 1911, but annual yearbooks were published during the years 1911-1916, and then cumulative yearbooks were issued every few years: 1919, 1922, 1925, 1929, 1934, 1939, 1942, 1949, 1958, 1968, and 1976. A total of 19 distinct volumes have been identified, but early volumes are hard to find since their print runs were often fewer than 100 copies. The 1929 volume was bound in blue with a paper label on the spine; 1949-1976 books had, respectfully, blue, burgundy, green, and orange-tan spines with gilt labels and marbled boards. A Centennial Book published in 1987 effectively extended the series by including information for the years 1976-1986.

Following its predecessors, the Pittsburgh Bibliophile Society issued nine less elegant but equally informative booklet reports covering the periods 1962-63, 1963-64, 1964-65, 1966-68, 1968-1970, 1971-73, 1974-82, 1982-86, and 1987-1995.

Newsletters and Journals

Many bibliophilic clubs and societies at one time have disseminated club news through printed newsletters or journals. In recent years, the internet, the prevalence of downloadable files, and the increased costs of paper and printing seem to have changed that dynamic. Presumably a limited number of copies of older newsletters survive in club archives or in the hands of older members, but past or current newsletters from most of the smaller clubs and societies hardly ever come to nation-wide market on internet sites. However, some of the larger clubs issued



Early Newsletters: 1922 Grolier Club and 1934 Book Club of California.

newsletters which are now often carried by the used book trade. Indeed, several clubs continue to issue printed newsletters and journals today. These items are not only available, but are also invaluable as being “close to the action” accounts of club activities.

The Book Club of California has issued its *Quarterly* since 1933. As of 2025 there are approximately 350 issues of this periodical, which collectively constitute a significant library of both book collecting and of book clubbing. The earliest issues are hard to find, and some of the more recent issues have yet to come to secondary markets, but most issues from the 1940s well into the 2010s can be readily obtained. Several index volumes have been issued to facilitate the exploration and use of this vast archive.

Another California club, The Zamorano Club, also has a distinguished record with regard to its newsletter, the *Hoja Volante*. Thirteen issues were published erratically during the club’s early years, but since 1947, with a few hiatuses, the newsletter has been published quarterly. The total issue count as of 2025 is about 300. The tone of the *Hoja Volante* complements the tone of the *Book Club of California Quarterly*, in that the *Hoja Volante* is a less formal publication, more expressive of the activities of individual members, and less concerned with bibliophilic scholarship. The personalities of leading members of the club come shining through issue after issue. Earlier issues are easier to find on secondary markets than more recent issues. A hard-to-find index covers the years 1934-1984.

The last yearbook of the Caxton Club was issued in 1985, but in the fall of 1993

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the club began issuing a monthly newsletter, *The Caxtonian*. Recently *The Caxtonian* has been issued every other month. In total there are now about 350 issues of *The Caxtonian*—cumulatively constituting an enormous archive of bibliophilic and book clubbing news. Further, little material feels dated—to read a back issue is as instructive and as interesting as reading a current issue. Issues of the *Caxtonian* tend to become available on secondary markets in large lots, presumably reflecting the downsizing efforts of older Caxton Club members or estate sales.

In addition to its annual yearbooks, in 1885, 1894, 1899, and 1920 the Grolier Club issued volumes of transactions. Further, Volume 1 of *The Gazette of the Grolier Club*, numbers 1–11/12, was issued from May 1921 to June 1929. Volume II, numbers 1–8, was issued from May 1931 to May 1949. A New Series of the *Gazette* starting in 1966 was initially issued twice a year before moving to typically once a year publication. The *Gazette* began as a very newsy publication, but over the years it has morphed into a journal dominated by scholarly articles. Nevertheless, recent issues still list new members, club publications, exhibitions, and provide associated material.

The Grolier Club also publishes a *News Sheet*, and for a time the Rowfant Club issued a *Beguiling Light Newsletter*: issues of both of these publications are sporadically listed by various booksellers.

The highly commendable *Journal of the Book Club of Washington*, which was founded in 1982, certainly deserves mention; copies of many back copies are still available and listed for sale on the club website. Further, undoubtedly there are back issues of other book club periodicals out there waiting to be found—for example, this author has been able to acquire many of the over 250 issues of *The Florida Bibliophile* that were printed between 1983 and 2015.

Of course indices are essential to the full utilization of back issues of newsletters and journals, and sometimes indices are useful in their own right. For example, it is difficult to find back copies of the *NOBS Newsletter* (NOBS = Northern Ohio Bibliophilic Society), but *An Index to the NOBS Newsletter 1984–2002* (Akron, Northern Ohio Bibliophilic Society, 2003) compiled by Dean H. Keller is available. The listings in the index themselves, even absent the articles, testify to the interests, presentations, and publications of the Society during its first eighteen years.

Membership Rosters

Some clubs and societies have issued or continue to issue hard copy membership rosters. As salient examples, note the eleven combined rosters of the Roxburgh Club of San Francisco and the Zamorano Club issued by Lester Lloyd as keepsakes for joint club meetings from the early 1970s into the 1990s, and the ten rosters of the Sacramento Book Collectors issued between 1960 and 1988. The website of the Book Club of Detroit states that membership directories have been sent out annually since 1998, and the Grolier Club library contains nine Club of

Odd Volumes membership lists for that were issued between 1998 and 2012. As another example, some of the history of the long defunct Carteret Book Club (of Newark) is embedded in membership lists that were issued in 1926, 1928, 1931, and 1934. Eventually most printed rosters become accessible in the book trade.

Some cumulative roster volumes are available. For the Grolier Club, for example, the 1986 volume *Members of the Grolier Club 1884-1984* and the 2009 volume *Members of the Grolier Club 1884-2009* are valuable sources of information. Additionally, the Grolier Club has published two volumes of short biographies of selected members, *Grolier 75* (1959) and *Grolier 2000* (2000). The Zamorano Club has published *Zamorano Club Biographies and Memorial Tributes 1956-1997* (1998).

Annals of Club or Society Travel

Many accounts of club travels have been issued by bibliophilic clubs or societies or by host institutions welcoming their visits. Anything close to a comprehensive list of these travel annals would be difficult to compile and far to lengthy to be included in this article. Nevertheless, two specific series of travel annals deserve mention: The Grolier Club has issued a fairly elaborate and highly collectable series of “Iter” volumes of club travels. *The Grolier Club Iter Italicum* was issued in 1963. It was followed by *The Iter Germanico-Helveticum* (1973), *Iter Hibernicum* (1998), *Iter Veneticum* (2001), *Iter Britannicum* (2003), *Iter Gallico-Helveticum* (2013), *Iter Hibernicum Redux* and *Iter Siniticum* (2017), *Iter Hellenicum* (2019), and *Iter Ungaricum* (2019).

On a more modest scale, during the 1960s and 1970s The Pittsburgh Bibliophiles documented the activities and participants of a number of club trips in a series of collectable pamphlets: *Grandfather’s Attic: The Philadelphia Story of the Pittsburgh Bibliophiles* (1964); *Pilgrimage to April: The Pittsburgh Bibliophiles’ Journey to Washington* (1965); *September Solstice: The Virginia Journey of the Pittsburgh Bibliophiles* (1966); *Connoisseur’s Haven: The Pittsburgh Bibliophiles’ Journey to Baltimore* (1967); *Autumn Adventure: The Pittsburgh’s Journey to New York City* (1968); *Passage to Boston* (1973); *The Chicago Pilgrimage* (1974); and in one more elaborate hard cover volume, *The Pittsburgh Bibliophiles’ Pilgrimage to Italy* (1976).

The Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies Newsletter/Journal

In 1993 seven founding member societies established the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies or FABS. The roster of member clubs and societies has changed over the years; as of the spring of 2025 there are 26 members and a large number of international affiliates.

Five issues of Volume 1 of the FABS newsletter were published at irregular intervals over the years 1995-1997. By 1998 the newsletter had settled into a twice-a-year publication schedule which has since been maintained. Over time the designation “newsletter” was dropped and the publication instead became a “journal.”

Early issues were in an 8.5 x 11 inch format, but in the fall of 2013 the format was reduced to 6 x 9 inches. Only 200 copies of the now hard-to-find first issue were printed, but by 1996 circulation had grown to 3,000 copies and as of 2025, 5,000+ copies are being regularly printed. Although copies of the *FABS Journal* are distributed only to individuals belonging to FABS member clubs and societies, over time copies of most issues have become more generally available.

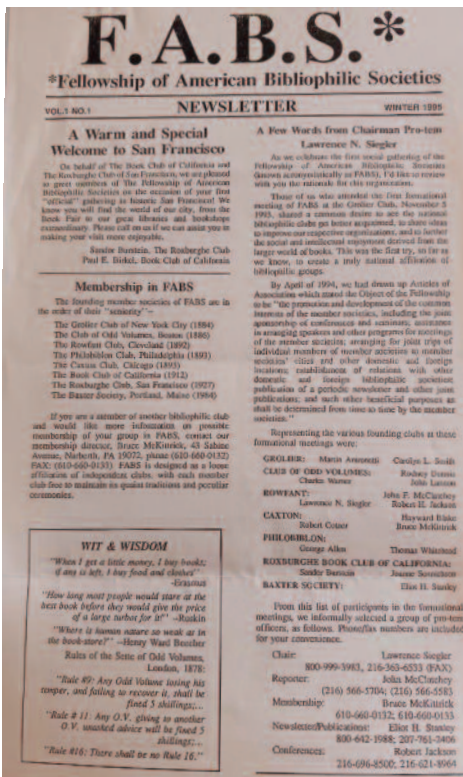
Since its inception this FABS publication has included articles of interest to book collectors and book clubbers, including articles on famous books, book collections, auctions, and libraries; reports of events in the book world; tips for book collectors; informative advertisements; and book reviews. Additionally, and apparently uniquely, the *FABS Journal* has reported “Club News,” based on inputs from individual representatives from each of the FABS member clubs and societies. Short but often brimming-with-content notices describe and document meetings, speakers, travels, and other club or society activities.

Indeed, as the only publication which provides this sort of detailed information across a wealth of clubs and societies, the *FABS Journal* may be the best single source of information on twenty-first century American bibliophilic clubs and their activities.

Histories, Bibliographies, and Anniversary Volumes

A companion article with a list of histories, bibliographies, and anniversary volumes of bibliophilic clubs and societies has been separately published in the freely downloadable January 2025 issue of *The Florida Bibliophile*: <https://www.floridabibliophile.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Florida-Bibliophile-2025-01.pdf>.

The author wishes to thank Jacqueline Vossler of the Caxton Club and Kevin Kosik of the Book Club of California for their assistance with materials associated with their respective clubs.



The first FABS Newsletter, Winter 1999.

Listening to My Collection of Women's Bookplates

MEGHAN R. CONSTANTINOU

AS A PERSON who has dedicated herself professionally and intellectually to the subject of collecting for nearly fifteen years, I had a surprising lack of curiosity about my own collecting until very recently. My collection of women's bookplates, which I started about a decade ago, was initially motivated by a general interest in the history of women's book ownership, combined with an enduring love of graphic arts, two areas I have nurtured through professional experience, educational training, and (once upon a time) artistic practice.¹ As a librarian, I also took joy in the freedom to make selections based on my own aesthetic preferences rather than an institutional collection development policy. I let myself be guided by visceral response alone—an antidote to the strict ordering required for my professional work.

This benign anarchy, however, was not destined to last. In Fall of 2023, when Drew Griffin, president of the Ticknor Society, asked me to discuss my collection as part of a panel on female provenance at the Boston Book Fair, I was forced to ask myself what, exactly, I was doing. Why was I spending time, money, and mental energy on this? Was aesthetic response really my only guiding principle? And then something remarkable happened: in trying to answer these questions, the collection told me about myself—my values, my sense of identity, my responses to various life experiences, and my scholarly interests. Disparate threads were woven together effortlessly. It was like cutting through layers of mental detritus to find a clear voice and a beating heart.

Meghan R. Constantinou, MA, MLS, is a private rare book curator in the Boston, Massachusetts area and a PhD student in Library and Information Science at Simmons University. Her dissertation research explores intersections between bookplate collecting, gender, and authority in the United States, ca. 1890-1950. She is a member of the Grolier Club, the Society of Printers, and the Ticknor Society. Previously, she was Librarian of the Grolier Club.

1. I am using the term 'woman' for convenience in this essay, although I realize gender roles and identities are complex, intersectional, and bound by time, context, and culture. I have not yet attempted to systematically identify other identities of the individuals represented in my collection, such as race and ethnicity. I suspect this was largely a White middle- to upper-class demographic, but it is a question in need of further study. In a 1990 essay, Dorothy Porter Wesley noted that few Black collectors used bookplates ("Black Antiquarians and Bibliophiles," in *Black Bibliophiles and Collectors*, ed. Elinor Des Verney Sinnette et al., Howard University Press, 1990, p. 8). I identify as a cis-gendered, straight White woman.

Rodger Friedman
Rare Book Studio

B. D. S.

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POSTHUMA,

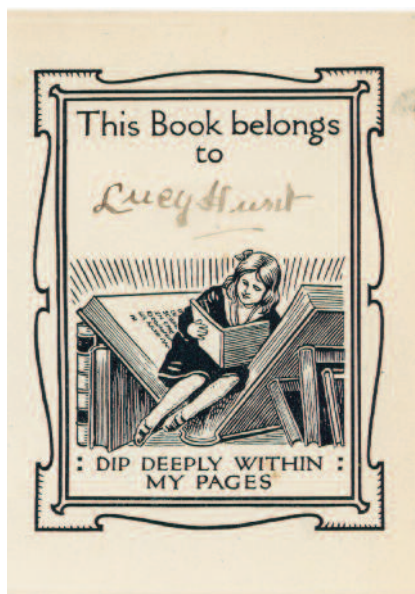
*Quorum series post Præfationem
exhibetur.*

T. Lynford.



CLC LXXVII. *Al:o*
Q

Spinoza, *Opera Posthuma.*
1677



Bookplate of Lucy Hunt, n.d. Artist unknown. Author's collection.

Here are three things my collection told me:

(1) I care about documenting a history of women's book collecting and ownership that is broad, deep, and socially and economically diverse. Much of the literature on the history of private book collecting in the west has focused on elite and high spot collecting of rarities by a select number of individuals, generally white, Anglo-American and European men of means. This narrative has also, at times, accommodated a small number of women collecting in the same vein, such as (in the U.S.) Abby Pope, Estelle Doheny, and Mary Hyde Eccles. However, once we unhook from narratives of elite collecting to consider library building more broadly, bookplates tell a very dif-

ferent history of women as book collectors and owners: one that is wildly abundant, multifaceted, and diverse. Although I have my share of armorial bookplates made for wealthy European aristocratic collectors, I also have bespoke bookplates commissioned by middle- and professional-class American women, and commercial bookplates with blank name spaces filled in by girls at the beginning of their lives with books. I have manuscript ex-libris by skilled and by less practiced hands; stamped DIY plates; plates that tell about a woman's occupation, home, workspace, favorite objects and activities, or other things that gave meaning and texture to her life. And for every one of the approximately 400 plates in my collection, I have turned down dozens of others (due to limitations in my budget rather than lack of interest). Sometimes I can figure out who these women were through a little bit of research; often I cannot. I collect their bookplates because I am curious about them as book owners, I take their efforts seriously, and because I want to document a piece of this wider picture.

(2) I am interested in the relationships women form with each other around books and reading. As my collection grew larger, I noticed that many of my bookplates revealed evidence of women's relationships with each other. Sometimes this is shown in gift inscriptions and in plates passed down from one family member to another.

Or, like the bookplate of American physician Dorothea Moore designed by Olive Percival, it is present in bookplates created for women by other women, including both professional artists and friends and family. Or, yet again, we see it in



Bookplate of Dorothea Moore, n.d., by Olive Percival (1869-1945). Author's collection.

the numerous exchanges between women building private and institutional collections, which could range from a few hundred bookplates to tens of thousands. To provide more context for these relationships, I have recently begun to collect correspondence between women bookplate collectors, artists, and scholars. In one of my letters, for example, Angela Shipman Crispin, whose bookplate collection is now at Smith College, sends Clara T. Evans, Columbia University librarian from 1907 to 1943, the personal bookplate of American illustrator Leota Woy (1867-1962), writing “perhaps you know her work, but I risk sending her personal plate which I have always liked, as it really represents the owner.” As a historian, it is difficult, due to the indirect nature of such evidence, to prove that women supported female artists and collec-

tors as a deliberately feminist act. But as a person who has navigated the world as a woman, I find these choices full of significance.

(3) I seek spaces where women have agency over how they are represented visually. The western art historical tradition has a long history of representing women as readers. We might think of the countless medieval and Renaissance paintings of female saints reading devotional books, or sentimental nineteenth-century views of women reading in lush domestic interiors. Often these images use iconographic tropes to reinforce moralizing attitudes about appropriate reading material, spaces, and practices for women. Women reading for devotional purposes or reading with children in neatly ordered domestic rooms, for example, conform to traditional social attitudes about proper feminine spheres. When women readers transgress these roles, they are often depicted as frivolous or threatening. The majority of these images—at least the ones typically seen in art museums and in mainstream art historical surveys—were created by men.

Women's bookplates depicting female readers give us a different perspective—one grounded in female agency. In the case of bespoke bookplates, the individual commissioning the plate would presumably have had a voice in how the imagery was presented; in the case of commercially produced bookplates, she certainly would have had a choice about what to buy. All bookplates by nature, moreover, represent the individual not just as a reader, but as a book *owner* in command of financial and intellectual resources—forms of power often denied women in the

past (and, in some instances, still today). While many of my plates adopt traditional iconographic tropes of women reading, others reinvent or appropriate them in amusing ways.

The 1897 bookplate of Mary Edith Nichols, for example, shows a young woman in colonial American garb deeply absorbed in a book, while ignoring her spinning wheel. Rather than portraying women's reading as a troublesome distraction from domestic work—a common form of moral handwringing—this image, when deployed in a bookplate, owns and celebrates such rebellions. Or, to use a concept borrowed from art history, it gives the female subject agency over the implicitly male “gaze” which

has relentlessly hounded representations of women throughout time. Other plates show women engaging in intellectual or studious activities, belying stereotypes of women as less ‘serious’ readers and book owners than men. I especially like the bookplate of Helen K. Copley, an influential newspaper publisher, a skilled collector, and the underwriter, with her husband, of the University of San Diego's Copley Library. In this image, a young woman reads from a folio propped open on a table in front of richly appointed shelves flanking a large, closed window (no faraway amorous looks here). The considerable size of the books and their raised bands encode them as antiquarian, lending them (and their reader) weight and dignity—a riposte, it seems to me, to entrenched attitudes about women's book consumption as more trivial or passive by nature than that of men's.

My collection, then, is about assembling evidence for a history of women's collecting that is guided by different narratives than the ones that have traditionally been told. While I have never seen this as a theoretically-driven project, the scholarship of feminist book historians such as Leslie Howsam, Kate Ozment, and Sarah Werner—who challenge us to go beyond inserting women into prevailing narratives to re-thinking those narratives all together—has given me a language and critical framework for discussing the intellectual underpinnings of my work. Ozment, in particular, in her groundbreaking essay outlining a rationale for feminist bibliography, showed how collecting and documentation can be forms of feminist activism—ways to combat women's erasure. She cites past giants such as



Bookplate of Mary Edith Nichols, 1897, by Harry Bridwell (1861-1930). Author's collection.

Simon Beattie

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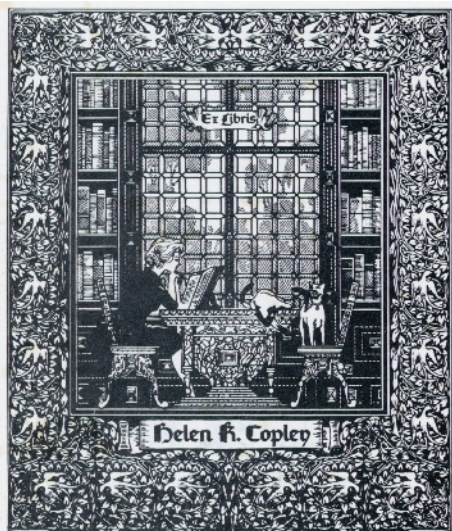
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Bookplate of Helen K. Copley, n.d., by Ben Kutcher (1895-1967). Author's collection.

areas of my life. And who would have ever thought that bookplate collecting could be activist!

Acknowledgments:

I would like to thank Mark Tomasko for jumpstarting me in this collecting area with a generously filled starter album; Caroline Schimmel for regularly plying me with images of women's ownership evidence and for her recent gift of a gloriously annotated copy of Louise Seymour Jones's *The Human Side of Bookplates* (1950)—my favorite bookplate collecting memoir; Sarah Funke Butler for sending me images of women's bookplates from the Dobkin Family Collection of Feminism; and the many other friends and colleagues who have given me bookplates, showed me interesting specimens, and listened patiently as I shared my enthusiasm for these intriguing objects. Last, but not least, I'd like to thank Tom Boss—without his monthly on-approval parcels and expertise, I would have a much less interesting (and smaller!) collection.

References:

- Howsam, Leslie. "In My View: Women and Book History." *SHARP News* 7, no. 4 (Fall 1998): 1–2.
- Ozment, Kate. "Rationale for Feminist Bibliography." *Textual Cultures* 13, no.1 (2020): 149–178.
- Werner, Sarah. "Working Toward a Feminist Printing History." *Printing History* 27/28 (2020): 11–25.

Hroswitha Club members Miriam Young Holden, Marjorie Dana Barlow, and Anne Lyon Haight, as well as contemporary collectors such as Lisa Baskin, who have approached their collecting with this explicitly feminist mandate. This has helped me to see my own project as part of a larger continuum of practice rather than an isolated hobby.

Collecting is a way of knowing about the world and of knowing about oneself. In my case, an instinctual approach led to a kind of clarity that was blocked by my more controlling cerebral side. Once I made the effort to listen to my collection, I was amazed to see how holistically it fit into other

KURT'S BIBLIO-WANDERINGS

“Mark Twain in the Hill Country”

KURT ZIMMERMAN

It took me twenty-one years, three months, and eleven days to realize my wife Nicole doesn't talk as much as I thought. This revelation occurred to me on a drive back from a trip to the Austin area. She is quietly reading the news on her phone while I expound about our most recent visit with book collector Kevin Mac Donnell and his wife Donna. I've known them for over thirty years. Nicole and I have been seeing Kevin and Donna semi-regularly for two decades. Kevin has the greatest collection of Mark Twain material in private hands and one of the finest single-author collections ever assembled. This may sound like friendly hyperbole, but it is not—nary a whiff of exaggeration, nor a modicum of puff involved.

“Remember, I was just there, too,” Nicole replies when I pause to take a breath, but I sense no real resistance, so I continue telling her what she already knows about Kevin's background.

Kevin began collecting Twain in the 1970s. His transition from librarian to antiquarian bookseller during this time opened new vistas of opportunity. He performed the difficult balancing act of collecting and dealing in the same subject areas. He built personal collections of various nineteenth century authors including an important Henry David Thoreau collection, all eventually sold to facilitate Twain acquisitions. His hunt for material is relentless and his knowledge on the subject profound. He has become a primary source for all things Twain.

Kevin's collection of over 8,000 Twain items includes books of course, almost every variant recorded and unrecorded, Twain's own copies of many works, dozens of important association copies, books from Twain's library, along with 1,000 + letters, manuscripts, inscribed photographs, printed ephemera, advertising, memorabilia to the present day, folk art, and even Twain's writing desk! But there is no room here to go into detail as I did while talking to Nicole in the car—I refer those with further interest to the festschrift “Kevin Mac Donnell: Legacy Collector and

Kurt Zimmerman has been fully immersed in rare books for over three decades. He has a library degree from UT-Austin and trained at the Ransom Center there. He has been a member of the rare book trade, directed the book department at a major auction house, remains a book appraiser, and most significantly, collects and writes about book collecting history and antiquarian bookselling.

Scholar” that makes up the entire Fall 2016 issue of the prestigious *Mark Twain Journal*.

However, I can’t help but touch on our latest tour of the Twain collection housed on their third floor build-out designed specifically for it. You enter by ascending a stairwell packed with eye-catching pictures, rare advertising posters, and other frameable goodies. Multiple spaces contain glass front bookcases and custom shelving designed and much of it built by Kevin himself who is a skilled carpenter. (He is also a classically trained pianist but that is an aside for another time.)

The entire third floor is well-nigh stuffed with an explosion of Twain, yet he and Donna have curated this museum-like experience, so all the spaces are utilized efficiently but invitingly. Kevin’s recall about each item and his storytelling ability makes the tour mesmerizing. He can provide a nickel tour or a deep-sea submersible version depending on interest. Either way, one is transported to another time. And there is even a guest space within the collection area. But this might be too much for an overnight aficionado of Twain. Kevin recalls a three-day visit by the curators of the Mark Twain Museum in Hartford, CT. They were there to see the collection and borrow about fifty items for a long-term loan exhibition. One curator became so enthralled that she began selecting additional items that had no bearing on the exhibition “just because she wanted to have them around her back in Hartford.” Kevin gently reeled her back in, sympathetic to her passion, but he probably moved her to another guest room in a more neutral area of the house.

Kevin has retired as a bookseller to focus on collecting, writing, and researching Twain-related topics. He has had a dozen articles published in the *Mark Twain Journal*, along with other essays about biblio-topics in various publications. There is a book in the works. As a speaker, he is engaging and in demand. On this visit, he shows me his PowerPoint presentation about the history of Mark Twain collecting since Twain’s time that he will soon give at the Grolier Club in conjunction with Susan Jaffe Tane’s exhibition “A First-Class Fool: Mark Twain and Humor.” The items for his presentation are drawn from his collection. The subject matter is right up my proverbial alley, and I jealously covet a few of his outstanding biblio-association copies. Coveting is labeled a sin in the Bible but is a natural occurrence among collectors.

Nicole, Donna, and I are in Kevin’s book office talking as he inscribes a few of his journal appearances for my own collection. Donna expresses mild displeasure with the disordered desk and surroundings of stacked books. Nicole suddenly interjects, “Compared to Kurt’s office, Kevin’s space is right out of *Better Homes & Gardens*.” This zinger at my expense draws a hearty round of laughter that would have made Twain proud. Kevin beams, and Nicole has made his lifetime Christmas list.

“They’re a great couple,” Nicole comments briefly as I relive the moment on the drive home, “And his collection certainly wouldn’t be what it is without her full support.”

I can only agree wholeheartedly and praise Nicole for her own support. This is simply reaffirming what we worked out between us long ago, but it is nice to express it out loud occasionally.

The drive back to Houston is almost three hours. Nicole is texting and paying no attention to me. Her actions are mildly annoying, but nonetheless I begin anew with a Shakespearian monologue about an important acquisition that arrived in the mail while we were on our three-day getaway. It awaits us upon our return. The item is a *Sketch of Thomas P. Barton’s Library* (1860), a separate issue of the chapter in James Wynne’s pioneering book *Private Libraries of New York* (NY: Eli French, 1860), this example one of six on large paper, inscribed by Barton to the publisher himself, French!

This rare relic of early American book collecting is the only presentation example by Barton I’ve encountered. Thomas P. Barton (1803-1869) began collecting in the 1830s. By 1860, when Wynne devoted a chapter in his book to Barton’s 15,000 volume library, it was recognized as one of the finest in the city. Barton was particularly interested in English drama and had the best Shakespearean collection in America, including the four folios, numerous quarto editions, and extensive amounts of ephemera. After Barton’s death, the Boston Public Library purchased the collection. Barton’s role as an American pacesetter in collecting Shakespeare was significant, followed by many important enthusiasts and later collectors including Henry Folger and Henry Huntington. I’ll have to show the item to Kevin Mac Donnell when he visits me. Great collectors appreciate one another’s efforts.

I find out belatedly at the end of my monologue that one of our three grown kids is having an issue. Thus, Nicole’s extended texting session.

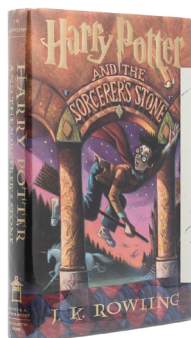
“She just needed her mom’s input,” Nicole says, “She’ll be okay.”

“Yes ... good,” I reply, settling down some, jolted back into the world. We are home soon.

“Please bring in our suitcases and the bag of books we bought,” Nicole says after we pull in the driveway. “You can also make me dinner and then tell me more about Kevin’s collection and the Barton guy,” she adds with a smile.

I bring in the bags and make dinner with alacrity after retrieving the Barton package from the mail, but I give her a reprieve on further book talk. Silence is golden. Temporarily, at least.

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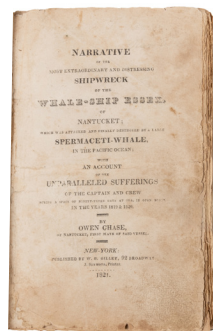
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To Dr. J. Robert
Dornish,
with my best
wishes & thanks
for all you've said!
JKR Sj



Diane and Leo Dillon. Original Cover Artwork for *The Girl Who Spun Gold* by Virginia Hamilton.

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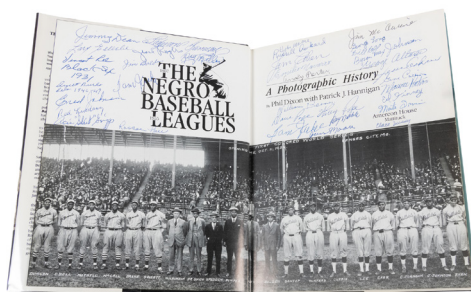
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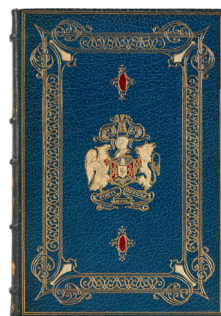
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Why I Have Collected

DAVID DiLAURA

Le cœur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point. — Blaise Pascal

IT IS OFTEN a pointless, if not a dangerous, business to ask ourselves why we do what we do. Our reasons and our motivations can be an intimidating and impenetrable fog. We are leery of what might emerge, and even more fearful that nothing will. So why parse so personal an equation as

Why I Have Collected Books = ?

Because, after thirty-five years, I can. I attempt no generalizations here—or at least very few. My solution to the equation is just that—mine.

It is necessary to make clear that my professional life as an engineer has revolved around optics, light, and vision. I eventually collected antiquarian books that dealt with those subjects, but long before that I had built a library of contemporary, technical books. I am an autodidact and books have had great power in my life. In addition to time in industry, I taught engineers-in-prospect at university and witnessed firsthand the power of books in others. From my own experience, and theirs by second hand, came the first and faintest recognition of book as instrument.

In most technical fields, there is a famous, early, important book. Known to all, honored by some, read by none. In light and optics it is the first complete book on the measurement and calculation of light: *Photometria*, written in Latin by Johann Heinrich Lambert in 1760. No English translation had ever been made. So, I took up the project and searched for a copy of *Photometria*—me, a complete tyro in all things having to do with antiquarian books. A copy arrived from England in drab printer's boards, paper spine, leaves untrimmed and unpressed—just as it had left the printer's 230 years earlier. And I experienced the power of book as object. Holding it in my hands, I was first and permanently afflicted.

David DiLaura has been an “Illuminating Engineer” for more than 50 years—someone who helps provide lighting with sufficiency and economy in buildings and outdoors. He established his own consulting company and began training engineers-in-prospect at the University of Colorado at Boulder, where he taught for 35 years. He produced the first translation of Lambert's *Photometria* (1760) and has collected antiquarian books dealing with optics, light, and vision for more than 30 years. In 2022 he published a bibliography of optics books from 1475 to 1925.



Lambert's *Photometria* of 1760. My first antiquarian book purchase. In entirely original condition.



The Biblioteca Opticoria.
A shot from the side.

I became interested in other “old books” and so began to acquire. I now know that this acquisitiveness was not collecting. But the more I acquired, the more deeply I was tintured. Jeanette Winterson wrote of this in her essay “The Psychometry of Books”:

Book collecting is an obsession, an occupation, a disease, an addiction, a fascination, an absurdity, a fate. It is not a hobby. Those who do it must do it. Those who do not do it, think of it as a cousin of stamp collecting, a sister of the trophy cabinet, bastard of a sound bank account and a weak mind.

Acquisitiveness evolved into collecting. “Evolved” does describe what was happening. I studied what was in the books and began to see their influence: how they changed history, other authors, what was taught in schools, and what was held to be true by the reading populace. Books were changing me, changing my collecting. Hardly peculiar to me, this is a general phenomenon: Books affect us. As when a bit of rope is tied around a growing gourd, its presence changes the shape of the gourd. Gently, incrementally, over time, irreversibly.

But the reason I was collecting remained deeply inchoate. There was the pleasure of the hunt, the frisson of an important addition, the delight and surprises that come from learning, the richness of book-friendships, and the anticipation

of book fairs. But these were all consequences not reasons, ornament not structure.

As my collection neared 1000 books—a lot of books in so narrow a collecting field as light, vision, and optics—the reasons for my collecting became clear, slowly at first, then suddenly. I recognized that my collection was assembling, in one place and at one time, important books—not just famous, but important—and this assembly was a kind of biblio-syzygy. An alignment of books that made and marked, witnessed and demonstrated, the history of our understanding of light, vision, and optics.

Vision is our most powerful way of apprehending the world, and we have come to understand its function, limits, and faults. Light is the entity that makes vision possible and by coming to understand its nature, we have enhanced and extended vision. Optics has provided the mechanisms and technologies that have enabled that extension from the microscopic to macroscopic. Books were the mechanism that announced discoveries, applied advances, that taught, that gathered and explained, challenged and corrected. Altogether, they are an embodiment and example of the process of human intellectual progress.

And so, I collected books to establish a critical mass, a book-entity that was at once generator, monument, witness, and enabler. Something that arose from the collection because it was a collection.

Some books had come together, almost of their own accord. Aristotle's theory of vision, with its many incunabula and Renaissance commentaries. Descartes' *Discours de la Méthode* of 1637 and its engulfing of European natural philosophy. Newton's *Opticks* of 1704 and the long echoing consequences of its publication—good and bad. Fraunhofer's discovery of the narrow dark bands in the Sun's spectrum and how it led to vastly superior telescope lenses and eventually to the chemistry-at-a-distance of astrophysics. And the remarkable issue of the *Annalen Der Physik* in 1905 with Einstein's three papers of his *annus mirabilis* and all that followed from them.

The high spots were easy to obtain—if expensive. Other books required considerable searching. Books with marginalia that showed how they were instruments of learning, helping the reader do the heavy lifting of education. Books that showed the long history of textbooks, both grand and small, by which students learned of light, vision, and optics.

Some books were collected because of my own encompassing interests. But these were not static. My interests changed, faded, expanded as I learned more about the books. A kind of reciprocal process: I was collecting the books and they were changing me.

And so it seemed to me that this collection, this alignment of books, required that it be recorded. That it be written about. That it be described. It was this recognition that prompted work on a bibliography. And that seven-year task called for

me to put into words why I collected the books I did. And it was during that task, the difficult, refractory process of clarifying my own thoughts so words could describe them, that I finally understood why I collected books. I was building an entity that was monument and witness, a collection that itself directed and shaped my collecting. The rope around the gourd.

Review of Joseph Hone, *The Book Forger: The True Story of a Literary Crime that Fooled the World* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2024).

TOM DANNENBERG

IN 1934, *An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth Century Pamphlets* dropped like a bombshell onto the bibliographical and literary establishments of the Anglo-American world. In the masterfully written book, John Carter and Graham Pollard presented the undeniable conclusion of their detailed bibliographical investigation: dozens of rare, valuable, and highly desirable first edition printings of various works by revered Victorian writers were, in fact, forgeries. Moreover, the two authors made it devastatingly clear that Thomas James Wise, the world's preeminent book collector and most esteemed bibliographical authority, was centrally involved—either as a complete dupe, unworthy of his honors and accolades, or as a conniving, deceitful forger.

Within the staid circle of the antiquarian book world, the effect of the *Enquiry* was profound. It also garnered broad public attention, as sensational headlines in newspapers from *The Times* of London to the *New York Herald Tribune* announced Carter & Pollard's conclusions. Antiquarian book dealers, prominent collectors, and academic librarians took sides on the question of T.J. Wise's complicity in the forgeries. Leaders of the Roxburghe Club held frantic meetings; debate raged in the *Times Literary Supplement*; a British peer even called publicly for Wise to explain himself. As John Carter himself later quipped, "It was almost as if the Bank of England had been caught uttering counterfeit money."

Over time, though, the shock faded and public attention waned. Interest persisted in bibliographical circles, to be sure, but broader fascination and outrage subsided. Wise died in 1937 without ever admitting to his involvement in the forgeries. Undeniable proof of his guilt—along with conclusive evidence that he had a partner-in-crime—came to light several years later. Since then, a host of studies,

Tom Dannenberg is a bibliophile and collector who has particular interests in book collecting history and Thomas J. Wise. He is a member of the Caxton Club and serves as the Chair of the University of Chicago Library Advisory Council.



OORLOGSIDYLLEN [War Idylls]

Gabriëlse, Johannes. Utrecht: A. Oosthoek, [1915]

Portfolio of ten anti-war lithographs (plus cover) from early WWI by Dutch artist and designer Johan Gabriëlse, who died in a WWII internment camp where he sketched and taught, run by Japanese occupiers on Java. His 1920 work from the Dutch East Indies was ubiquitous in school materials of its colonizer, the Netherlands. WWI—the Great War—profoundly changed art by engendering dada, surrealism and social realism. Whether artists were anti-war from the start: John Heartfield and George Grosz, or eagerly enlisted: Otto Dix and Max Beckman, everyone wound up needing to express the savagery of the violence, corruption and trauma, much as Rubens, Goya and others did before them. In the U.S. 64,000 conscientious objectors were recognized; 300,000 people did not register for the draft; and three million persons were inducted. (53655) \$1,250

De God Die Wapenen Zegent (cropped)
[The God Who Blesses Weapons]



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working papers, and articles on the Wiseian forgeries have been published, but these have been almost entirely confined to bibliographical and bibliophilic journals. Thomas J. Wise is not a name familiar to the educated general public. And while I would venture to guess that most readers of the *FABS Journal* are familiar with the salient points of the story, it's likely that few have more than a vague concept of the extent of his deception. Even fewer have a full appreciation of the incredibly innovative methods of detection that Carter and Pollard used to prove the forgeries.

Why is this so? My personal enthusiasm as a collector of Wiseiana may color my perspective, but I cannot understand how this unparalleled episode in bibliohistory has retreated so far from public appreciation. It is such a captivating story! For nearly half a century, Wise's treachery deceived the greatest collectors, dealers, bibliographers and librarians of the Anglo-American world. He led a double life in the extreme, accepting honors that included election to the Roxburghe Club, the presidency of the Bibliographical Society, and an honorary MA from Oxford. And the investigation that led to his unmasking combined scientific application, deductive reasoning, and good old-fashioned sleuthing in an effort worthy of Sherlock Holmes himself. "Connoisseurs of detective method will find it more fascinating than any fiction," wrote the great crime writer Dorothy L. Sayers—and I couldn't agree more. Why aren't more of us talking about Wise?

Enter Joseph Hone. Ninety years after the publication of the *Enquiry*, Hone tells the tale in an atmospheric page-turner that will be equally as engrossing to Wiseian diehards as to the uninitiated. In *The Book Forger: The True Story of a Literary Crime that Fooled the World*, Hone adeptly synthesizes secondary sources with his own archival research to bring the story to life. The author has a real knack for narrative, and he manages to recount the familiar—and not so familiar—components of the saga in such a way that the somewhat esoteric bibliographical story often reads like crime fiction:

The door opened and there he was, every inch the dragon in his lair... The deep mahogany of the bookcases loomed against the walls, framing him perfectly against a backdrop of gemstone leather. The gilt spines glittered in the afternoon sunlight. Wise smiled at his guest and gestured to the empty settee. Pollard sat. While Mrs. Wise pottered around with the tea and exchanged pleasantries, the two men took the measure of each other . . . The interview at Heath Drive was no simple meeting of minds; it was a game of chess.

For those accustomed to reading about the Wiseian forgeries in *The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, the stylistic difference is dramatic, and it works brilliantly. Hone sets the stage in the prologue, when he highlights the fact that the real-life investigation into the forgeries took place during the golden age of the detective story. He posits that Carter and Pollard were inspired by fiction and goes so far as to call them the "Poirots of the library, Holmeses of the book world."

He employs this parallel to great effect throughout, and it imbues the book with the feeling of a bibliomystery. He also anchors his argument about the influence of the genre and the period with several key facts.

Hone points out that John Carter was an enthusiastic reader and collector of detective fiction, producing a catalogue for Scribners that consisted largely of his personal collection of detective stories. (Hone also quotes from Carter's chapter in *New Paths in Book-Collecting*, entitled "Detective Fiction." Notably, it was published in 1934, the same year as the *Enquiry*.) We're also reminded that Ian Fleming ran in the same circles as Carter and Pollard, and while James Bond was hardly a detective, themes of espionage and intrigue were part of the same creative milieu. (Incidentally, Carter himself was a dry martini man whose key ingredient was "an attitude of scrupulous respect.") Later in the book, Hone discloses that the bookshop in which Graham Pollard worked was located next door to the meeting rooms of the Detection Club. This social club of mystery and crime writers included nearly all of the great names of the period, like Agatha Christie, E.C. Bentley, G.K. Chesterton, and Dorothy L. Sayers.

Interestingly, Hone highlights the fact that Sayers was a regular customer of Pollard's bookshop, and the two of them corresponded for several years. Who knows how much they discussed the fine art of detection? Finally, and most impressively, Hone has dug deep into the archives to paint a rather full picture of Pollard's espionage work for MI5. Henry Hemming identified the bookseller as an MI5 operative in his 2017 book *M: Maxwell Knight, MI5's Greatest Spymaster*, but he spent little time elaborating on Pollard's activities. Hone has used The National Archives at Kew to add a wealth of detail, and in doing so, he draws a persuasive parallel between Pollard's mindset and methods as an anti-communist spy and as a bibliographical detective. "Leading the double life of bookseller and spy equipped him with a newfound sense of scepticism and suspicion," Hone suggests. It's hard not to imagine he's right.

While he is an academic, Hone is anything but pedantic in his writing. His specialization in book history becomes obvious on occasion, like when he refers to "each flick of serif and coil of ligature" in type analysis. But he uses his deep knowledge of the subject matter to make it accessible to the general reader, like when he explains exactly what a 'kern' is in typography and makes it clear why this feature is so important to the story. And he keeps the story moving with a structure that alternates the focus of the chapters between antagonist and protagonist, between the crime and the investigation, and between the 19th century and the 20th. I like the author's choice here, as the format builds suspense and creates for the reader a feeling of the thrill of the chase. It's an especially effective technique in chapters six, seven, and eight, where in each of the three the focus remains on the infamous Reading Sonnets; but the scenes alternate between Wise in the 1890s, masterfully creating a pedigree for his most audacious forgery, and Carter

and Pollard in the 1930s, perceptively realizing that something is amiss. The timelines finally converge in chapter fifteen as the investigation nears a climax.

We're not breaking any new ground in *The Book Forger*, but it's not the author's intention to do so. It's clear he wants this book to be entertaining as much as edifying, and it is. At the same time, the extent of Hone's archival research enables him to introduce a startling new piece of evidence that demonstrates Wise's bookbinder was fully aware their client was stealing leaves from the British Museum's collection of 17th century dramas. He is also able to amplify some little-known facts, and as someone who is fairly conversant with the literature, I learned several really interesting things. Who knew John Carter's provisional title for the *Enquiry* was 'Wisecracking'? Or that Graham Pollard collaborated with Dorothy Sayers on a fictitious history of Lord Mortimer Wimsey, printed with a fake imprint à la Wise? Finally, the author's study of unpublished sources also equips him to paint a much more vivid portrait of the key events and characters than would be possible otherwise. In particular, his robust description of Pollard is well done. Wilfred Partington amply characterized Thomas Wise; Donald Dickinson wrote a lovely biography of John Carter; but not until reading Joseph Hone could I fully visualize Graham Pollard in threadbare corduroy, working through typographical puzzles with a "grubby handkerchief that may once have been white" and wearing a scraggly knitted tie that one would swear "bore traces of lunch."

Thematically, Hone's most significant departure from the canon of Wiseian scholarship is in his diminution of Harry Buxton Forman as a culpable co-conspirator. Forman isn't exonerated, but in Hone's conception of the events he plays a markedly more inferior role than the one assigned to him by Nicolas Barker and John Collins in *A Sequel to An Enquiry*. The shift is subtle but definite. In Hone's interpretation, Forman's participation in the deceptions was the result of benign intentions, and he was repelled by the moral position of profiting from forgery. He suggests that by 1896, Forman broke with Wise and was done. While I'm not sure I agree with this position, I do believe Barker & Collins saw too much evidence of Forman in what was likely Wise's work, and I'm pleased that Hone's book should prompt a renewed discussion of just where Forman fits in. As for Forman's son, the author proposes two plausible scenarios to explain why Maurice Buxton Forman came to Wise's defense and publicly named his father as the conduit through which Wise received some of the suspect pamphlets. I was surprised that Hone didn't offer a third scenario related to Maurice's own activity as a forger, as alleged by Barker and Collins. There was no mention of this sideline at all; perhaps it would have led the reader too far afield.

For readers like me who are very interested in source attribution, or in sifting direct quotation from artistic license, the use of endnotes is an annoyance; but I understand they are a necessary evil in a work that is meant to appeal to a general audience. This is a very minor complaint, though, and particular to my personal

preference. The same can be said of my defensive reaction to Hone's rather harsh treatment of Sir Edmund Gosse. The author flippantly dismisses him in a handful of appearances as "a literary hanger-on, second-rate poet, slapdash critic" or "vain and notoriously muddleheaded." Again, it grated against my sensibility, but other readers may well think nothing of it.

Readers will, however, thoroughly enjoy this book. Those familiar with the outline of these events will appreciate the way Hone has crafted an engaging, pacy narrative without neglecting the technical nuance of the investigation. Newcomers to the saga will find themselves drawn into the story in a delightful fashion and will, I hope, be compelled to go back and read the *Enquiry* and other sources. Hone describes his book as "the story of perhaps the most sensational literary scandal of the last hundred years." He does it justice in *The Book Forger*, and has earned his place among the Wise Guys.

Review of Ashby, Elizabeth Clark. *The Miniature Library of Queen Mary's Dolls' House* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2024).

WILLIAM L. BUTTS

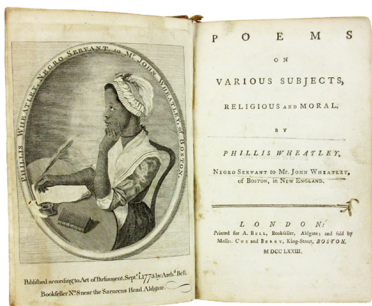
AMERICANS OF a certain age may be familiar with silent film star Colleen Moore's famous doll house, long on display in Chicago's Museum of Science & Industry and still quite the crowd-pleaser. Apparently Moore (1899-1988) had long been a doll house enthusiast, but I have no doubt that when she had the opportunity in 1924 to view the fabulous doll house of England's Queen Mary (1867-1953), it sparked her childhood interest anew. She began to work on her own doll-house in 1928. According to the Chicago museum's website, the Moore doll house contains a library featuring "over 100 miniature books, many of which were handwritten by renowned 20th century authors."

The Miniature Library of Queen Mary's Dolls' House describes the project as the brainchild of the queen's childhood chum and cousin, Princess Marie Louise of Schleswig-Holstein, who worked closely throughout with noted architect Sir Edwin Lutyens (designer of the doll house) and prolific writer E.V. Lucas. Think

Bill Butts and Yolanda Butts founded Main Street Fine Books & Manuscripts in Galena, Illinois, in 1991. He has been book review editor for *Manuscripts* for more than 25 years and for many years contributed regular columns to *Autograph Collector* and *The Antique Trader Weekly*. He has written articles on various book and autograph topics for *Fine Books & Collections* and other publications. In previous lives he was a Fulbright teaching assistant in Vienna, Austria, where he also worked for Simon Wiesenthal at his Nazi Documentation Centre, an undergraduate English instructor at Loyola University, and a trade book editor with Bonus Books and Precept Press in Chicago.

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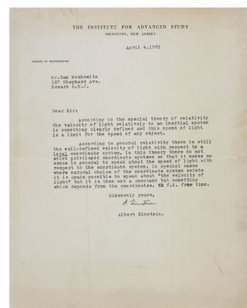
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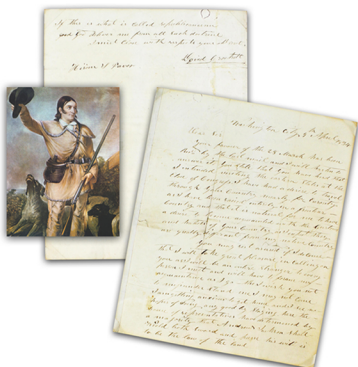
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of it as Downton Abbey on a miniscule scale, every detail meant to represent a microcosm of the best of upper crust British *everything*. The level of Lilliputian detail down to the tiniest desktop knick-knack is mind-boggling, and most of the furnishings were custom-made by the same famed companies that produced the full-size versions. The kingly doll resident

might consult the numerous dispatch boxes created by one of the firms who acted as bookbinders for the Dolls' House scheme, Sangorski & Sutcliffe. The boxes were exact replicas of the versions used in the Royal Household, and they contain miniature despatches bound in silk thread from all government departments.... There are also desk calendars, a tiny ivory paperknife incised with the royal cypher, and a magnifying glass to read the small print. A diminutive ink pen was supplied by Mabie Todd & Co. and bottles of ink by Henry Stephens. Bundles of writing paper, imitating the full-scale versions used by the King, were also provided, with matching envelopes for the royal correspondence...

And so on for every object in each of the Dolls' House's many, many rooms. This trio thought of everything: The wine bottles in the pantry contain wine, the tiny marmalade jars contain marmalade, the elevator actually operates, the sinks have running water. I guess that never has such a gargantuan undertaking on a miniature scale been undertaken anytime, anywhere.

But the books! Oh, the books! The library is the crown jewel of the Dolls' House (along with a handful of others scattered appropriately about the house). Their original plan to have "small-scale copies of the classics printed specially" to fill the library was quickly shot down when they "received a cost estimate for this, of £600 per book (today the equivalent to some £18,000 each). . ." Instead, they had to be content with printed miniature books already available.

Thank goodness that even for the royal family, price *was* a factor. A plot was hatched and the result is a miniature book collection to which none other in the world compares:

It is formed of 595 miniature books. Of these, 176 are manuscripts: handwritten contributions from many of the most significant literary figures of the day. They are shelved alongside 132 tiny printed books, newspapers and magazines, including Bibles, railway timetables and the complete works of Shakespeare. Some of these printed items were created before the Dolls' House project, some were made specially for it and some were added afterwards. There are also 24 minuscule printed music scores from contemporary composers, and two stamp albums, with stamps specially miniaturized to fit the Dolls' House scale. Other miscellaneous miniature books such as blotters and visitors' books add to the collection, along with 241 blank books bound in red or blue card, created to fill up the shelves.

The use of 241 blank books feels like cheating in this uber-authentic environment. One wonders if many of these haven't been quietly replaced with worthy

miniature books as they became available over the past century. Ashby only notes that “A few books, newspapers and magazines have been added . . . over the century since it was formed, and comparisons with early catalogues show that a small number have left the collection.” Could QE II have borrowed a volume and neglected to return it?

Those 176 manuscript miniature books are what most intrigue us. Signed, usually limited edition miniature books are nothing new—many have been published over the last century. But *manuscript* miniatures are truly a rare beast. And manuscript miniatures by famed (or once-famed) authors? Practically a newly-discovered species. Writes Ashby,

The miniature manuscripts sent to the Dolls’ House provide a fascinating snapshot of literature of the 1920s. While many of the writers copied extracts from works already published or in the process of being so, much of what was written in the little books was composed specially for the Dolls’ House. Although many of these unique contributions were subsequently reproduced in the 1924 catalogue edited by E.V. Lucas, few were published elsewhere, and they remain largely unknown.

If your spider senses aren’t already all a-tingle, she elaborates:

Collections from poets include those made specially by Walter de la Mare, A.E. Housman and Rudyard Kipling. Extracts from novels were submitted by popular authors such as Elizabeth von Arnim, May Sinclair and Mary Cholmondeley, and essays were contributed by John Buchan, E.M. Delafield and former Prime Minister H.H. Asquith. Still-loved writers Siegfried Sassoon, Joseph Conrad, M.R. James, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, G.K. Chesterton, A.A. Milne and Sir J.M. Barrie are all on the shelves.

You may find yourself saying *Elizabeth who?* and *May who?*—it’s not surprising that some authors go by the wayside—but among the household names many now-less-famous names with which some readers may not be familiar crop up in the chapters that follow.

Fetching my copy of *Colleen Moore’s Fairy Castle* that she inscribed for me long ago, I find that Moore borrowed this and other methods learned from the Queen’s Dolls’ House:

Miss Moore had small books made with blank pages. These were given to the authors to write parts of their famous books, making these rare books not merely first editions, but “only” editions. Many of them contain original stories, and each is bound in leather with the author’s name embossed in gold.

In the library are personal writings of A. Conan Doyle, Louis Bromfield, Clare Booth Luce, William Randolph Hearst, Irvin Cobb, Sinclair Lewis, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Booth Tarkington, Lloyd Douglas, Fannie Hurst, Kathleen Norris, John Steinbeck, Carl Van Vechten, James Hilton, Adela Rogers St. Johns, Edna

Ferber, Joseph Hergesheimer, Gene Fowler, Charles Norris, Rupert Hughes, Eleanor Glyn, Robinson Jeffers, Willa Cather, Edgar Rice Burroughs, and Hervey Allen.

Here too, if you find yourself saying *Adela who?* and *Hervey who?*, not to fret. Many of these authors have faded from view, while others have entered the pantheon of giants. Other than Sherlock's creator Conan Doyle, it's an all-American version of the Dolls' House's all-English collection.

Moore also compiled a signature album of the type that "autograph hounds" of yore used to gather, no doubt the eclectic mix of celebrities with whom a film star of the 1920s might rub shoulders. Hers "could well be called an autograph history of our times. Its pages show signatures of such famous people as Franklin D. Roosevelt, Nehru, Churchill, de Gaulle, Toscanini, and Henry Ford... General Eisenhower, General Pershing, Admiral Byrd of South Pole fame, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Queen Elizabeth II, the Crown Prince of Japan, and Paderewski, first premier of Poland."

Despite the archive of paperwork that the creation of the royal Dolls' House created, it remains unclear what criteria Marie Louise, Lucas and Lutyens employed when determining whom to solicit. Apparently they came up with routine lists of famous writers, supplemented by others who were friends or family. A broad age range was sought ("A few younger writers were involved: the war poets Edmund Blunden and Robert Graves were in their twenties... The oldest contributor, Frederic Harrison, was in his nineties") and subject matter was intentionally wide-ranging:

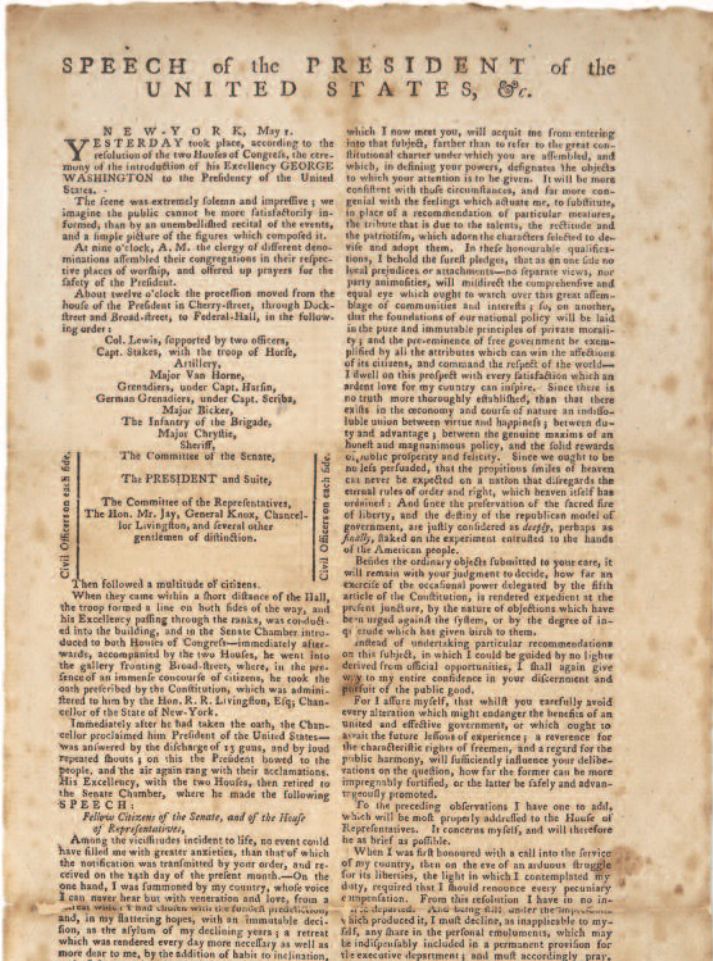
While some of the contributions were chosen by writers as being characteristic of their output, there are, appropriately for a dolls' house, fairy tales and children's stories...along with accounts, maxims and poems about and from the viewpoint of fairies, dolls and toys. There are books written for dolls on acting, philosophy and history; and books for the use of the dolls living and working in the Dolls' House, including a cookery book, a wine cellar list and a catalogue of the art.

Not surprisingly, "A few of the books make unpleasant reading today, due to content that is now regarded as racist and anti-Semitic." I wish that Ashby had rattled off a few of these authors, but alas not. I imagine that the once outrageously popular *Little Black Sambo* (first published 1899), by Scottish writer Helen Bannerman, might rest among these.

It also doesn't surprise that leading British bookbinders such as Zaehnsdorf, Riviere & Son and the aforementioned Sangorski & Sutcliffe—the Rolls Royces of their field—were among the chosen few who bound these books in plush leather with gilt-lettered spines. Nor that, to leave no stone unturned, each of the front pastedowns bears a 1.7 cm bookplate depicting Windsor Castle's Round Tower designed by E.H. Shepard, whose immortal Winnie-the-Pooh creations were yet to come.

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Just as fascinating as these books are those *not* present—authors who either refused or were never asked. Most regrettable are giants such as D.H. Lawrence, W.B. Yeats, H.G. Wells, and Virginia Woolf. And what a shame that the poet with one of the most diminutive scripts of all, John Masefield, declined. (By the way, those who contributed but could not write small “were to provide material which would be transcribed professionally, which they should then sign.”) I would have been agog had the ever-curmudgeonly George Bernard Shaw complied, but naturally he angrily refused.

Several meaty chapters delve into particulars of the manuscript miniatures. There are details on the logistics of gathering the manuscripts and on the contents of the manuscripts themselves, broken up into worthwhile sections on poetry; on one-of-a-kind compositions; on content concerning India and other lands; on the just-concluded First World War; on books about dolls and faeries and childhood; on autograph books (one each for Parliament, Theatre, the Navy and the Army—this last title is “now sadly lost”).

The cherry on the parfait of this Dolls’ House undertaking (and what could cap off such an over-the-top project?) is that “the organizers had decided on a publication that would catalogue the books of the library and reproduce much of their contents, concentrating in particular on writing composed specially for the Dolls’ House and poems selected into arrangements uniquely for the purpose.” Two thick, full-size volumes were published by the London publisher Methuen in 1924. Lucas wrote *The Book of the Queen’s Dolls’ House Library* and A.C. Benson and Sir Lawrence Weaver edited *The Books of the Queen’s Dolls’ House*, “which described the whole of the rest of the House and Garden.”

Miniature books have long been a recognized collecting field, and the Miniature Book Society has been around since 1983. Among the charms of miniature books is that even a good-size library of them has a shockingly small footprint—a big draw to anyone strapped for space. If any book can convey the allure of miniature books, *The Miniature Library of Queen Mary’s Dolls’ House* is it. That it includes a

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wealth of autograph content and exemplars adds to its luster to us manuscript folk. It is disappointing that this beautifully illustrated, handsomely presented volume lacks an index (every nonfiction book, especially one filled with names, should have one)—but every book has its flaw. This delightful volume may create new miniature book collectors and will certainly please any autograph enthusiast.

CLUB NEWS

Aldus Society

Our 2024-25 program year got off to an exciting start last fall with attendance beyond anything we've seen post-COVID (and likely before), and lively Q & A after the presentations from our speakers. We started last September with Dan Sinykin giving a brilliant talk based on his book *Big Fiction*, which examines how changes in the publishing industry have affected literary form, what we read, and what it means to be an author. In October, Angus Fletcher, professor of story science at Ohio State's Project Narrative, spoke very eloquently about his book *Wonderworks: The 25 Most Powerful Inventions in the History of Literature*, which combines neurology and literary analysis to detail the mental health and wellbeing benefits of over two dozen literary breakthroughs from ancient Sumer to the present day. Our November speaker, Sarah Casto, paper and photograph conservator at the Ohio State University Libraries, shared some examples of her fascinating work in the conservation and care of paper-based and photographic materials.

In October, members enjoyed a "field trip" to visit an impressive and delightful exhibit at the Ohio State University Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, "Essential Ingredients: Cookbooks as History," hosted by Jolie Braun, associate professor and curator of Modern Literature and Manuscripts (and co-curator of the exhibit itself). Celebrating more than 200 years of American cookbooks, the exhibit highlighted the works on display as windows into our culture and history, including social movements, global foodways, local communities, technological advancements, and personal stories.

As always, we started the new year with our Aldus Collects program in January, in which members share about their own collections. This year our presenters included Scott Williams, talking about the "Great Postcard Revolution," Jenna Nahhas, a new member, with "Binding & Beyond: Book Arts," Jay Hoster, discussing "John Stubbs—The Man Who Gave His Right Hand for Freedom of the

Press,” and Harry Campbell explored the latest additions to his collection of works on the topic of “Doubting Shakespeare.”

Our speaker series picked up again in February with actor and educator Roger Jerome discussing his new book, *Dickens in Ohio*. Roger has worked professionally as an actor (television, stage, and film) and educator in both the U.K. and U.S. His book uncovers the overlooked chapter of Charles Dickens’s visit to the heartland of America in April 1842, revealing the untold story of Dickens’s journey, which had a profound influence on the world-renowned author’s perspective and literary creations. In March, we learned about Lost Books of the Early Modern Book Trade from Ohio State English professor Alan Farmer, who drew on recent advances in estimating the numbers of lost books to consider how this might reshape our view of the cultural history of England from the mid-16th to the mid-17th century. Still to come, our speaker for April will be Rhiannon Knol, antiquarian bookseller with Bruce McKittrick Rare Books, discussing the role wrong ideas have played in Renaissance and early modern science, focusing on the writings of Aristotle, Christopher Columbus, and Athanasius Kircher, and reactions by their readers, from Galileo and Harvey to Sor Juana de la Cruz. We’ll wrap up the spring season with the Poet Laureate of Ohio, Kari Gunter-Seymour, who will discuss the literature derived from the 32 Ohio counties “nestled within the western foothills of the Appalachian Mountains.”

We’re also looking ahead to another field trip in the spring, visiting the Wagnalls Memorial Library in Lithopolis, Ohio. Our tour of the library will include viewing two original Norman Rockwell illustrations and two original letters from Harry Houdini to Mabel Wagnalls Jones.

David Brightman, *President*

American Society of Bookplate Collectors & Designers

Greetings, FABS Members!

The January 2025 issue of the ASBC&Ds newsletter introduced our 103rd year as an international bookplate society, a truly global community! We’re proud to be among the oldest worldwide societies, and we’re still going strong as we plan new exhibitions, publications, and competitions, as well as the continued growth of our international collection of bookplates. Participation and contributions from all corners of the globe make our society truly unique and vibrant.

Bookplate collectors in the San Francisco Bay Area will be the first to see our in-person “Breakfast at Tiffany’s” exhibition at the **Book Club of California from August 4th to November 7th, 2025**. Ex Libris artists from around the globe celebrated our Tribute to Truman Capote with this competition.

Are you interested in hosting a bookplate exhibit? Please drop me a line: info@bookplate.org.

We are fortunate to receive three new bookplate collections for our growing museum collection. The Phair collection from Pasadena, California, includes various fine American bookplates with works by E.D. French, J.J. Lankes, V. Preissig, W.F. Hopson, L. Ward, and R. Kent. The second donation is a significant collection of Russian bookplates, including thousands of original prints, hundreds of books, and exhibition catalogs. The third is a collection of sketches, proofs, prints, and production notes by G.W. Edwards (1859-1950). The ASBC&D continues to move forward in building an essential international bookplate research center in the USA.

Bookplate collectors from all corners of the globe came together for another unforgettable bookplate congress in Palma de Mallorca, Spain. You can delve into the details of this global gathering in the Balearic Islands with Olli Ylönen's review. Olli is a longtime friend from Helsinki and the Executive Secretary of FISAE—the International Federation of Ex-Libris Societies:

The international ex libris umbrella organization FISAE, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrated remarkable resilience. The scheduled Congress in 2020, initially planned for Cambridge, UK, and later relocated to London, could not occur. However, this setback did not deter us, and we continued to strive for our mission.

The decision to hold the next FISAE Congress in 2022 in San Francisco was paramount as it marks the resumption of our regular activities after the disruption caused by the pandemic. Equally significant was the confirmation of the Catalan association's invitation to host the 2022 Congress in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, which was a unique opportunity to showcase the rich ex-libris culture of the region.

In early October 2024, we were delighted to welcome over 100 participants from more than 20 countries to the beach resort site of Ca'n Pastilla in Palma de Mallorca. This diverse and global participation truly reflects the international nature of our community. It was a testament to our love for ex libris, and bookplates transcend geographical boundaries, and we are all part of a more extensive, interconnected network!

Participants feverishly made their bookplate exchanges with fellow artists and collectors for several days. Sometimes, it was without a mutual language understanding, but everyone managed quite well. English is the common language used at an ex libris congress.

Amidst the intellectual exchanges, the FISAE Congress also provided ample opportunities for cultural exploration. Participants enjoyed group trips around Palma, visiting the Joan Miro Museum, Bellver Castle, and the magnificent Cathedral. These experiences enriched our understanding of the local culture and inspired our artistic pursuits.

Two major exhibitions were presented in Palma. The bookplates of local artists Alexandre de Riquer (1856-1920) and Xam (Pedro Quetglas Ferrer, 1915-2001) were shown in the Misericordia Cultural Center. The well-known and highly prized bookplates of Austrian artist Alfred Cossman (1870-1951) from the collection of Manuel Ripoll were exhibited in Palma Municipal Archive.

Exlibris for Peace encouraged artists to express their visions of Peace. This theme sparked interesting discussions and led to the creation of thought-provoking and inspiring bookplates.

Of course, the publications included a competition exhibition catalog of the exlibris of Balear Isles from XIV to XXI (Joan Bauca I Barcelo).

We had two written invitations to hold the 2026 Congress in Athens, Greece, and Varna, Bulgaria. After careful consideration and a close democratic vote, the delegates chose Varna for the 2026 Congress.

Klaus Rödel volunteered to continue the FISAE newsletter, which has over 460 issues!

The Congress was a good experience, with a pleasant beach and resort environment and action-packed exchanges of global historical and contemporary bookplate prints.

James P. Keenan, *Director*

The Ampersand Club

The first meeting of our 2024-2025 season was on September 19, 2024 at the Minnesota Center for Book Arts. After our social hour we were given a gallery talk of the 2024 MCBA Prize Exhibition. Established in 2009, the MCBA Prize is an international artist's book award that honors excellence in new work from across the sweeping spectrum of book art. Twenty semi-finalists and five finalists were selected from 150 submissions from 16 countries. The winner was Radha Pandey, "Flora of Mughal India."

On October 17, 2024 we gathered at the Nomadic Press in St. Paul to hear Kent Aldrich talk about his 35 years as a storefront letterpress job shop. The Nomadic Press does fine printing and jobbing that includes graphic design, hand book-binding and presentation cases. The keepsake invitation was printed by Kent Aldrich.

The Tretter Collection at the University of Minnesota's Andersen Library hosted our November 13, 2024 meeting. Dr. Aiden Bettine's address was titled Radical Librarianship. Aiden is curator of the Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection and his talk focused on the history of queer archiving and put into context how the Tretter Collection became the largest archival repository of LGBTQ history in the Midwest.

On December 19, 2024 Dick Sveum moderated A Minnesota Bookish Discussion on Zoom. We shared stories of our shared book culture covering everything from libraries, bookstores and our private libraries and book collections.

The Annual Winter Party was hosted by John and Inez Bergquist in their Eagan home on January 25, 2025. We enjoyed a buffet and viewing their cozy home and library. Two keepsake booklets were distributed, *The House Where Phil Lived* by Rob Rulon-Miller originally appearing in Matrix 35, and *Designing a Book* by Abe Lerner.

Lori Williamson, Collection Care Specialist of the Herschel V. Jones Print Study Room in the Minneapolis Institute of Art, hosted our February 20, 2025. Lori displayed items from the collection and discussed rare old master prints, incunabula, and the emergence of print culture in Western Europe.

Please visit our website theampersandclub.org for the complete schedule of our future 2025 meetings.

Richard Sveum, *Program Officer*

The Baltimore Bibliophiles

All programs are via ZOOM at 7:00 pm, unless otherwise noted.

ZOOM program links are provided to FABS Clubs in advance.

Virtual programs are recorded, with the permission of the speaker.

On Tuesday, January 21, 2025, noted children's book author and lecturer **Leonard Marcus** gave us a talk entitled "Strong Women, Great Books: The Women Who Invented American Children's Book Publishing." On Tuesday, March 11, **Reid Byers** regaled us with "Imaginary Books: Lost, Unfinished and Fictive Works from the Collection of Reid Byers." Reid is a wonderful raconteur and had his far-flung audience nestled firmly in the palm of his hand. On Tuesday, April 15, **Professor April Oettinger**, of Goucher College, will discuss the work she and her students are accomplishing with Goucher's Art & Artifacts collection and the Woman's College of Baltimore Museum. During the summer, we hope to have a booksellers showcase, moderated by BIBS president **Tom Stosur**. We are also hoping to arrange a field trip to a prominent Maryland bookstore. (Stay tuned!) On Saturday, September 13 (in person), **Mark Samuels Lasner** explains "Could've, Should've, Didn't: Tales of a Wrong-headed Collector." His talk is slated to take place in the Edgar Allan Poe Room of the Enoch Pratt Free Library (Central branch). Tuesday, October 16, features a talk by **Chris Needham**, "Library Ghosts: The Afterlives of Vanished Collections." Our November annual meeting is a work in progress, but will be in person.

To keep up to date with our schedule, including our Calendar of Events, please

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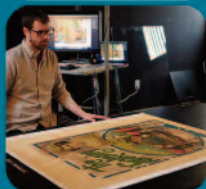
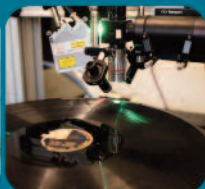
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May 1-3, 2025 | abaa.org/vbf

ABAA Autumn Book Fair

Sept 25 - 27, 2025 | abaa.org/vbf

IN-PERSON FAIRS

New York International Antiquarian Book Fair

Apr 3 - 6, 2025 | Park Avenue Armory

Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair

Nov 7 - 9, 2025 | Hynes Convention Center

subscribe to our bi-monthly *Literary Miscellany*. Simply contact Binnie Syril Braunstein at BSBGC@aol.com or 443-519-6366. Our programs are also posted to the FABS Calendar, to ExLibris, and to the new BIBS website: www.baltimorebibliophiles.org. We welcome FABS members via ZOOM or in person.

Binnie Syril Braunstein, *Program Chair*

The Baxter Society

The Baxter Society is the bibliophilic group “North of Boston,” usually meeting at Glickman Library, USM, in Portland, Maine (and on Zoom) on the second Wednesday of the month.

Our September meeting was a joint meeting with the Kate Cheney Chappell Center for Book Arts, **Stephanie Stigliano** spoke to us about her recent work, showed some stunning artist books, and discussed the relation of community and art. In October, **Ann Bromer** brought in some tiny treasures and spoke to an enthusiastic crowd on the topic, “Miniature Books Deserve More Respect,” and in November, **Reid Byers** spoke on his upcoming book and Grolier Club exhibition, “Imaginary Books: Lost, Unfinished, and Fictive Works Found Only in Other Books.”

In December, we observed our longstanding holiday tradition, a brief business meeting followed by revel and carouse, this year at the Maine Museum of Photographic Arts, as the guests of gallery director **Denise Froehlich** at the opening of an exhibition by photographer Barbara Peacock called “American Bedroom.” Our January meeting, always eagerly anticipated, was our annual Show-and-Tell meeting, allowing members each to share a new acquisition from the previous year, and in February, **Bill Lippencott** spoke on “A Bangor publisher’s connection to Houghton Mifflin: George Godfrey and his library.” This meeting was hybrid, both in person at Glickman Library and on Zoom.

In March, **David Dilaura** will speak on “A Startling Discovery: Meeting Isaac Newton in My Own Library—or—Gobsmacked by Provenance.” A few years ago, David made the discovery of a lifetime on his own shelves, a stunning example of the importance of careful examination in the collecting of books. April will bring a fascinating presentation by **Karolyne Garner** on her extensive collection of etiquette books, and in May, **Scott Vile** will speak on thirty years of operating the Ascensius Press. The talk will be held at Glickman Library Room 423-423, with a visit afterwards to the exhibit in the 7th floor Great Reading Room.

Reid Byers, *President*

The Book Club of California

Our new quarters were duly christened over late summer and fall 2024, as members and guests poured into 47 Kearny for lectures, exhibits, a holiday party, and our latest book release. It already feels like home.

In September, Declan Kiely packed the house for our annual Windle-Loker Lecture Series on the History of the Illustrated Book. His talk, “The White Whale: Moby-Dick Illustrated,” is also the lead article in the Winter 2025 issue of the *Quarterly News-Letter*. In December, the Kenneth Karmiole Endowed Lecture on the History of the Book Trade in California and the West featured an equally fascinating and well-attended lecture on the “Caxton Printers of Idaho, A Century of Publishing in the American West,” by Alessandro Mereaglia.

We hosted a wide array of book talks by curators, librarians, photographers, and scholars during the last half of 2024, including Alexandra Alvis’ “The Material Culture of Advertising: Treasures from the Winterthur Library’s Collection of Trade Literature,” Katie Gee Salisbury’s “Not Your China Doll: The Wild and Shimmering Life of Anna May Wong,” Sarah Keyes’ “American Burial Ground: A New History of the Overland Trail,” Cait Coker’s “Women’s Book History and the Knowledge Revolution,” Tim Hunt’s “Robinson Jeffers’ Tamar and Other Poems: A Centennial Appreciation,” Sandra E. Bonura’s “The Sugar King of California,” Deborah Parker’s “Belle da Costa Greene: A Transformative Librarian Through Her Letters,” and Iris Jamahl Dunkle’s “Riding Like the Wind: The Life of Sanora Babb.”

We also hosted two events featuring authors in conversation. In San Francisco, we co-presented and co-hosted with Litquake “The Forgetters: Greg Sarris with Leslie Carol Roberts,” and in Pasadena, Daria Topousis moderated the panel discussion “Voices of Contemporary Women Writers in Southern California” with fellow authors Tisha Marie Riechle-Aguilera, Carla Sameth, Romaine Washington, and Desiree Zamorano.

On the exhibition front, “Creatures of Commerce: Animal Advertising Ephemera from the Bruce Shyer Collection” opened on October 14 with a talk by the collector and curator, himself. This spectacular exhibit of ephemera was the first in our new location.

We continue our tradition of fine press publishing, releasing our 243rd book, *From California: Poems by Dana Gioia, Engravings by Richard Wagener*, on November 12, at a reception honoring the poet and the engraver. Featuring nine engravings and 27 poems, the deluxe edition of 25 copies quickly sold out. Copies of the standard edition, limited to 225, are still available for purchase. Navigate to the publications page of our website to learn more about this exquisite book and to place your order.

A second publication, our 2024 Keepsake, “Greetings of the Season: The Hol-

iday Cards of Mallette Dean,” by John Hawk, with Foreword by Deborah Dean Kerkof, continues to receive high praise from our members. It is just one of the many benefits that Book Club of California membership brings. We encourage you to consider it, to visit us when you’re in San Francisco, and to enjoy the many programs we offer in-person (in San Francisco and Pasadena), via Zoom, and in hybrid formats, including our popular Lunchtime with the Librarian Zoom events and Virtual Community meetings. To view the full schedule of upcoming event and/or find out more about our publications and member benefits, visit us at bccbooks.org.

Finally, a quick word about our Southern California programming. Just as we were congratulating ourselves on a successful move and settling back into a sense of normalcy, the Eaton and Palisades fires erupted in Los Angeles. The bibliophilic community—encompassing a great many of our members—suffered profound losses, including homes, libraries, bookstores, and letterpress printshops. As the fires continued their devastation, the 57th California International Antiquarian Book Fair, scheduled to take place in Pasadena in early February, had to be canceled. We, too, paused our programming at Pasadena Heritage. We resumed this in March and hope our Southern California members are finding a measure of comfort in the bibliophilic fellowship these events occasion. In the virtual world, you can always find us at bccbooks.org. We hope you’ll check us out!

Terri A. Castaneda, *Vice-President*

Book Hunters Club of Houston

The Book Hunters Club gathered in February at our informal club house, Good Books in the Woods, a rare and used open shop owned by member Jay Rohfritsch. The cozy atmosphere of the bookshop, tucked away amid tall trees and whispering winds, provided the perfect backdrop for our monthly meeting.

Good Books in the Woods is not just a bookshop; it is a haven for bibliophiles. The shelves, laden with rare and used books, create a labyrinth of literary treasures waiting to be discovered. The warm lighting and comfortable seating areas invite visitors to lose themselves in the world of words. The scent of old pages and fresh coffee mingles in the air, adding to the charm of this unique sanctuary.

Members of The Book Hunters Club began arriving at Good Books in the Woods just as the winter sun dipped below the horizon, casting a golden glow over the tranquil setting. Jay Rohfritsch, our gracious host, welcomed each member with a warm smile and a personal recommendation for their next great read. The camaraderie was palpable as members exchanged greetings and shared their latest literary adventures.

The meeting kicked off with a lively discussion about our book of the month,

The Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafón. This captivating tale of intrigue and mystery set in post-war Barcelona sparked passionate debates and thoughtful reflections among the members. Themes of love, loss, and the power of literature resonated deeply with everyone, making for an enriching conversation.

Jay, with his vast knowledge of rare books, shared fascinating insights into the historical and literary context of the novel. Members eagerly took notes, jotting down titles of books to add to their ever-growing reading lists.

One of the highlights of the February meeting was the literary treasure hunt organized by Jay. Members were given a list of clues leading to various rare books hidden within the nooks and crannies of the shop. The excitement was infectious as everyone scoured the shelves, determined to uncover these hidden gems.

The treasure hunt not only brought out the competitive spirit in the members but also introduced them to books they might never have discovered otherwise. The joy of finding a rare first edition or an obscure literary work was evident in the smiles and exclamations of delight that echoed through the shop.

As the evening progressed, members gathered around a large wooden table in the heart of the shop, sharing stories and experiences over cups of steaming hot chocolate. The atmosphere was one of warmth and conviviality, with laughter and animated conversations filling the air.

Before the meeting came to a close, the club discussed plans for the upcoming months. Exciting events and activities were proposed, including author meet-and-greets, book swaps, and themed reading challenges. The enthusiasm and commitment of the members to fostering a love for literature were truly inspiring.

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As the night drew to an end, Jay thanked everyone for making the evening a success and expressed his gratitude for being part of such a passionate and dedicated group. Members left Good Books in the Woods with their hearts full and their arms laden with new literary treasures, eagerly looking forward to the next gathering.

The February meeting of The Book Hunters Club was a memorable one, filled with enriching discussions, exciting discoveries, and cherished moments. As we parted ways, we carried with us not just new books, but also the joy of shared experiences and the anticipation of future literary journeys together.

Postscript: BULLSH*T! The above was almost entirely AI generated. I curiously activated the Microsoft Word AI “co-pilot” that offered to help me as I wrote out the first line, “The Book Hunters Club gathered in February at our informal club house, Good Books in the Woods, a rare and used open shop owned by member Jay Rohfritsch.” Much to my amazement and growing horror, it quickly generated the rest of this entirely fictitious account. Admittedly, Jay Rohfritsch comes across as quite an impressive guy, and I do like Zafon’s *The Shadow the Wind*. But I don’t recall any coffee or steaming hot chocolate offered. I was ready to hit the delete key, but then thought otherwise, presenting this as a cautionary tale of what lies ahead, and the temptations stirred when one waits until the last minute to turn something in, or just feels lazy.

Kurt Zimmerman

The Caxton Club

The Caxton Club’s officers are president Sarah M. Pritchard, vice-president Lou Pitschmann, treasurer Jeff Jahns, and secretary Leslie Winter. Elections for these offices and for one-third of the club’s council will be held in June 2025. Meetings of the council (via Zoom) are held every other month.

Membership currently stands at 353. There are senior, regular, and junior levels of membership and members include residents (those living within 50 miles of Chicago) and non-residents (including international members)

The club holds flourishing mid-day and evening events (live and/or via Zoom) from September through June (Zoom meetings open to non-members—members of FABS associations especially welcome); continues to publish the bi-monthly *Caxtonian*; and has a continuing program of awards and grants for the book arts.

The many notable programs (midday and evening) in the past half-year include Nora Davies on broadside ballads; Eric Slauter on the *Pocket Constitution*; Cait Coker on Gwendolyn Brooks and the Black literary canon; Morgan Swan on penny dreadfuls; Paul F. Gehl on Robert Middleton; and, Oren Margolis on Aldus Manutius. Upcoming events include Vicki Mahaffey on James Joyce (March) and

a panel of speakers on the Anthony Mourek Collection of Political Cartoons (April).

The *Caxtonian* maintains a high level of layout and design and is fully illustrated. Its current issue (March/April) features an appreciation of the life of the late Robert Cotner, the founding editor of the *Caxtonian* and president of the club in the mid-1990s. Articles of particular interest in the last half-year have included Sid Berger's *The flowering of typography* (about fleurons); Hunter Dukes' *Johannes Hartlieb's Book of herbs (1462)*; R. Eden Martin's *A new interpretation of the death of Prince Andrei in Tolstoy's War and peace*; Jack Weiss's *Chicago Design Archive: a short history*; and, Deborah Parker's *Loving by the book, Belle Da Costa Greene, Bernard Berenson, and Dante*.

The club's Grants and Awards Committee (chaired by past-president Jackie Vossler) has made more than \$5000 in book arts awards for 2025 to students of the book arts at the School of the Art Institute in Chicago (SAIC), the University of Iowa, and the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. MFA recipients are SAIC's Hanna Renedo (Vossler Prize), for her *Greenland Ice Sheet Thesis Book Project* and Jennifer Miller (Iowa) for her *Kinder inquiries*, and Undergraduates (SAIC only) Hanwei Li's *Monologue under the moon* and Demah Alfaiz's *Al archeef*.

Michael Gorman

The Book Club of Detroit

September 2024 brought sad news: The death of Richard "Dick" Marsh, longtime member of the Book Club of Detroit (BCD) and the Grolier Club. An accomplished attorney, bibliophile, and historian, he was the longtime president of the Winston Churchill Society of Michigan. With his wife Mary Jo, he established a fellowship for visiting scholars at the University of Michigan's William L. Clements Library, and served on the library's Board of Governors. He is greatly missed.

On September 21, BCD visited the Detroit Public Library for "Bibles to Baseball: Treasures of the Detroit Public Library Special Collections," presented by DPL Special Collections Coordinator Mark Bowden. DPL is home to five special collections: Burton Historical Collection (Michigan/Old Northwest/ Canada/New France history); E. Azalia Hackley Collection (African-Americans in the performing arts); Ernie Harwell Sports Collection (history of baseball and other sports); National Automotive History Collection; and Rare Book Collection (including first editions, illuminated manuscripts, and incunabula). The treasures Mark showed us ranged from an ancient Sumerian clay cone to a leaf from the Gutenberg Bible to a 1957 photo of Elvis Presley with women officers of the Detroit Police Department.

On October 13, BCD had a display table at the Ann Arbor Antiquarian Book Fair, a benefit for the Clements Library. Organized by long-time BCD member and past president Jay Platt, the fair is always a great opportunity to introduce BCD to potential new members

On October 24, a special treat: BCD members visited the Benson Ford Research Center at the Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. A “collection of collections,” the Center is a treasure trove of everything from automotive history to women’s clothing fashions to children’s toys! Many items are from the personal collection of Henry Ford, including his correspondence with Thomas Edison. This “behind the scenes” tour was arranged by BCD board member Janet Blackhawk.

In keeping with long BCD tradition, our club’s year closed with our annual meeting and holiday luncheon on December 7; the venue was Longacre House in Farmington Hills. Our featured speaker was BCD member George Hagenauer, famed as the “Comic Book Wizard of Ypsilanti” and a well-known collector of illustration art. George’s topic was “Collecting the Art for the Books You Love,” and included many examples from his collection. Also at the annual meeting, BCD honored two longtime officers and board members who stepped down at the end of 2024 after many years of service to the club: Vice-President C. Hedger Breed and Treasurer Maurice Barie.

We opened 2025 with a January 9 Zoom presentation by none other than

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FABS Chair Dr. Jennifer Larson, speaking on “Little Books and Big Ideas in the Handpress Era.” Jennifer described the development of miniature formats and typography, and explored the literary authors and titles most often chosen for distribution in small formats from the incunabular period through the early 19th century. We enjoyed seeing beautiful examples from Jennifer’s own collection (which she began while still in high school!). Jennifer’s fascinating presentation is now available on BCD’s YouTube channel!

On February 22, we enjoyed a visit to the Gaelic League of Detroit, the oldest center of Irish culture and language in the city of Detroit. A highlight of this visit was being able to examine the League’s book collection, contributed by descendants of the earliest Irish immigrant families in the area.

As of this writing, we are looking forward to BCD member Dan Freidus serving up a delectable presentation on March 15, “Expat Cookbooks: Expressions of Identity and Community While Living Abroad,” drawing on his collection of over 1,300 cookbooks. The featured books will include those from military families on overseas bases, Peace Corps volunteers, missionaries, international school PTAs, American women’s clubs, and more.

Other BCD events planned for 2025 include a tour of the Temple Beth El Prentis Memorial Library and a summer picnic at the home of BCD members Mike and Sandy Skinner. Mike is a founding member and past president of the Henry Ford Heritage Association; we look forward to seeing items from Mike’s personal collection of Ford Motor Company history!

Also highly anticipated is the annual Detroit Festival of Books, organized by BCD past president Ryan Place; this year’s Bookfest is set for July 20. In the fall, we look forward to “Pulp fiction: Why ‘trashy’ books are our treasure,” by BCD member Victoria Landes and Max Tortoriello.

Visit bookclubofdetroit.org and follow BCD on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube.

Marcia McBrien, *President*

The Florida Bibliophile Society

The September show-and-tell meeting that kicked off this season had a large turnout, with dozens of members and visitors eager to share treasures they found over the summer, or to discuss a book that fired their imagination. A few more joined us over Zoom. The October meeting was almost cancelled because some members were dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Milton earlier in the month, on the heels of Hurricane Debby in early August and Hurricane Helene in late September. The scheduled presentation was postponed, but a small group did gather and held an impromptu discussion about FBS.

Russell Spera's talk on Dante's *The Divine Comedy* in November led to a spirited Q&A with attendees. The 2024 part of the season wrapped up in December with food, drinks, books (of course!) and good company at the holiday party hosted by Ben and Joyce Wiley. The trip planned to Jim Anderson's printing museum for January 2025 had to be postponed because Jim is still dealing with damage from the hurricanes. Ben Wiley quickly organized a substitute trip to The Book Rescuers at their new, expanded location in Largo. February's meeting went off as planned with a gathering at Ersula's History Shop in Tampa. A group of FBS members also met at the Largo Public Library that month to look through the society's archives and make a final effort to gather material for the 40th anniversary book. We hope the book will be ready in time for the May banquet.

March began with the Florida Antiquarian Book Fair, where sixteen members took turns at the tables: recruiting new members, selling tote bags and doing appraisals for the public. In their spare time they roamed the Coliseum in search of books. The March meeting will be at the Jack Kerouac House in St. Petersburg, where the home's owner, Ken Burchenal, will give us a tour. Retired juvenile judge Irene Sullivan will give a talk at our April meeting about two books she's written—*Born and Raised to Murder* and *Raised by the Courts*—which explore Florida's courts and their impact on the state's youth. That month is also the time of the big book sale in Gainesville—a highlight of the year for some FBS members! The year will wrap up with the banquet at the St. Petersburg Marriott Clearwater. The winners of the Lee J. Harrer Student Book Collecting Essay Contest will be awarded there. We're grateful for all that Roxanne Rhodes does to coordinate the contest. Our guest speaker at the banquet this year will be Jim West, president of the Manuscript Society.

Sean Donnelly, *Secretary*

The Grolier Club

This fall at the Grolier Club saw two brilliant exhibitions. **Melville's Billy Budd at 100**, a member exhibition, curated by William Palmer Johnston was accompanied by a catalogue that includes a Moser broadside illustrating "Billy in the Darbies," the concluding poem of Billy Budd, and which is available for purchase at the Grolier Club. September 12-November 9, 2024. **Abraham Lincoln: His Life in Print**, a public exhibition from the Americana Collection of David M. Rubenstein, was curated by Mazy Boroujerdo. This historical exhibition celebrated one of America's greatest presidents and his leadership during one of its most turbulent times, through rarely-seen books, documents, and ephemera that empowered Lincoln's political ascendance, his leadership during the Civil War, and his efforts to end slavery. September 25-December 28, 2024.

During the winter, **Imaginary Books: Lost, Unfinished, and Fictive Works Found Only in Other Books**, December 5-February 15, 2025, was part bibliophilic entertainment and part conceptual art installation. It featured an unusual display of books that do not exist, curated by Grolier Club member Reid Byers from his collection at the Fortsas Club in Paris. Currently on display is **A First-Class Fool: Mark Twain and Humor**. January 15-April 5, 2025, an examination of humorist Samuel Clemens, who crafted the great “Mark Twain” persona. Twain identified as a “first-class fool,” capturing his dual literary role as a simple, folksy author and speaker on the one hand, and an intelligent and nuanced literary craftsman on the other. The exhibition includes more than 120 works drawn from the private collection of Susan Jaffe Tane and curated by Julie Carlsen and Gabriel Mckee.

The spring exhibitions will include **Wish You Were Here: Guidebooks, Viewbooks, Photobooks, and Maps of New York City, 1807-1940**. March 6-May 10, 2025. Curated by Mark D. Tomasko from his collection, the exhibition features more than 130 objects. Guidebooks on view trace the growth of the city, including Dr. Mitchill’s Picture of New York (1807, the first guide to New York City), as well as specialty viewbooks, such as for the new Central Park, Ellis Island, speakeasies, restaurants, and skyscrapers. On April 23, **After Words: Visual and Experimental Poetry in Little Magazines and Small Presses, Post-1960**, curated by Steve Clay and Grolier Club member M. C. Kinniburgh will open as a public exhibition. Poetry underwent a profound re-conception post-World War II, as poets experimented with techniques such as projective verse, and the verbal and visual qualities of poetic language. Known variously as visual, concrete, and sound poetry, these practices reached new heights of innovation in the 1960s and beyond, sustained by the mimeograph revolution and the proliferation of small independent presses. The exhibition explores the decentering and re-imagining of language from the perspective of visual poetics, and the varieties of ways these ideas took published form.

Our final exhibition of the season will be **New Members Collect 2025**, open May 29-July 26, and featuring contributions from the collections of our newly admitted members.

Reid Byers, *FABS Trustee*

The Manuscript Society

At the close of 2025, the Manuscript Society will have hosted meetings on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. The Annual Meeting was in New York City, April 24-27, with headquarters at the Warwick Hotel. Members of the Board of Trustees convened a day early to discuss business and have lunch at the auction house,

Christie's. That evening was our traditional "Fun Auction," a fundraiser with donated documents.

Local members of the Society who served as coordinators made sure we visited a variety of collections at the New York Historical, the Lincoln Center, the Municipal Archives, and the Morgan Library. We also saw archival collections at the Metropolitan, the Museum of the City of New York, and the South Street Seaport Museum. Half of the participants added an extra day and we boarded buses for New Jersey to visit Morristown, site of General Washington's encampment in 1779-1780. Interspersed were delicious dinners with our Luncheon Business Meeting at Rossini's Restaurant and the Gala Banquet Dinner at Fraunces Tavern with speaker Francis Morrone.

The Manuscript Society has planned an additional Study Tour this year to Cambridge and Oxford, September 10-18. We will have tours at Pepys Library at Magdalene College at Cambridge and the Bodleian Library and Merton College at Oxford. In addition, we will visit at least half a dozen homes, including Wimpole Hall, Drayton House, Waddesdon Manor (Rothschild), and Wormsley Park, still the home of the Getty family. Other country houses built in the eighteenth century include Blenheim and Rousham House. We look forward to being steeped in significant manuscript and art collections with colleagues who share our interests.

Join The Manuscript Society for the opportunity to participate in future adventures.

Ellen Howell Myers, Ph.D., *Past President*

NOBS (Northern Ohio Bibliophilic Society)

NOBS sponsored a variety of bibliophilic adventures for booklovers in northeast Ohio this past fall and winter, beginning with our Forum in September. William Claspy, Head of University Archives and Special Collections at Kelvin Smith Library of Case Western Reserve University, took us on a journey back to Charles Dickens's 1842 visit to America through the story behind a previously unpublished letter from the celebrated author that the library recently acquired. The following month we were regaled with tales from the more recent past, as Harriet Logan shared stories from the eventful thirty-year history of her beloved bookstore, and home of NOBS Forums, Loganberry Books. After the usual two-month break for the holidays, Forums resumed in January with our annual Show & Tell session where book-lovers shared some of their favorite recent finds. And most recently, NOBS board member and book binder Karen Esper took us through the history of paper marbling, sharing some examples of fine marbled paper and how it is made. As always, the recordings of past NOBS Forums as well as more infor-

mation on our upcoming events, can be viewed on our website (nobsbooks.org).

Members and other interested bibliophiles also gathered in November for the annual NOBS meeting. We first met for a hearty lunch at the Jolly Scholar on the Case Western Reserve University campus and then held a productive meeting. Once the business was concluded, we crossed Euclid Avenue for a special tour of the Allen Memorial Medical Library, led by Collection Development and Engagement Librarian Thomas Hayes. The Allen was established in the 1920s by Elisabeth Severance Allen Prentiss to honor her late husband Dr. Dudley Peter Allen, a principal founder of the Cleveland Medical Library Association (CMLA). Much of the library's core rare book collection dates from the collecting efforts of the CMLA in the early 20th century, and Hayes presented a selection of significant volumes with colorful and elaborate foldout plates for us to admire. We were also treated to a tour of the reading rooms of the Allen, which were designed in the English university tradition and featured cases of various historic medical devices and equipment. The entire visit was a memorable glimpse into the bibliophilic pursuits of rare medical and science book collectors from a century ago.

Last, but certainly not least, NOBS will be holding the 39th edition of the Akron Antiquarian Book & Paper Show on March 28-29 at the John S. Knight Center. We will be organizing the fair a little differently this year, with a ticketed preview on Friday evening with drinks and hors d'oeuvres and a chance to mingle with the booksellers and other bibliophiles. Saturday will then be the traditional book fair where we expect more dealers than last year and hopefully more attendees as well. We hope to see you all there!

Paul Heyde, *FABS Trustee*

The Philobiblon Club

Greetings, fellows! The Philobiblon Club continues to thrive under the stewardship of our new president, Janine Pollock. We are happy to report membership is growing rapidly, thanks in particular to a successful booth at the Fine Book Fairs' Philadelphia show last December. Club officers and board members coordinated throughout the weekend to have a continual presence at the fair. Special thanks to David McKnight, Eric Pumroy, Frank Hoeber, and Lynne Farrington for devoting so much time to meeting and greeting prospective members.

The Club wrapped up 2024 with a riotous meeting at The Rosenbach Museum & Library for our annual show-and-tell holiday party. After catching up over hors d'oeuvres and holiday cookies in the richly decorated South Study, followed by a quick tour of the galleries, we decamped to the Denworth Room where some 15 members shared their favorite and finest things. Some highlights: Carmen Valentino opened the meeting with original materials from the centennial of the

Club in 1993, including a booklet listing “Some of Our Best Friends: Books Selected from Collections of Members...” fittingly, an exhibition held at The Rosenbach; Rhiannon Knoll shared her beloved 1544 Venice edition of the Italian translation of Plato’s *Symposium* along with Marsilio Ficino’s commentary on the same, which is also in symposium form; David Wice wowed us with a selection of miniature books gathered over 75 years of his collecting, plus a fun story about visiting Queen Mary’s Dolls’ House Library and hunting for miniature books in the royal gift shop; and two of our newest members James Milanesi and Amanda Gior-dano Herrera presented the third anthology from their Philadelphia poetry collective, Poet’s Row. David McKnight emceed the event, with yours truly on “the bell”—actually a small gong—to limit time for each presentation (if you’re thinking we had to chime in more than a few times, you’re right!). Thank you to all who participated! What a great start to the holiday season.

Speaking of The Rosenbach: its executive director and Philobiblon board member Kelsey Bates is opening the museum doors to us for all of next season! While we have enjoyed meeting at The Ethical Society on Rittenhouse since we reconvened post-Covid, everyone agrees The Rosenbach will be a wonderful new (old) place for the Club to meet. Really, where could be better? Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach himself was president of the Philobiblon Club from 1922-1952.

The Club meets October through May on the second Tuesday of the month. Our presenter lineup for the rest of 2025 includes David McKnight on collecting The Beatles (April 8); Eric Pumroy on the Coppinger Widener Collection in the Free Library of Philadelphia’s Rare Book Department (May 13); and next fall, Clarence Wolf of G.S. MacManus Co. on bookselling and the new, expanded edition of his memoir; Christine Nelson on Belle da Costa Greene and Rosenbach; and Holly Mengel of the University of Pennsylvania archives on the work of artist Ursula Sternberg; plus others to be announced shortly. Look for dates and details soon on our *new website*—www.philobiblonclub.org—designed by board member Will Fenton.

Zoe Abrams, *Secretary*

Book Club of Washington

The Book Club of Washington (BCW) continues to move full speed ahead with a nice mix of in-person, and online events. We closed out our fall programing with a one-day workshop, “Words on Fire: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Censorship,” co-sponsored with Folio: the Seattle Athenaeum. We also gathered at Ivar’s Salmon House on Lake Union for our first post-COVID Holiday Dinner and Auction (raising over \$6000).

In January we again gathered in Seattle for an in-person Board meeting and

half-day retreat. We have found these to be a very productive way to start the year.

February found us holding our first, hopefully annual, “Book and Print Sale.” We put it together quite quickly, relying on our members to donate quality books and art work. They did and we raised over \$2000 in support of our scholarship to Rare Book School (RBS). We also had a virtual presentation by Philip S. Palmer, curator at the Morgan Library talking about their exhibit, “Belle da Costa Green: A Librarian’s Legacy.”

Upcoming events for March include a day trip to Bainbridge Island to see the “Nature of the Book: 2025” exhibit at the Bloedel Reserve, and “Power of the Presses” at the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art (BIMA).

In April we will also have our annual meeting (hybrid) which will feature a presentation by Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) professor, Solveig Robinson. We also anticipate presenting the Robert D. Monroe Award for outstanding achievement in book arts to a student in the Publishing and Printing Arts Program at PLU.

We are continuing to host BCW Bookstore Socials, but our moving them from monthly to seasonal. We have also asked the booksellers to share current highlights in their collection. This has proved to be very popular and insightful.

Once again, we have a full spring and summer program planned including a Road Trip to Portland in July and a barbeque later that month. As always if you are interested in learning more check out our website www.bookclubofwashington.org, or email us at info@bookclubofwashington.org.

Tamara Belts, *Vice President*

The Washington Rare Book Group

Our year got off to a fine start with a presentation at the Library of Congress by the WRBG’s 2024 Rare Book School scholarship winner, Allison Busar. Allison enrolled in History of the Book in America: a survey from Colonial to Modern. Allison illustrated her talk with examples from the Library’s rare book collection.

In October members headed north to visit the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. We enjoyed a behind-the-scenes tour of their Conservation and Technical Research Department with Annette Ortiz, Conservation Scientist.

November brought us back home for a tour of Tudor Place Historic House and Garden in Georgetown. The house was owned by Martha Custis Peter, a granddaughter of Martha Washington. Curator Rob DeHart and Archivist Sara Law showed the group some of its rarest books, reflecting the interests of an elite Washington DC family through several generations.

In January the group held its annual online book discussion, when we talked about *On Parchment* by Bruce Holsinger. These book discussions are always fun,

and happily, winter snow and ice never get in our way. Please email the group if you have book recommendations!

In February the group gathered on a cold and blustery day to visit The National Building Museum for a tour of their exhibition, “Building Stories.” Our gracious host and curator, Caitlin Bristol, led the group through this semi-permanent exhibition of classic children’s books in which the built environment figures into the story in a significant manner.

As a small but committed group of bibliophiles, The Washington Rare Book Group takes pride in offering the WRBG Rare Book School scholarship. We enable one talented young person from our area to build on his or her bibliographic interests and enjoy a week of intense study with like-minded students. We are grateful that Rare Book School administers the scholarship for us. More information is available here: <https://rarebookschool.org/admissions-awards/scholarships/wrbg-scholarship/>. The award includes a one-year membership in the WRBG and a request that each recipient make a presentation to the group on his or her experience at RBS.

As we look ahead, we have some exciting events planned, including a “Shop Talk” panel discussion. We will discuss rare book libraries’ policies on when and how to serve original books and documents and when to serve surrogates. If you are interested in learning more about the group or would like to join us, feel free to visit our website at <http://washingtonrarebookgroup.org/> or send us an email.

Jackie Coleburn, *Treasurer*



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