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The FABS Journal is published twice annually and 5,000 copies are distributed in Spring and Fall to our North American Member Clubs and International Affiliates.

Letter from the Chair

ON BEHALF OF FABS, we hope this issue of the *FABS Journal* finds you well, and hope you enjoy it. For those who don't know, this is the last issue of the *Journal* that will be edited by Jennifer Larson. Jennifer, we wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to you; your commitment to the *Journal* (and to FABS) has left an indelible mark. You leave the journal in good stead, from both content and fiscal perspectives, and we're grateful for all you've done!

We also wish to extend a very warm welcome to Deborah Prosser, who will be assuming the role as Editor of the FABS Journal with our forthcoming fall issue. Welcome, Deborah! We look forward to many years of working together, and are so grateful you've taken on this role.

As we plan for our annual meeting, to be held in April, the officers of FABS will be reaching out to our members and affiliates for your thoughts and contributions, particularly through the formation of two ad hoc committees. First, we would like to create a committee to explore the viability and feasibility of FABS Tours in the future. These tours were the hallmark of FABS programming for a long time, and we would like to reopen conversations about the possibility of offering these again. (If you were on the Tour in St. Louis in 2019, you might have seen yours truly give a lecture at the Mercantile Library!)

In addition to discussions and planning regarding FABS Tours, the officers would like to form a committee to explore longer-term strategic planning for FABS. The last five years have seen the addition of special interest groups and other virtual programming, and the solidification of the viability of the *FABS Journal*. Building on those successes, what do we want FABS to be committed to for the next five years?

As ever, we welcome any comments or thoughts, and want to hear from you. In the meantime, I wish everyone a pleasant spring, filled with bookish activity!

All best,
GRETCHEN HAUSE
FABS Chair

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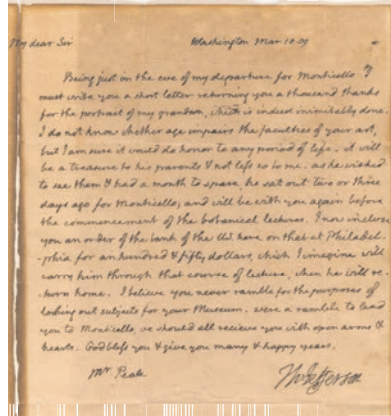
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An important autograph letter signed by Thomas Jefferson to Charles Willson Peale thanking him for the portrait of his grandson, Thomas Randolph Jefferson. Washington: 10 March 1809.

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Women and Bibliophilic Clubs: The Book Club of California and the Baltimore Bibliophiles

Michèle V. Cloonan

Prelude

This year marks America's bicentennial. It is also the 50th anniversary of women's admission into two formerly all-male bibliophilic clubs: Grolier and Caxton. In observance of these anniversaries, I have written two articles on women and those bibliophilic clubs. This, the third such article, looks at the two that were coed from their inceptions: The Book Club of California and the Baltimore Bibliophiles.¹ It is remarkable that until the Hroswitha Club was formed by and for women in 1944,² the Book Club of California was the only bibliophilic club in the United States that included women as members. Even by 1954 when the Baltimore Bibliophiles was formed for men and women, there was almost no forum for women book collectors and rare book professionals.

My premise is that once these women members are better known, we can study their careers closely and understand how bibliophilic women networked and advanced their collecting and their careers by supporting one another. And though women's involvement in booklovers' clubs dates back as recently as the twentieth century, documentation about many women has all but disappeared, as I have discovered in my research on women bookbinders. However, by re-examining existing archival resources and finding new ones, we can gain important information. In sum, my aim has been to resurrect women who have been forgotten, marginalized, or inaccurately depicted. Recent work has also been carried out by other scholars³ and a more complete view of the twentieth-century rare book world is emerging.

Women have been marginalized or forgotten for a number of reasons. If they married, they may have assumed their husbands' names, thus their "bibliographic trail" may suddenly end. Or, if they never married and had no heirs, their personal effects might have been discarded after their deaths. Or their work was not deemed important, and was marginalized. Sometimes the marginalization was intentional. For example, antiquarian book dealer Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach did not give his cataloger E. Millicent Sowerby credit for work on *Early American Children's Books* – which had been entirely researched and written by her. We know of this only because Sowerby wrote an autobiography.⁴ Interestingly, she acknowledges that work-

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ing for Rosenbach meant accepting such conditions, but apparently at the end of her life she wanted to set the record straight. In the copy of the catalogue in her personal papers (Maxwell Library, Bridgewater State University, MSS-025) and in her obituary her authorship is confirmed.

These gaps need to be corrected; women have played an important role in the history of the book since the beginning of books, as scribes, printers, calligraphers, bookbinders, paper decorators, writers, collectors, and later as typesetters, editors, designers, illustrators, booksellers, and publishers. In a 1918 issue of *Publishers Weekly* there is a photo of two women at the Riverside Press (by that time, part of Houghton Mifflin), with a caption that reads: “There is nothing about publishing and bookselling that a woman cannot do.” Yet this photograph was taken in the stock room of Houghton Mifflin Company, where the women appear to be shelving or re-shelving books, and they are not identified. They are mere cogs in the publishing wheel. It is suggestive of a persistent misogyny that the women are not photographed with authors, at their desks, or in other images that convey the central role that they often played in the creation and production of books.⁵

Historical Context

Women’s roles in book collecting and scholarship evolved slowly in the United States. During the Colonial Period in the United States, the early 1600s to about 1780, there were various venues for exchanging ideas and sharing books, such as taverns and coffee houses – though these places were not open to women. In the eighteenth century, societies such as the Junto in Philadelphia, for mutual improvement – formed by Benjamin Franklin in 1727 – did not include women. Subscription and private libraries were also restrictive. Thus, women formed their own groups and exchanged ideas in private settings. Anne Hutchinson is credited with being the first woman to organize a reading group, in the 1630s, though her focus was religious reform. Later groups focused on literature, current events, and social reform. But such groups of women were merely that: groups. They were not formally established and *named* clubs and societies.

It wasn’t until the mid-to-late nineteenth century that formal women’s social and literary clubs were established. Before then, opportunities for education were only gradually emerging. The first two women’s colleges, Georgia Female College and Mount Holyoke Seminary, were founded in the 1830s. Margaret Fuller (1810-1850), writer, editor, and scholar, in 1839 instituted weekly intellectual “Conversations” for women in Boston.⁶ Again, these were not named clubs.

This evolution led to the formation of nineteenth-century women’s clubs and, eventually, to book collecting clubs. Importantly, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, women were going to college in record numbers. Many women’s colleges were founded, in a period often referred to as the Progressive Era – though

it wasn't progressive for women of color. This generation of white women were joining the newly established "feminized" professions: teaching, librarianship, nursing, and social work. Some women who earned library science degrees found positions as rare-book librarians, or curators, or worked in the book trade. Some of them also became book collectors. Women who were well educated but who didn't need to work outside the home also became book collectors. Unfortunately, though there were many of them, they generally have not been documented. Men, on the other hand, have written countless works on their book-collecting escapades.

Although the late nineteenth century saw the enormous growth of women's clubs, these clubs focused on intellectual growth, art and culture, and social and political activism. They may have offered reading groups but were not bibliophilic. Men's bibliophilic clubs began in 1884 with the formation of the Grolier Club. It was not until 1912, that there was a bibliographic club for women to join: the Book Club of California. (Appendix 1 lists a number of American bibliophilic clubs and the dates when women became members.)

The Book Club of California (BCC)

The Book Club of California was formed in 1912 when several notable San Francisco-area men approached Charles C. Moore, president of the forthcoming Panama-Pacific International Exposition, to include an exhibit of rare books and printing. Ultimately, no book exhibit was included, but the BCC was born (bcc-books.org). Thirteen women were among its charter members, including philanthropist Phoebe Apperson Hearst, artist Florence Lundborg, and fine binder Belle McMurtry, later, Belle McMurtry Young – who married another prominent BCC member, W.R.K. Young (see Appendix 2). The BCC published its first book in 1914, and four years later it published Ina Coolbrith's poem *California*, and an edition of Clark Ashton Smith's *Odes and Sonnets* with illustrations by Florence Lundborg.⁷ Women played an active role in the BCC from the beginning.

Perhaps this had something to do with the fact that California was a more progressive state for women than were many Eastern and Midwestern states. For example, women obtained the right to vote in California in 1911, nearly a decade before the 19th amendment was certified in 1920. And the BCC had women as members many decades before the bibliophilic clubs in the Midwest and East accepted them. At the same time there is some irony in the fact that the two other California bibliophilic clubs that were formed after the Book Club of California—Roxburgh (San Francisco, 1928) and Zamorano (Los Angeles, 1928)—didn't accept women as members until 1980 and 1990, respectively. The path leading to women's equality is often convoluted.

Two BCC club members are noted here to show that the BCC recognized from its inception the appropriateness of having a coed club: Florence Walter and Ellen



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Shaffer. Walter was a charter member who became vice president in 1949 and president in 1955, the first woman to hold those offices in BCC. Ellen Shaffer was a long-time member who maintained her membership even during the years when she worked in Philadelphia, where the Philobiblon Club began accepting women only after Shaffer moved back to California in 1970.

Florence Schwartz Walter (1884-1972) became a member of the BCC in 1913 and was a director, chairman of the house committee, vice president, and president of the club. She was born into a prosperous family and in her twenties she began collecting finely printed books from the fifteenth century on. She collected the Grabhorn Press extensively and the 654 items of the Florence Walter Grabhorn Collection now reside in the library of the BCC.⁸

When Walter was about fifty, she took up bookbinding, studying first with Herbert and Peter Fahey and then with Belle McMurtry Young. Later she studied finishing in France with Charles Collet. For much of the rest of her life, Walter exhibited her work in the United States and abroad. Henry Snyder was able to record 115 of Walter's bindings; more may yet emerge.

It is notable that at least three of the women charter members, L. Averill Cole, Belle McMurtry (Young), and Florence Walter, were fine binders. The Book Club of California has promoted the art of the book from the beginning. Its teaching library, of which Walter's books are an important part, continues the tradition.

Ellen Shaffer (1904-1994) joined the BCC in 1955, just as Walter was winding down her term as president. Shaffer had a sixty-year career in the book world. After obtaining a library degree from the Library School in Riverside, California, and an A.B. from UCLA, she worked at Dawson's Book Shop in Los Angeles from 1929 to 1954, with time off for war service during WW II, and to study Spanish in Mexico and at USC. She then became Rare Book Librarian at the Free Library in Philadelphia, where she was from 1954-1970. Her last position, from 1970-1992, was at the Silverado Museum (now known as the Robert Louis Stevenson Museum) where she was hired by famed book collector and philanthropist Norman H. Strouse (1906-1993). Shaffer wrote numerous articles, including for *The Book Club of California Quarterly News-Letter*, and a couple of books.

Shaffer's rich career led her to become involved with – and express her views on – several clubs. In addition to her involvement with the BCC, she spoke at the Philobiblon Club on April 16, 1959. "Breaking with precedent, this occasion is the first time that a member of the fair sex has addressed The Philobiblon club, and it is the first time that ladies will be present at a Club meeting."⁹

Three years before her death, Ellen gave oral history interviews in January and February 1991. Pointedly, she observed that "There was the Zamorano Club in Los Angeles, which was for men only. I think they are still holding their line; I think it's still for men only."¹⁰ Shaffer was almost correct; the Zamorano Club accepted women only in 1990. But it must have been galling to her, even decades later, to



Florence S. Walter, Bookbinder and Philanthropist: *Used with permission by the family of Florence S. Walter.*



Ellen Shaffer, Librarian and Curator, *in the collection of M.V. Cloonan, and used with her permission.*

have been excluded from a club to which so many Dawson customers belonged. When she moved to Philadelphia she was once again excluded from the local club, the Philobiblon. Perhaps that is why she maintained membership in the BCC. She never mentions the Roxburghe Club. Perhaps her intellectual and professional needs were fully met by the BCC. Ellen Shaffer also had links to the Baltimore Bibliophiles, where she was twice a speaker (Appendix 3).

The Baltimore Bibliophiles (Bibs)

The Baltimore Bibliophiles was founded by eight people, but led by two prominent professional women: Dorothy E. Miner and Elizabeth Baer, who seem to have been the guiding spirits. Miner was chairman of the first meeting, and Baer was secretary. This is how the founding of “Bibs,” on June 23, 1954 occurred:

On a hot starlit night last June a group of us, sitting on the garden terrace at Evergreen House, fell into talk about the things that intensely interested all of us – books, old and new, and the making and enjoyment of them. The conversation rambled here and there and altogether was such fun and so stimulating that it was late when we broke up.

One thing that came out of it was unanimous: we were all agreed that what Baltimore needed was a booklovers’ club—a club to gather together the rare souls who find pleasure not only in the reading but especially in the handling of books, people who enjoy as amateurs or professionals the arts that go into the designing and illustrating, printing and covering of a fine book, whether made today or five hundred years ago.¹¹

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What is not stated, but is obvious, is that women would play an important role. That it was led by two women is remarkable. To my knowledge only the Book Club of California was coed in 1954. The Hroswitha Club, as was mentioned earlier, was an all-women's book club, and Dorothy Miner was herself a member. But perhaps she and Elizabeth Baer were astute enough to understand that making Bibs open to men and women would create a strong community of rare book collectors and professionals in the Baltimore and Washington, D.C., areas.

Dorothy E. Miner (1904-1973) graduated from Barnard College in 1926 with a degree in English and Classics. After her graduation, she studied at Bedford College, University of London, as an international fellow. She started, but did not complete, a doctoral program in art history. She worked briefly at The Morgan Library for Belle da Costa Greene, who became her mentor; Greene recommended her for the Keeper of Manuscripts at the Walters Art Museum, a position Miner held until her death. Miner was a prolific scholar who produced a number of important exhibitions at the Walters. Greene may have encouraged Miner to join the Hroswitha Club, since she was a founding member of it.¹²



Dorothy E. Miner, courtesy, © The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore

Miner died from cancer when she was 68. In addition to an obituary in the *Baltimore Sun*, there were several notes of appreciation in that paper following her death. James H. Bready mentions her scholarship, generosity, and involvement in the College Art Association, the Medieval Academy of America, and the Renaissance Society of America. He also notes that she was a charter member and president of the Baltimore Bibliophiles.¹³



Elizabeth Baer (1909[?]-1988) graduated from Bryn Mawr College in 1931, where she was president of the senior class and crowned "Queen at Bryn Mawr." After graduation, she completed a four-year training course in librarianship at the Enoch Pratt [Free] Library in Baltimore. She spent her entire career at the John Work Garrett Library at Evergreen House which later became

Elizabeth Baer, Librarian, Evergreen House, printed with permission by Special Collections, Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University; Blakeslee-Lane, photographer.

the rare book library of Johns Hopkins University. Like Miner, she published books and articles about the collections she worked with. In a newspaper article by Jeanne Sargeant about the Garrett Library's move to Johns Hopkins University, she noted that when Baer wasn't working, she was raising Chesapeake Bay retrievers. (Perhaps Sargeant felt the need to add a touch of human interest to the article.)¹⁴ While it does not mention the Baltimore Bibliophiles, the club is noted in Baer's obituary which also includes the information that she served as its secretary until the year before she died at age 79.¹⁵

The Baltimore Bibliophiles was fortunate to have been shepherded by these exceptional women.

Conclusion

There is still much to be learned about the role of women in twentieth-century book history. This article has focused on four representative figures, who account for only one slice of the book world: women and bibliophilic clubs. As additional information about women in the book world is published, we will learn more about their career development and how they mentored – and collaborated with – one another. Perhaps someone will create a network map to reveal relationships not yet known. This paper has provided some clues. We know that Ellen Shaffer interacted with three clubs: as a member of the Book Club of California, and as a speaker at the Philobiblon and the Baltimore Bibliophiles. It is a fair guess that Shaffer had a professional relationship with either Dorothy Miner or Elizabeth Baer which led to her being asked to speak in Baltimore. There may be correspondence among them in the archives at the institutions where they worked. There are many resources still to be mined. And many opportunities to bring women out of the shadows and into the light, where they belong.

Appendix 1: Women and Bibliophilic Clubs¹⁶

The first date after each Club name is the date of founding; the second date is when women were first admitted.

The Aldus Society, Columbus	1999/1999
Ampersand Club, Minneapolis	1930/1978
The Baltimore Bibliophiles	1954/1954
The Baxter Society	1983-84/1983-84
The Book Club of California	1912/1912
The Book Club of Detroit	1957/1985
The Book Club of Texas	1929/1989?
The Book Club of Washington, Seattle	1982/1982
The Book Hunters Club of Houston	2014/2014
The Club of Odd Volumes	1887/ <i>Does not admit women</i>

The Caxton Club	1895/1975-76
Florida Bibliophile Society	1983/1983
The Grolier Club	1884/1976
The John Russell Bartlett Society	1983/1983; closed 2024
Northern Ohio Bibliophilic Society	1983/1983
The Philobiblon Club, Philadelphia	1893/1974
The Rowfant Club	1892/ <i>Does not admit women</i>
The Roxburghe Club of San Francisco	1928/1980
The Ticknor Society	2002/2002
The Utah Bibliographic Society	2021/2021
Washington Rare Book Group, DC	1982/1982
The Zamorano Club	1928/1990

Appendix 2: Women Charter Members of the Book Club of California

Mrs. Donald Y. Campbell
 Miss L. [Louise] Averill Cole (1880-1971), bookbinder, *later*, Mrs. L. Averill Howland¹⁷
 Miss Alice Hager
 Mrs. Phoebe Apperson Hearst (1846-1919), philanthropist
 Miss Pauline Jackson
 Miss Evelyn Levy
 Miss Florence Lundborg (1870-1949), artist
 Miss Sarah E. Macdonald
 Mrs. Laurens Maynard
 Miss Belle McMurtry, bookbinder, *later*, Mrs. Belle McMurtry Young
 Miss Josephine Neeley
 Mrs. John I. (Florence) Walter (1884-1972), bookbinder, first woman president of BCC
 Miss Marian Walter (1894-1980), *later*, Mrs. Edgar Sinton

Note that Cole/Howland, Apperson/Hearst, and McMurtry/Young chose to use their own first names after “Mrs.” rather than become, for example, “Mrs. John Smith.”

Appendix 3: Women Speakers at Meetings of the
 Baltimore Bibliophiles in Its First Decade

1954
 Organizational meetings; no women speakers

1955
 Eleanor Estes [librarian and author], Nicholas Mordvinoff [illustrator], and Margaret K. McElderry [librarian and editor]. “What Makes a Good Children’s Book?”
 Ellen Shaffer, “Nuremburg Chronicle Jamboree”
 Dorothy E. Miner, “A Summer’s Book Hunting for the Walters Art Gallery”

1956
 Elizabeth Baer, Edward S. Corcoran, and Dorothy E. Miner, “Exploration of the John Work Garrett Library”

1957

Visit to the Free Library of Philadelphia, the Library Company of Philadelphia, and the Rosenbach Foundation.

It is likely that Ellen Shaffer participated in this event.

1958

Sarah E. Freeman, "Highlights of the Garrett Coin Collection"

1959

Ellen Shaffer, "*Hortis Sanitatis* of 1491"

1960

Dorothy E. Miner gave two talks.

1961

No women speakers

1962

Helen Lowenthal, "Architecture and the Education of the English Gentleman in the Eighteenth Century"

1963

Sarah Elizabeth Freeman, "Numismatic Portraits"

1964

Dorothy E. Miner, "Description of Gratianus' *Decretum*, Strassburg, 1471"

NOTES

1. Michèle V. Cloonan, "Caxton Women at Fifty" *Caxtonian* (September/October 2025): 2-4; Michèle V. Cloonan, "Forerunners of the Early Women Members of the Grolier Club," *Gazette of the Grolier Club*, in press.
2. The Hroswitha Club, started in 1944, was likely the first book collecting club started by women exclusively for women collectors. See Kate Ozment, *The Hroswitha Club and the Impact of Women Book Collectors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).
3. Recent examples include: Kate Ozment, "Rationale for Feminist Bibliography," *Textual Cultures* 13, no. 1 (2020): 149-78; Emiko Hastings's blog, *Adventures in Book Collecting*, "Women Bibliophiles Project," at librarianofbabel.wordpress.com/about; Eve Houghton, "Private Owners, Public Books: Henrietta Bartlett's Feminist Bibliography," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 116, no. 4 (December 2022): 567-87; Kurt Zimmerman, "The Hunt for Early Women Bibliographers," *American Book Collecting* (blog), October 30, 2017, at <http://www.bookcollectinghistory.com/2017/10/the-hunt-for-early-american-women.html> (accessed March 2, 2026) and Sara D'Amico, "Rediscovering Sarah de Laredo: Historian, Bibliographer, Woman," (*PBSA* 119, no. 3 (September 2025): 305-31.
4. E. Millicent Sowerby, *Rare People and Rare Books* (Williamsburg, VA: The Bookpress, 1987), pp. 183-85.
5. *Publishers' [sic] Weekly* 94, no. 20 (November 16, 1918): 1723.
6. Megan Marshall, *Margaret Fuller: A New American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), pp. 130-41.
7. Robert Ernest Cowan, *Bibliography of California and the Pacific West* (San Francisco: BCC, 1914); Ina Coobrieth, *California* (San Francisco: Book Club of California), 500 copies printed by John Henry Nash. Clark Ashton Smith, *Odes and Sonnets* (San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1918), illus. by Florence Lundborg; 300 copies printed by Taylor and Taylor.
8. Biographical information on Walter is from *Florence S. Walter: Pioneering American Bookbinder*

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(San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 2019), pp. 16, 20 and 68; and information obtained from Kevin Kosik, Book Club of California.

9. On May 3, 2025, Margery Sly, Philobiblon archivist, sent this email to the author: “I reached out to one of our longest-tenured members, Steve Rothman, and he supplied this interesting tidbit. ‘Ellen Shaffer of the Free Library of Phila [sic] spoke to the Club on 16 April 1959. M.J. McCosker.’” Documentation is in the Philobiblon Club Records, #1943, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Box 11, folder “Programs, 1956-1973.” Margery died unexpectedly in August 2025, and I am grateful for her invaluable assistance.

10. “Ellen Shaffer, Self-Portrait of a Bookwoman,” interviews conducted by Ruth Teiser in 1991, transcript, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1992, p. 45.

11. Donald Farren and August A. Imholtz, Jr., eds., *The Baltimore Bibliophiles at Fifty, 1954-2004 with Children’s Books in Bygone Baltimore, An Essay and a Catalogue*, by Linda F. Lapides (Baltimore: The Baltimore Bibliophiles, 2009), pp. 117, 119.

12. Ozment (above, n. 2), p. 4.

13. James H. Bready, “Dorothy E. Miner, Scholar: An Appreciation,” *The Evening Sun Baltimore* (Wednesday, May 16, 1973): 18.

14. “Baltimorean Crowned Queen at Bryn Mawr,” *The Baltimore Sun* (Saturday, May 2, 1931): 11; Jeanne B. Sargeant, “Hopkins Names Garrett Library Official Rare Book Depository,” *The Evening Sun Baltimore* (Wednesday, July 19, 1961): 25.

15. Farren and Imholtz, eds. (above, n. 11), p. 117.

16. The list includes nonspecialized bibliophilic clubs from which data was readily available on the web and/or contacts at the clubs. Many thanks to the following people: Kevin Kosik and Elizabeth Newsom, (Book Club of California); Rob Rulon-Miller (Ampersand Club); the late Margery Sly (Philobiblon); Tamara Belts and Cindy Richardson (Book Club of Washington); Laurelle Swan (Roxburghe); Jacqueline Coleburn (Washington Rare Book Group, DC); Kurt Zimmerman (Book Hunters Club of Houston).

17. Cole was a well-known bookbinder about whom many articles were written, including “A Woman An Expert [sic] Bookbinder,” *New York Times* (Sunday, March 17, 1912): 68, and Lenora Wannier, “Bound and Determined: L. Averill Cole, A Singular Arts and Crafts Binder,” *The International Journal of Arts Theory and History* 17, no. 2 (September 2022): 1-16.

Of Text and Textiles: Listening to W.B. and Lily Yeats

CHRISTIAN Y. DUPONT

I am sometimes asked, especially by my library colleagues, about my collection development policies for the collections I am responsible for curating. I tend to experience an emotional resistance to such questions, especially when I sense that the petitioner expects a set of prescriptive criteria or fully articulated and rationalized guidelines in response. Writing this article for fellow collectors presents a welcome opportunity to reflect on my reaction.¹

To my mind, collecting at its best is an adventure, an exploration of worlds only partially known, which for many collectors includes their interior world, personal history, and temperament. Yet, when one collects for an institution or some other public purpose, one must discipline more carefully one's own motivations and apply one's talents and accumulated experience to discerning and serving a greater good. Doing so involves continually decentering oneself and refocusing on what a given collection is and may become for others through its development.

A recent collaboration with faculty and museum colleagues on the curation of a large-scale exhibition on the Yeats family and the public arts for our McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College provides an example of how I have approached institutional collecting and what I have learned from it.²

Two years ago, in March 2024, McMullen Museum director Nancy Netzer and I faced a crisis: the concept for an exhibition that we had been helping a faculty member to prepare for the Spring 2026 semester was not coming together coherently or quickly enough. The vision would surely ripen during his upcoming leave. Yet how to fill the resulting gap in the exhibition schedule with relatively little time to do so? Showcasing recent acquisitions can be a good strategy in such circumstances and so it proved to be in ours.

Nancy and I had collaborated on the acquisition of a series of fourteen Stations of the Cross embroidered by Lily Yeats that needed to find an appropriate

Christian Y. Dupont is Associate University Librarian for Scholarly Resources and Burns Librarian at Boston College. He previously served as director of the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia, director of the Special Collections Research Center at Syracuse University, and as a curator and reference supervisor at the University of Notre Dame while earning academic and information science degrees. He has spoken, published and created exhibitions on a variety of topics drawn from the diverse collections he has enjoyed curating. He is a member of The Grolier Club, The Ticknor Society, and other bibliophilic, academic, and professional associations.

home when the Jesuit center in Pennsylvania where they had been kept since their creation permanently closed. As a Jesuit university founded in the mid-19th century to serve Catholic immigrants, many of them from Ireland, Boston College was a natural candidate due to its important holdings of works by members of the Yeats family. Thanks to patient negotiations facilitated by one of our Jesuit deans, the transfer was completed during the summer of 2023. At the same time, I was having conversations with the widow of Chicago-based collector Anthony Mourek, a dearly missed member of the Caxton Club, Grolier Club, and Manuscript Society, about the disposition of his Irish collections, which included a large segment on illustrator and painter Jack B. Yeats. The subsequent donation through Anthony's estate complemented a 2021 gift of three paintings by Jack Yeats to McMullen Museum as well as our holdings in the John J. Burns Library of books, manuscripts and artworks by Yeats family members that had been built up over many years. Those holdings had begun with the donation of a substantially complete collection of first and significant editions of works by W.B. Yeats by a local collector and the purchase of manuscripts and correspondence from Yeats's son, Michael, in the early 1990s.

When I began my appointment as Burns Librarian in September 2014, I quickly gained appreciation for the scope and significance of our Yeats-related holdings and was soon presented with opportunities to add to them. A bookseller catalogue that I received in February 2015 included some Yeats rarities, including an embroidered panel by Lily Yeats to which the dealer called my attention after I inquired about certain books, some of which had already been sold. I had not considered adding examples of Lily's needlework to our collection, but this particular piece was compelling because it incorporated the closing chorus from one of W.B.'s early poems in scrolled banners along the top and bottom of the composition: "The proud and careless notes live on / but bless the hands that ebb away." Text in textile? It was and remains the only panel embroidered by Lily that includes lettering so far as I am aware, apart from another version of the same theme that I made sure we would win at auction when it was offered in Sotheby's Yeats Family Sale in 2017.

Intrigued by that notion and other details in the lengthy catalogue description of the embroidered panel depicting three musicians playing lutes and psalteries on an Irish hillside, I decided to purchase it, only later discovering how much the dealer had marked it up when I found the record of the Irish auction from which it had been purchased a few years before. Rare Book Hub had not yet begun indexing Irish auctions and their results were seemingly not exposed to Google's indexing at the time, nor had I gained enough experience or contacts to help me research the provenance of Irish materials. While I lamented expending a significant share of our annual budget on the embroidery, I have never regretted the decision to expand our Yeats holdings in this new direction, even when our



Brigid O'Brien Ganly (1909–2002), designer; Lily Yeats (1866–1949), embroiderer. Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross (Station of the Cross 13), c. 1931–33. Cotton, silk, and wool threads on Irish poplin ground; oak, 25 × 21.5"; 37 × 25.6" (framed). McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, 2023.3.13–14.



Brigid O'Brien Ganly (1909–2002), designer; Lily Yeats (1866–1949), embroiderer. "The Players Ask for a Blessing on the Psalteries and Themselves," c. 1931–32. Embroidered threads on silk ground, 11.5 × 14.4. John J. Burns Library, Boston College, Collection of Yeats Family Papers, MS-1986-054.

MAGNA

Charta, cum statutis,
tum antiquis, tum re-
centibus, maximopere, animo
tenendis nunc demum ad
vnum, tipis ædita,
per Richardum
Tottell.

[Handwritten scribble]

(*)

[Handwritten scribble]

JOHN CRAPPEN

Anno domini 1576.

MAGNA CHARTA ...

[London]: Richard Tottell, 1576

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archivists expressed concern about our capabilities as a library to appropriately care for such artworks. In retrospect, the acquisition laid essential groundwork for our recent exhibition and prompted the enhancement of our collection management protocols and capabilities. We grew along with our collections, guided by them.

In 2016, the centennial anniversary of the Easter Rising, I was presented with the opportunity to purchase the remaining portion of Loretta Clarke Murray's extensive collection of women in revolutionary Ireland, the initial segment of which my predecessor had acquired some ten years before. That first portion comprised archival records and ephemeral materials from Cuala Industries, the Arts and Crafts cooperative society established in 1908 by Lily Yeats and her sister, Elizabeth, a printer and publisher who had initially studied and taught drawing. The materials included a variety of embroidery templates designed by Elizabeth that were subsequently executed by Lily and her assistants, as evidenced by samplers that survive in the archives of the National Gallery of Ireland (NGI). The second portion contained a large and unusual embroidered panel designed by Irish nationalist leader Maud Gonne that seems to have been executed by another needlework artist or guild, as yet unidentified. The bases – or rationale, if you will – for extending our collecting of embroidered works accordingly broadened. So, too, the possibilities for our current exhibition, which features these and other objects from the Loretta Clarke Murray collection and loans from the NGI.

The relationships that we had cultivated with colleagues at the NGI and other Irish institutions through various visits and contacts in preceding years provided a strong foundation for collaboration around our exhibition project and the ability to progress our ideas quickly with shared enthusiasm, resulting in mutual benefits. The NGI offered to lend more items than we had initially planned to borrow, and we helped them finance the conservation of a Lily Yeats embroidery that they had recently acquired so that we could safely display it in our McMullen Museum exhibition.

Relationships we had developed with Irish auction houses, dealers, and Yeats scholars meanwhile led to introductions to private collectors and loans from their collections. In the end, the gap that we needed to fill in our exhibition calendar ended up bridging otherwise disconnected attempts to explore the impacts of the individual members of the Yeats family on the arts in Ireland. What has turned out to be the most comprehensive display of Lily's embroidery work ever assembled is appropriately set in the context of the business enterprise that she jointly managed with her sister amid the divergent careers of their brothers who supported them in different ways: Jack by providing illustrations for Elizabeth's Cuala Press books, broadsides, and greeting cards, and William by supplying texts

of his own and other writers for Elizabeth to print and by commissioning emerging women artists to create designs for Lily to embroider. Titled “Collaborating in Conflict: The Yeats Family and the Public Arts,” the exhibition explores in an unprecedented manner and degree the sometimes collaborative, sometimes combative relationships among the four siblings against a background of political strife and wars.

The Stations of the Cross, commissioned by W.B. on Lily’s behalf as a speculative venture, shrewdly hoping that they would be purchased by a wealthy American pilgrim to the Eucharistic Congress held in Dublin in 1932, would achieve precisely that aim and crown Lily’s career as an embroiderer. The Stations would similarly become a focal point of our exhibition, thanks to their recent rediscovery and acquisition by Boston College, providing in turn a retroactive justification for our previous acquisitions of Lily’s embroidery work and related materials for Burns Library.

The exhibition of a collection may represent its culmination, the final form to which a collector has brought its development, or it may showcase a stage in its maturation from which fruits may be gathered while it continues to grow and blossom from season to season. Growing along with their collections, collectors are nourished by them.

In our case, I learned afresh that cultivating relationships with collectors, dealers, scholars, and colleagues at other institutions, building and expanding upon those inherited from my predecessor, and looking and listening for resonances among objects in various formats were the best policies and practices for continuing the development of our collections in new and fruitful directions. I also learned not to judge myself too harshly for spending too much to purchase unique items that reinforce or extend the scope of our collecting, for in the contexts afforded by our collection, they may prove valuable to others, including my own successors. The proud and careless notes live on. Bless the hands that ebb away.

1. I wish to express gratitude to the many collectors, donors, dealers, scholars and colleagues who have shaped my cumulative and continually maturing understanding of the values and practices of building collections of cultural materials, in particular my new curatorial partner at Boston College, Meghan Constantinou, whose contribution to the Spring 2025 issue of this journal, “Listening to My Collection of Women’s Bookplates,” and attentive conversations helped frame my reflections here.

2. “Collaborating in Conflict: The Yeats Family and the Public Arts,” McMullen Museum of Art, February 1–May 31, 2026. An accompanying catalogue includes essays about Lily Yeats’s Stations of the Cross and other works mentioned in this article.

A Treasure from the Incarcerated Polygamists in the Utah Penitentiary in 1886

CRAIG S. SMITH

A significant yet often-overlooked event in the nineteenth-century history of Utah territory is the rounding up of hundreds of Mormon polygamists by federal marshals during the mid to late 1880s, after which they were sentenced to the penitentiary. A special copy of John Nicholson's *The Martyrdom of Joseph Standing; or, the Murder of a "Mormon" Missionary. A True Story* (Deseret News Co., 1886)¹ is signed by all the inmates at the time in 1886. It documents and puts a human face to these turbulent times of the conflict between the Latter-day Saints, who felt persecuted by the federal government for practicing their religion, and the federal government's attempt to enforce the law, stamp out polygamy and deal with the "Mormon problem."

This unique copy of *The Martyrdom of Joseph Standing* is currently a high spot in my collection of material on Utah and the Mormons, which contains many important association copies. After the passing of Hyrum Goff (1849-1914), its first owner, the book was handed down through the family, eventually ending up with his and Maria Tryphena Arnold's (1855-1932) grandson, Louis Shirley Smith (1927-1985). The book contains Smith's ownership label on the front pastedown and his name and address on the rear pastedown. At some point, it was donated to a local thrift store. I was not the one who found the book there, but



Cover of *Martyrdom of Joseph Standing*. All images courtesy of the author.

Craig S. Smith has been a collector of books on Utah and the Mormons for almost 40 years and is a member of the Utah Bibliographic Society. His recent book is a history and bibliography of a Salt Lake City specialized publisher in the 1880s: The Juvenile Instructor Office: The Growth of Specialized Publishing in Utah in the 1880s, A History and Bibliography (Greg Kofford Books, 2025.

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was standing next to the person who discovered it on the shelf, so I came within inches of the amazing find. Fortunately, I was able to buy the book from that lucky person.

Following the United States Supreme Court's 1879 ruling in the George Reynolds case saying that Congress could make laws against certain religious practices, and the passage of the 1882 Edmunds Act, territorial judges and federal officials began a massive attack on proponents of polygamy and unlawful cohabitation in Utah, an event known to Latter-day Saints as the Raid. In November 1884, Rudger Clawson became the first Latter-day Saint to be convicted and sentenced to the Utah Penitentiary for unlawful cohabitation, receiving a four-year sentence. The number of arrests and convictions steadily ballooned over the next few years as federal marshals expanded their raids even to remote rural areas of Utah, forcing many of the Saints and especially the leaders into hiding. Many who went to prison for unlawful cohabitation considered it an honor to take the punishment in the name of their beliefs. Even when the Utah territorial governor, Caleb Walton West, visited the penitentiary on May 13, 1886, and offered full presidential pardons to anyone willing to pledge to reject polygamy, no one accepted the proposal. They said that they did not want to abandon their wives, children and the principles of their faith.²

During these troubling times, John Nicholson (1839-1909) while incarcerated in the Utah Penitentiary from October 13, 1885 to March 13, 1886, for unlawful cohabitation wrote *The Martyrdom of Joseph Standing* to bring attention to the tribulations faced by the Latter-day Saints. For many years Nicholson was associate editor of the *Deseret News*, one of the major newspapers in Utah and the publisher of this book. He also wrote several other books, pamphlets, and articles including a pamphlet published in 1884 on the killing of two missionaries and two of their associates by a mob at Cane Creek, Tennessee in August 1884.

The first portion of the book details the murder of the 26-year-old missionary, Joseph Standing, by a mob in Georgia in 1879. Rudger Clawson, also imprisoned for unlawful cohabitation, provided Nicholson the information for the account, as he was Standing's missionary companion when he was shot and killed. After the crime, Clawson delivered the body to Utah by train and then returned to serve as a witness during the trials in Georgia where the jury found the "perturbators" not guilty. As a result of the verdict, Clawson fled the area in fear for his life.

The second half of the book focuses on a description of the Utah Penitentiary and those incarcerated for unlawful cohabitation, emphasizing the ordeals that the inmates endured after losing their freedom. Nicholson first describes the penitentiary and its buildings and enclosures, taking the reader on a tour through the prison that was located in the Sugar House portion of Salt Lake City. The remaining part of the book provides a short biography for each of the first 74 inmates incarcerated in the Utah Penitentiary for unlawful cohabitation. As noted above,

Rudger Clawson was the first imprisoned on November 3, 1884. He was finally released from the penitentiary on December 12, 1887, after the United States President Grover Cleveland pardoned him. Lorenzo Snow, a member of the leading Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the LDS Church and later its president, was the most prominent prisoner of those included. He was in the penitentiary from March 12, 1886 to February 8, 1887. In addition to Rudger Clawson, who was appointed a member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles in 1898, Abraham H. Cannon was another inmate who later became a member of the quorum in October 1889. Among the many other notables are Angus M. Cannon, one of the founders and mayor of St. George, business manager of the *Deseret News*, and president of the LDS Church Salt Lake Stake; Amos Milton Musser, traveling bishop and agent for Brigham Young; William Fotheringham, member of the Utah Territorial Legislature, Mayor of Beaver City, and Justice of the Peace, and Samuel Smith, nephew of the Joseph Smith.

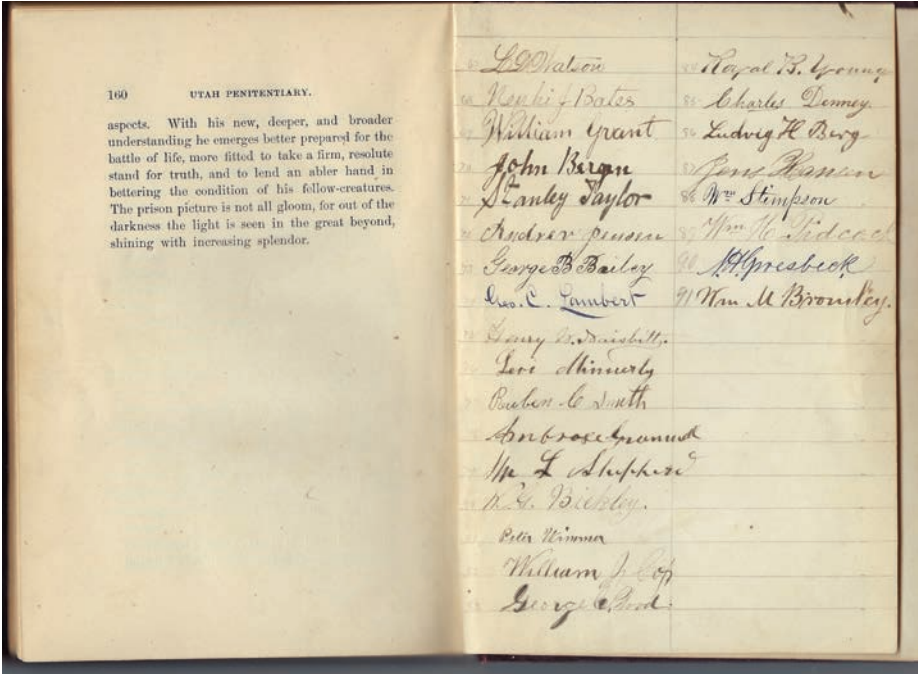
The men included in the book were from a wide range of Utah communities and pursued many different professions and employments. In addition to Salt Lake City where many lived, communities represented included the small Utah towns of Beaver, Odgen, Tooele, Bountiful, West Jordan, and Mill Creek. As would be expected, the most common employment practiced by those imprisoned was farmer and gardener, especially those from the more rural communities. A number of the individuals were in law enforcement or in the legal professions including sheriff, policeman, lawyer, and probate judge. Among the trades were tailor, tinner, brush-maker, tanner, butcher, confectioner, cabinet maker, locksmith, teamster, and printer. Several had previously been driven out of Nauvoo only to face new troubles. In addition to the men, the biographies also included two women who were jailed in the penitentiary because they refused to testify against their husbands. One was Lucy Devereux, the wife of William David Newsome, who was in prison for six weeks with her infant child because she refused to say who the father was. The other was Eliza Shafer, the wife of John Snell, who was incarcerated for three months. However, they did not sign the book nor were they numbered among the men inmates. The prospect of their wives receiving jail time forced many of the men to testify against themselves.

Hyrum Goff of West Jordan, Utah, at the time a small town southwest of Salt Lake City, appears to have been the original owner of this special signed copy of *The Martyrdom of Joseph Standing*. He wrote his name and the date of June 3rd on the front pastedown of the copy in pencil, which was probably the date in 1886 that the book was received by the prisoners in the penitentiary. Goff was imprisoned on March 3, 1886, and was released on September 9, 1886 after paying his fine of \$399.65. At the time of his arrest, he was a leader in the West Jordan LDS Church Sunday School and the 300 members of the Sunday School visited him en masse

at the penitentiary to show him their respect. He owned a store in West Jordan.

Upon receipt of the book, Goff added a series of lines in pencil to the recto and verso of the front and rear endpapers and then put a line down the center of each page, dividing the lines into double columns. The first 91 men incarcerated in the Utah Penitentiary for unlawful cohabitation are listed on the lines in order of the date they entered the penitentiary. Those still in the penitentiary between the date that Goff received the book on June 3, 1886 and his release signed the book in ink in the space after their number in the sequence of their incarceration date. Goff listed in pencil the inmates released prior to June 3 in the space after their number in the sequence so that all inmates through August 3, 1886 are represented. The signature in the number one spot is that of Rudger Clawson, the first one jailed on November 3, 1884, and still in the prison at the time. Joseph H. Evans signed the second line as he was imprisoned on November 8, 1884, for three and a half years. The next 24 names from P. P. Pratt in the number 3 spot to Aurelius Miner on the number 26 line are written in pencil, probably by Goff. Three additional individuals (Robert H. Swain, Thomas Porcher, and John W. Keddington) on the number 28, 30, and 31 lines are listed in pencil, being discharged in May 1886 prior to the arrival of the book.

The remaining 64 names of prisoners are presumably the men's own signatures, as all were in the penitentiary at varying times between June 3 and Septem-

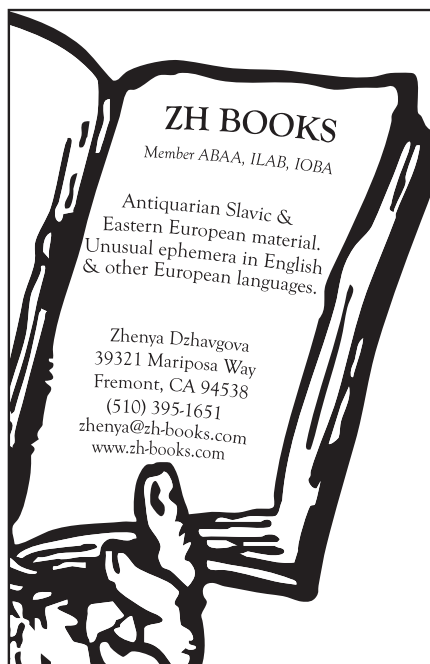


Rear endpaper of *Martyrdom of Joseph Standing*.

ber 9, 1886. All inmates through George C. Lambert, number 74, also have a short biography printed in the book. The last 17 men (numbers 75-91) were jailed after the book had been printed, but before Goff had been released. The final inmate with a signature on the list is Wm. M. Bromley of American Fork (number 91), who was imprisoned on August 3. Notable signatures also include Lorenzo Snow and Abraham H. Cannon, leading authorities of the LDS Church.

Through his meticulous efforts, Goff created an amazing artifact that documents this trying period in Utah territory history. He carefully prepared the grid on the endpapers in pencil, numbering each cell. Because he listed or had each prisoner sign in order of their incarceration date, he had to compile a list of all individuals by that date to ensure they signed the book in the correct order. He then had to find and approach each person to sign the book, thereby producing a unique historical record.

1. John Nicholson, *The Martyrdom of Joseph Standing; or, the Murder of a "Mormon" Missionary. A True Story* (Deseret News Co., 1886). The book is bound in maroon cloth with floral blind stamping in the corners of the front and rear boards and the title in gilt in the center of the front board. It measures 19 x 13.5 cm and the pages are as follows: [i], [ii blank], [1], [2 blank], [3], 4, [5]-160.
 2. Andrew H Hedges and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, *Within These Prison Walls; Lorenzo Snow's Record Book, 1886-1897* (Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2010); Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth Century America* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
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Kurt's Biblio Wanderings: Runnin' Down the Road

KURT ZIMMERMAN

I'm runnin' down the road to the Houston Book Show, the morning traffic making me bleary-eyed. I've got seven book acquisitions on my mind, four I wanna own, two I'll leave alone, one that is extremely fine.

I ease into the parking lot with books and music filling much of the space in my head. The book show opens in thirty minutes, and I'm scheduled to do free appraisals from 10-12. I've volunteered for this assignment for two decades to help promote the show. Most of the couple dozen booksellers are already in their booths, the veterans relaxed, the newbies fidgeting. Nicole and I stroll in, saying hello to old friends and a few new faces, but also scanning their offerings like eagles on the hunt. I already have a nice book from the collection of Bill Wittliff reserved at the booth of James Gannon and Blake Johnson of InkQ Rare Books.

The weekend long Houston Book Show is modest in size but lively with a steady crowd. The show had been on life support for several years when Houston bookseller William Allison took over and revived it, and now fellow area booksellers Bryan & Kelly Young of Grayshelf Books have assumed the duties with show manager Julie Adkins coordinating. The national chain Half Price Books, founded in 1972 and based in Texas, has joined the Texas Booksellers Association as a co-sponsor of the show, as well as the shows in Dallas and Fort Worth. Bookseller Michael Utt was instrumental in arranging this merger of sorts in discussions with Half Price Books CEO Sharon "Boots" Anderson.

Nicole and I were present with the two of them and several others at a bookish gathering in 2024 at Utt's home / rare book space in Fort Worth, a converted large garage with soaring ceilings, comfortable sitting area, and thousands of desirable books ranging from Americana to a wall of rare chess books, a specialty. (Outside in his yard is a giant chess set.) When the subject of Half Price's potential involvement took front and center, I gave my opinion on a few things and found Boots Anderson to be an engaging and memorable personality, literally raised among books as her mother was a co-founder of the business.

A few antiquarian trade stalwarts were concerned about this marriage of collectible books with the sponsorship of a used bookstore chain, but the coupling has worked, and Half Price Books has leveraged dozens of its retail locations to

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.

market the shows and drive in potential new collectors, many of them younger. Half Price also has a substantial booth presence at the shows and now co-hosts the new Dallas ABAA Regional Book Show.

The Houston show opens and the crowd spills in. I'm sittin' in the appraisal corner, and what fine sight do I see, it's a woman, my lord, lugging a giant, tattered family Bible, coming to find me.

I let her hopes down easy. I won't repeat here my often-used spiel for old family Bibles of minimal value, but it focuses on the family heirloom angle. The two hours of free appraisals draw a steady crowd and as usual there is quite a bit of diverse material but little of collectible worth. The most unusual item is a New Testament translated into Hawaiian and published in New York in 1871.

The appraisal booth also becomes a gathering place as collectors and dealers swing by and watch the action. Good friend David Funtanilla, a well-read collector with a focus on 20th-century literature, sits with Nicole and me as my de facto assistant. He spends much of the time discussing architectural trips with Nicole. His presence is a pleasant reminder that this isn't your typical networking event.

It is not only fascinating to see what people bring but also how they transport it: shopping bags, plastic tubs, old bubble wrap, purses, briefcases, an occasional rolling cart. Once a man approached me with a book balanced on his head, but I think he was just showing off. Typically, the least valuable items are wrapped the most tightly and take the longest to unveil, and the flotsam and jetsam of rotting bindings and acidic debris litter the black cloth-covered table (and myself) by the end of the session.

I do a thorough hand washing. And I have a world of trouble on my mind. But don't let the sound of my thoughts drive you crazy. My bird's eye view of the book show provides a mix of pessimism and optimism that is difficult to separate. The show exists. Sales are uneven among the dealers but happening. A few new dealers are present although their stock is thin, and the learning curve is steep. There are big gaps in subject areas offered, and many of the veteran dealers are retired or in book Valhalla. But the crowd is younger and shows enthusiasm. Perhaps my memories of larger, more vibrant shows in the past are clouding my present view.

Then the fog lifts as Nicole squeezes my arm and smiles. At a book show, she's often just a little hard for me to find. I see mighty collector Bill Fisher approaching. Bill has driven over from San Antonio ostensibly to look at books, but primarily to enjoy the camaraderie of fellow bibliophiles. Bill's collection of Latin American literature is unrivalled. He and I met over thirty years ago through our mutual interest in the subject. My own collection is pretty darn good, although I turned my focus long ago to my favorite subject of biblio-history.

Bill and I have just seen each other the evening before at the Houston-area home of Douglas Adams, notable collector of literary forgery material. Joe Fay,



La Vie Secrète de Salvador Dalí. 1952.

First edition of Michel Déon's French adaptation: his copy, warmly inscribed by the painter. The contemporary vellum binding was adorned by Salvador Dalí with two original black ink compositions.

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Rare Books ♦ Manuscripts ♦ Literary Archives

the Connecticut-based rare book dealer with Texas roots is also present. The four of us have been friends for years. We were there to pay homage, admire, and view in wonderment Douglas's library room at his new house. Custom bookcases in a stunning navy-blue color stretch floor to ceiling eleven feet tall and cover two walls of a large space. Glass front doors protect the sections housing the forgery collection. The rest is filled with modern literature, biblio-mysteries, and miscellaneous finds. Library room envy is evident among us. Douglas is not a wealthy industrialist, but he spared no expense for his bookcases and library room. Included in the room are two new comfy chairs with a glass-topped table of sorts fashioned from a shipping trunk stamped "William Reese Co. New Haven, CT." The trunk was used to transport untold numbers of rarities to book shows. It is covered in a patina of stickers, stamps, and tape from its many journeys. Joe rescued it from a cleaning out of the Reese warehouse after Bill Reese's death. Joe had the life-changing experience of working for Bill for a number of years. I got a similar trunk from Joe as a remembrance of the great bookseller.

We are back at the show now, and the Saturday session has concluded at 5 pm. A group of thirteen bibliophiles hold court at the Tejas Brewery and Restaurant across the street. Besides the four of us booketeers who were at Douglas's house, nine others join the table including Nicole, dealers Bill Allison, Luke Bilberry, James Gannon, Blake Thompson, Jacob Imerman, Michael Utt, and a surprise guest, Scott Brown from Portland, Oregon, who is serendipitously passing through Houston the weekend of the show.

Scott has been in the book trade over thirty years. He owned an open shop, Eureka Books, in Eureka, California for much of that time, but has transitioned to a less stressful existence, and now works from home. Scott also deserves kudos as the founder and first editor of *Fine Books & Collections* magazine. He regularly issues a book list / rare book e-newsletter "Dispatches from the Trade" that is always worth reading. I recall a dinner with him and a small group of bookmen in San Francisco in 2002 during the ABAA Fair when he floated the idea that would become *Fine Books and Collections*—a genesis moment. All but one person present including myself was enthusiastic; the not-to-be named outlier has long since converted.

We thirteen bibliophiles begin to talk in earnest once our appetites have been assuaged. Next to the books themselves, and frankly, often greater than the books, are the associated stories, the booklore of the trade and of collectors that needs no real embellishment so fantastical is the truth; stories of individuals, quirky, unusual, unpleasant, joyous, surprising, or some mix thereof, combined with the backdrop of books and collections.

James Gannon, former employee of the legendary Heritage Book Shop in Los Angeles established by Lou and Ben Weinstein, and later in the auction business at Heritage Auctions in Dallas (no relation to the bookstore), has so many

backstories about collections and collectors and related dealings that I want to lock him in a room, ply him with his favorite beverages, promise him rarities beyond belief, and have him unwind in detail every episode he can recall. I tell him this and he looks a bit frightened. Don't worry, James. It won't hurt much.

Luke Bilberry, Scott Brown, Bill Allison, and I discuss current happenings intermingled with old tales, classic chestnuts worth recounting, others revealed for the first time in the comfortable light of the brewery atmosphere. Scott Brown discusses his recent postings about collector James Strand (1935-2023) who died alone, and whose modest house in Portland was ransacked by common thieves who stole much of his multi-million-dollar book collection within, leading to FBI involvement, and ongoing saga raising as many questions as answers.

Joe Fay talks about his interactions with Ira Lipman (1940-2019), collector of Americana, who was Bill Reese's last major customer. Joe observed the action firsthand, and he promises to recount in writing what can be written. He did mention Ira thought it okay to contact Bill by phone, day or night, anytime, to answer questions about items he'd purchased from Bill, usually having Bill explain details to a guest who was with Ira at that moment.

There are things discussed in these gatherings that can't be written: details of deals both good and bad, opinions of certain biblio-players that would be poor form to publish, secondhand stories that are juicy and interesting but uncorroborated. More the reason to attend such live gatherings when possible, to fully immerse your book-lovin' soul. You may lose if you don't, and win if you do, but you'll never have these moments again.

Scott Brown is not a frequent visitor to Houston, nor I to Portland, so when he confirms he can stop at our house Sunday afternoon on his drive to Dallas, I'm elated. We've corresponded over the years, but I hadn't seen him in person in two decades until this weekend. A home / library visit is an unexpected bonus.

I don't need to explain to you readers what transpires. We briefly catch up on our general lives, then we look at books, we talk books, we inhale books. I have him inscribe two Nicholas Basbanes titles that Scott edited, *Editions and Impressions: Twenty Years on the Book Beat* (2007), and *About the Author: Inside the Creative Process* (2010). I nudge Scott to take home a presentation copy of my recent book, although he bought one upon publication and receives extra praise for this.

Why does life move so quickly during a book visit, I ponder, as Scott's time to be on the road comes too soon. Relaxed and grateful, I show him a last couple of things and I reflect on the bookish life.

"You know we got it easy," I say, as Scott prepares to leave, the confluence of events leading to his chance visit fully appreciated by both of us.

He nods in agreement, and shakes my hand firmly with a grin, "Take it easy," he says. And he's out the door, and I watch him get into his car and drive away, and I know there's a fair chance he'll never be here again.

Review of Thomas G. Tanselle, *John Carter: An Assessment and a Handlist*. Charlottesville: Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, 2025. \$20.

JOSEPH HONE

In the antiquarian book trade, it is difficult to disentangle John Carter's legacy from that of his most commercially successful and endearingly waggish book, *ABC for Book-Collectors* (1952). "Check Carter" or "What does Carter say?" are common refrains in bookshops across the world. In this capacity his name has been inscribed amidst the stars alongside Wing and Foxon as one of those bibliographers whose name enjoys the dubious honour of having become a noun. But Carter's achievement was of course far greater than the *ABC*. In the 1930s he pioneered, alongside his friend Graham Pollard, the use of chemical analysis to reveal the physical composition, and thus the date, of paper, leading to the spectacular debunking of the Wise-Forman forgeries in *An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth Century Pamphlets* (1934). As a dealer, he had an astonishing nose for good books. As a scholar, he ranged effortlessly from sixteenth-century editions of Catullus to modern detective fiction. And as a man, he was by all accounts generous, charming, and elegant. He had no time for scholars in the mould of Professor Dryasdust, allergic as they were to "the aroma of bibliophily." He remained until his dying breath an enthusiast and an evangelist for the study and collecting of books.

In the title of this substantial pamphlet, G. Thomas Tanselle promises an *assessment* of Carter's virtues but perhaps a more appropriate word would be *appreciation*. With virtues like Carter's, how could it be anything else? The results are delightful. Every page is thoroughly soaked in Tanselle's enthusiasm for his subject. The introductory essay provides a wide-ranging overview of Carter's career and a generous appraisal of what his major publications achieved. Tanselle is particularly strong in two areas. The first is the importance of sociability to Carter's scholarship. He had a knack of making and remaining friends with people who could help him. Such friendships were never purely instrumental; Carter was far too urbane for that. But rather, he recognised his own shortcomings as a bibliographer and understood how others could help him fill the gaps: for instance, in the partnership of Carter and Pollard, whose knowledge of modern type-foundries perfectly supplemented Carter's intimacy with the Anglo-American market for modern firsts. Witness, too, the team responsible for *Printing*

Joseph Hone is Reader in Literature and Book History at Newcastle University. His most recent book is The Book Forger (2024). He is a member of the Council of the Bibliographical Society and in 2025 was a Visiting Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford.

and *the Mind of Man* (1967), in which Carter and Percy Muir took the leading roles, with input from Stanley Morison, Nicolas Barker, and others.

The second strength of Tanselle's assessment is his sensitivity to the qualities of Carter's prose. Carter may not have been the most technically accomplished bibliographer of his generation, but he was surely the field's greatest writer. In a lengthy account of *Taste and Technique in Book Collecting* (1948), which Tanselle regards fairly as Carter's most accomplished book, he praises its "balanced syntax, precise but often surprising diction, striking metaphors," and so on. I would go so far as to claim that Carter's prose often has an almost mock-heroic quality. Consider the passage in which he compares the connoisseurship of the bibliographer who can identify "a pristine copy of *Pride and Prejudice* in the original boards" to the "soldier who can tell a sniper from a tree-stump" or the "housewife who can tell under-cut from scrag-end." It is impossible not to smile at the poise and counterpoise, the balancing of "original boards" against "scrag-end" of mutton. Indeed, I wonder whether Tanselle might have paid slightly more attention to this aspect of Carter's writing: it is often laugh-out-loud funny. One is struck not only by Carter's infectious enthusiasm for the field, but also by his tacit acknowledgement that the enterprise is slightly ridiculous.

The accompanying handlist of Carter's publications is very good indeed. With characteristic assiduity, Tanselle seems to have checked under every stone. Here we find not only Carter's books, with the original editions clearly delineated and described, but also his essays, reviews, lectures, and even letters to the press, here listed under the titles supplied by subeditors: one wonders how many dabblers in Carteriana will seek out his missive to the *Daily Telegraph* on the "Need to Control Noisy Drivers." This more-is-more approach is, in my view, to be applauded and the decision to include, for instance, Carter's menus for dinners of the Double Crown Club is a delightful touch. There is, though, a danger that this handlist may become the very thing Carter deplored: a mere checklist for the unimaginative collector. Now that Tanselle has mapped the terrain so thoroughly, one is left questioning *where next?* Having been granted a glimpse of the treasures of Tanselle's bookshelves, does the junior collector of Carteriana set about the task with renewed vigour or, I fear, throw up his or her hands in surrender?

There is only one area where I wish Tanselle had allowed himself to be more systematic: in supplying the details of printers, for Carter often selected the printers of his books with care. Nowhere does Tanselle mention that the *Enquiry* was printed by Clay and Sons, the same firm that had printed most of the forgeries exposed within the book's pages. He notes that the printing of Carter's little pamphlet on *The Dry Martini* (1963) was done by the Worcester-based firm Ebenezer Baylis but without querying why. Carter had never dealt with Baylis before and would not deal with them again. Only later, in an unrelated appendix on the "Halcyon Booklets" does Tanselle mention that Baylis had recently, in 1962,

taken over printing of the James Bond novels for Jonathan Cape. Mere weeks before Carter seemingly conceived his pamphlet, Cape published *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (1963), which includes a drinks order that would have struck Carter as sacrilege: "A double medium-dry vodka martini on the rocks with lemon peel." Perhaps he regarded his own recipe as an antidote to Fleming's poison. Nor, it is worth saying here, does Tanselle indicate that the pamphlet was intended as a seasonal new year's gift for friends, as the many presentation copies show.

But such quibbles are beside the point. When one master turns his attention to another, the rest of us should stop and listen. This volume is a handsome tribute from one of the greatest bibliographers of our present age to one of the greatest bibliographers of the previous age. It is a joy to read. And if the handlist drives the price of Carteriana even higher, then so be it. At least we will know whom to blame.

Review of Rebecca Romney, *Jane Austen's Bookshelf: The Women Writers Who Shaped a Legend*. New York: Scribner, 2025. \$21.

JEFFREY JOHNSON

In *Jane Austen's Bookshelf*, Rebecca Romney writes of the women authors who directly influenced the novels of Jane Austen (1775-1817). Romney, author of *Printer's Errors: Irreverent Stories from Book History* (with J.P. Romney), is a rare book dealer and co-founder of Type Punch Matrix, a rare book company based in Washington, D.C.

While the book will certainly be enjoyable and a valuable reference for Jane Austen fans, Romney also writes about the mechanics of collecting books in general, the chase, the joys, the disappointments and, most of all, how one book leads to another. Any book collector will be able to relate. Rare book dealers will also find common ground in the book. Romney writes "It's tough to work in a retail business where you can't manufacture your product. You have to find it."

The early part of the book contains a very useful synopsis and publishing history of the handful of novels published in Austen's lifetime: *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park* and *Emma* as well as the two novels published after her death, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*. Romney cites hard

Jeffrey Johnson recently retired from a 45-year career as a designer and architect in Knoxville, Tennessee, his hometown. He is a life-long book collector and has been a member of The Grolier Club, the nation's oldest and largest society of bibliophiles, since 2017. His member exhibit entitled "Whodunit: Key Books in Detective Fiction" garnered international attention. He currently is the Curator of Books for Addison's Used and Rare Books, a brick and mortar shop in downtown Knoxville.

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Thomas Jefferson SB
Est: \$26,000-\$35,000
SOLD \$112,500
January 2026



Einstein "Speed of Light" TLS
Est: \$80,000-\$100,000
SOLD \$150,000
May 2022



Davy Crockett ALS
Est: \$18,000-\$24,000
SOLD \$62,500
August 2024



Apollo 11 SP
Est: \$3,000-\$5,000
SOLD \$8,125
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Lincoln GEM MT 10 Signed
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evidence of the influences of a number of authors on Austen's plots and writing, often by references to what Austen is reading or has read gleaned from her own letters. Austen also refers to some of these writers and their books in her novels.

Each of these authors, all women, has a full chapter on her life and work. They are Frances Burney, Ann Radcliffe, Charlotte Lennox, Hannah More, Charlotte Smith, Elizabeth Inchbald, Hester Lynch Thrale Piozzi (who typically published under the name of Mrs. Thrale) and Maria Edgeworth. These authors preceded Jane Austen by a few decades in general, made novel-writing by women acceptable (among the earliest novelists, the young author hid to write, being told it was sinful) and demonstrated that writing can be a way to make a living.

Not all of these writers were ladies in the Jane Austen sense of having had a genteel upbringing (even though relatively impoverished) or living quiet lives. Charlotte Smith had spent time in a debtor's prison and was constantly worried about returning to one because of a gambling and philandering husband. Elizabeth Inchbald began life as a farmer's daughter and later became an actor. Hester Lynch Thrale scandalized British society by marrying an Italian musician, Gabriel Piozzi, after the death of her first husband.

One of Romney's favorite authors is Frances (Fanny) Burney who wrote *Evelina*. In it, Romney traces direct influences to *Pride and Prejudice*. In fact, the first time Jane Austen's name appeared in print was as a subscriber to Burney's third novel, *Camilla*, published in 1796.

Romney reads the books, not all novels, written by these women and relates her discoveries along the way. Given that these books were often maligned by contemporary critics – mostly men – Romney is often surprised at how good and witty she finds the writing. Charlotte Lennox, a name almost unheard of today, becomes Romney's favorite of the authors. Lennox, who was a close friend of Samuel Johnson, is best known for her novel *The Female Quixote*, which was read by Austen and influenced her novel *Northanger Abbey*. Romney calls her writing “witty and bold.”

Romney is good at researching the 18th-century origins of words and terms we still use today like “Sunday school” and “bluestocking.” She also explains the meaning of more esoteric words like “cathexis” which refers to imbuing an idea or object (such as your grandmother's wedding band) with emotional energy.

In the chapter on the often-moralizing Hannah More, Romney opens up about her own background growing up in a conservative Christian community and attending an equally conservative (and controlling) university.

The book includes an especially helpful 27-page appendix of books both by and about the cadre of authors listed above (including Jane Austen). There is also a detailed bibliography, a large section of notes and – to a scholar's delight – an index.

AFFILIATE NEWS

The Fine Press Book Association

The Fine Press Book Association will soon be celebrating a major milestone in its history with the publication of the fiftieth issue of its journal *Parenthesis*. The FPBA started in 1998 and has for most of its history published two issues a year, the Spring issue coming from the UK chapter and the Autumn/Fall issue from the North American chapter. Each issue is 64 or 72 pages long, in full colour, with features on the fine press scene, reviews, and lists of new books from FPBA press members. Issue 50 is due out in the Spring of 2026 and the milestone will be marked with the publication of a 120-page index to the first forty-nine issues. Our website is at www.fpba.com.

Martyn Ould, UK Chairman

The Book Collectors' Society of Australia

The Book Collectors' Society of Australia has quarterly meetings mostly held on the first Saturday afternoon of March, June, September and December. Our meetings are held at the Fisher Library, attached to the University of Sydney at 2 pm AEST in person and on Zoom, so anyone can attend from anywhere in the world. Membership includes a quarterly journal, *BibliNews*, which contains articles of interest, book reviews, obituaries and a section called Notes & Queries where members can express views and ask questions, although we do not deal in book valuations.

In 2025 our guest speakers were as follows:

March: Dawn Albinger (co-owner, Archives Fine Books, Brisbane) spoke on "The National Book Collecting Prize for an essay on book collecting written by people 35 years old or younger." This competition was initiated by Dawn and the third such competition is currently being conducted. One of the Highly Commended entries from the 2023-24 competition is included in the December 2025 issue of *BibliNews*. It is about a collection of martial arts books.

June: Author Ronald Caldwell spoke on Rev Ralph Marsfield and his collection. Mansfield was a 19th century Methodist missionary and newspaper editor, mainly in New South Wales. He co-edited one of the colony's earliest newspapers, the *Sydney Gazette* and in the early 1840s was made an editor of *The Sydney Morning Herald*. He printed the first issue of the *Government Gazette* and was often involved in controversy.

September: Author and collector Robert Holden spoke on the works of artist, cartoonist and author Norman Lindsay as held by the University of Sydney library.

Robert's talk examined specific aspects of the Lindsay collection and his article relating to his talk was in *Bibliionews* 427 (September 2025). Robert is a prolific author. Our AGM preceded the talk.

Our December meeting was a Show & Tell, whose details will appear in a future issue of *Bibliionews*.

The Melbourne Branch of our Society held a meeting in mid-2025 which was a talk given by Dr Anna Welch on "Recent Research on the Emerson Collection at the State Library of Victoria." The John Emerson Collection is one of the world's largest collections of rare British printed works. It features books and pamphlets from the 15th to 18th centuries, mostly produced in England. John Emerson was long term member of the Melbourne Branch of the BCSA and for two years its president. Later in the year a visit was conducted to a member's home in Melbourne to inspect his collection.

In March 2026 our speaker is Dr Trevor Hay whose talk will be "My collection of antiquarian books relating to China and Tibet and my book, *The Library of Lost Horizons*." Dr Hay is Senior Fellow at the University of Melbourne and is a long-time China scholar.

Our September 2025 issue of *Bibliionews* included an article by Michael Richards titled "Some Ideas for Rehoming Books."

Further information about the Society including details about membership can be found on our website: bookcollectors.asn.au.

Richard Blair, *Acting President*

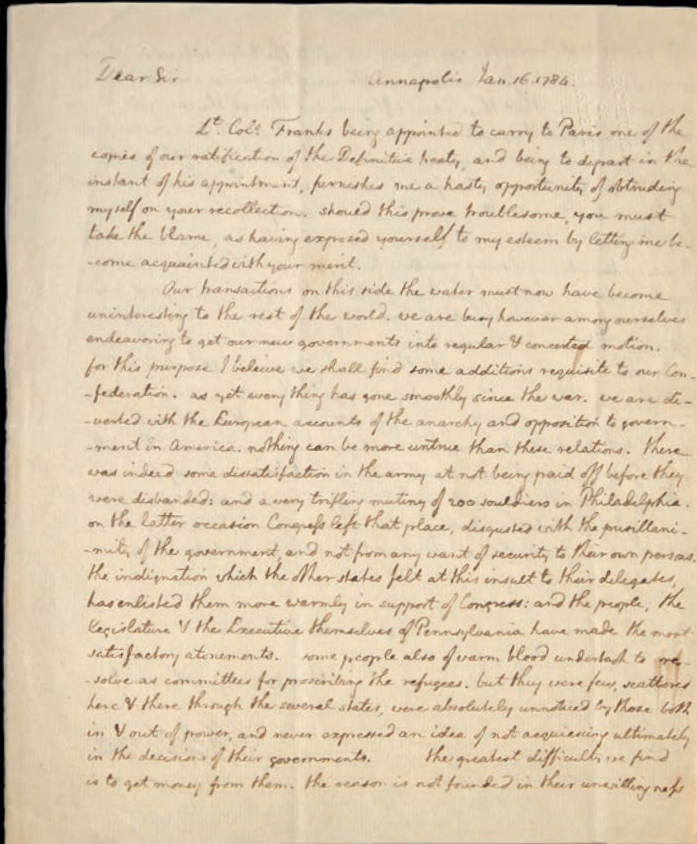
The Pirckheimer Society (Germany)

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Pirckheimer Society on January 29, 1956, by book enthusiasts like Arnold Zweig, Werner Klemke, Bruno Kaiser, and Johannes Bobrowski. Born in the aftermath of World War II in East Berlin, the society popularized bibliophilia in a country whose initial political climate deemed private book collecting a bourgeois folly. By the 1970s, the society had become an influential force that helped shape East German book design, collaborating with many printmakers and graphic designers. The society has now existed longer in a reunified Germany than it did in East Germany alone.

With close to 600 members, most of whom are book and fine print collectors, the society remains very active. It has regional groups across Germany, including in the western and eastern parts, that meet at artist's studios, for library talks or joint excursion to bibliophile places like museums or printing shops. The society publishes a quarterly magazine, *Marginalien*, which includes an original print by a contemporary artist in each issue for members only. The society also maintains a daily blog on its website and a continuous presence at many book fairs across

HOW HISTORY UNFOLDS ON PAPER: IMPORTANT AMERICANA FROM THE ERIC C. CAREN COLLECTION, PART X

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Thomas Jefferson's "Birth of the Nation" letter, carried to Paris with the Treaty of Peace, by a Jewish patriot, January 16, 1784

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"The rockets' red glare." A British midshipman's log recording the bombardment of Fort McHenry, September 1814



"We have met the enemy, and they are ours." Oliver Hazard Perry's 1807 Naval commission, signed by Thomas Jefferson



The Plymouth Colony applies to the British Crown in 1690 for its first royal patent



An extremely rare Type 1 photo of Lou Gehrig, dated July 3, 1927, one of over 150 press photos to be offered

Germany. The society's board implemented this strategy over ten years ago to increase visibility which led to growth in membership. In addition to issuing fine print runs and annual book gifts, we are involved in exhibitions and short film programs for children for our anniversary. We are also a partner of Berlin's first Rare Book Week in September (14–20), an event hosted by the German antiquarian book industry association, the VDA, in conjunction with the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers' World Congress in Berlin. In addition to the congress, Rare Book Week will feature public talks, screenings, and a book fair (rarebookweek.berlin).

At the same time, we are preparing our archives for transfer to the German National Library in Leipzig. This will finally bring our archives together with those of other German bibliophile societies. We will also hold our annual meeting in Nuremberg, the hometown of our namesake Willibald Pirckheimer, from September 11 through 13. He was a renowned Renaissance humanist, book collector, and close friend of Albrecht Dürer. Just four years ago, hand-drawn illustrations by Dürer were discovered in a book once belonging to Pirckheimer in an Oldenburg library. Naturally, back then we held our annual meeting in Oldenburg to celebrate the find.

For more information, check our website, www.pirckheimer-gesellschaft.org, which lists all table of contents from the first issue of *Marginalien* in 1957. International members are very welcome. We already have members in the Japan, Austria, Switzerland, France, Ireland, Sweden, the Netherlands. Perhaps we will meet



The Pirckheimer Society booth at the 2026 Leipzig Book Fair.

one of you at upcoming fairs in Leipzig, Hamburg, or Berlin. May the bibliophile force be with you!

Till Schröder, *Deputy Chair, Pirckheimer Society*
Editor-in-Chief, Marginalien

CLUB NEWS

The Aldus Society

In December the Aldus Society of Columbus Ohio held its annual holiday dinner at Brookside Country Club, including its annual book auction to raise funds for club activities. We also enjoyed a dramatic reading of “Words, Words, Words” by David Ives. The club has already secured all its speakers and programs for 2026-2027, and we look forward to a robust calendar of spring activities to round out our year.

Steve Andersson, *Secretary*

The American Society of Bookplate Collectors & Designers

The ASBC&D and Victoria University in New Zealand sponsor competitions to present outstanding book artists to the public. Our Tribute to Truman Capote featured the “Breakfast at Tiffany’s” bookplate competition exhibition, initially hosted by The Book Club of California in 2025. Building on this momentum, we currently offer four exhibitions of contemporary bookplates: The Tribute to George Steiner, Truman Capote’s “Breakfast at Tiffany’s,” James Joyce’s “Ulysses,” and Eugenio Montale’s “Ossi di Seppia” (“Cuttlefish Bones”). Montale won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1976.

Now in its 104th year, the ASBC&D stands as a truly global bookplate society. We’re proud to be among the oldest societies worldwide. We are still going strong as we plan new exhibitions, publications, and competitions. We also continue to grow our international museum collection of more than 125,000 bookplates and thousands of books, exhibition catalogs, society journals, with over 50 donated collections. In the USA, our collection is unique because we have antique examples along with fine contemporary prints. Ongoing participation and contributions from all corners of the globe make our society unique and vibrant.

Continuing our outreach efforts, on January 21st, I presented an illustrated Zoom talk, “Bookplates: The Art of This Century,” for members and friends of the Caxton Club in Chicago. There were 194 registered! The presentation showed that the art of the bookplate remains active worldwide. As many collectors know, the 21st-century bookplate is a significant department of the graphic arts.

Our publications feature the world's top book artists, printmakers, and engravers. We offer bibliophiles the opportunity to commission bookplate artists. They can also build a collection through the traditional exchange process. Our January newsletter highlighted Julieta Warman's bookplate engravings and profiled her 225 ex libris works. It also featured articles on American Art Deco pioneer Mac Harshberger and another story on Rev. Jonathan Fisher, who was an early American bookplate artist and printer.

April's newsletter presents international contributions, including Mrs. Anke Polenz from the Deutsche Exlibris-Gesellschaft (DEG) who presents a story about ex libris designs for kitchen libraries, we feature Richard Wagener's wood engravings, and Lew Jaffe's selection of the bookplates belonging to passengers on the ill-fated Titanic. Mrs. JoAnne Fuerst's *Year Book* story spotlights William K. Bixby's 1906 octopus bookplate by Edwin Davis French. Bixby (1857-1931) was a bibliophile and philanthropist.

You don't want to miss the 41st International FISAE Bookplate Congress. This will take place in the beautiful coastal city of Varna, Bulgaria, September 1-6, 2026. Attendance will be strong given the central location and will provide global networking and collaboration opportunities for bookplate enthusiasts.

The ASBC&D is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, charitable organization founded in 1922 to further the art and study of bookplates. The Society is an association with subscribers worldwide and a growing membership throughout the Americas. For more than a century, the ASBC&D has built a tradition of advancing the interest in bookplate art. We accomplish this through our publications, exhibitions, conferences, and electronic media.

Have questions, comments, or want to get involved? Contact us at info@bookplate.org. We welcome snail mail, too! We look forward to hearing from you and invite you to join our book arts community. ASBC&D, P.O. Box 14964, Tucson, AZ, USA 85732-4964.

James Keenan, *President*

The Ampersand Club

The Ampersand Club's 2025-2026 Season started on September 18, 2025, with the popular "Members Show & Tell" at the Campbell-Logan Bindery. Our members shared their vast collecting interests and after the presentations all the books were laid out on a large worktable to allow inspection and further discussion.

On October 16, 2025, we met at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul for "Minnesota Cookbooks: Small Bites from the Collection." Cate Cooney, Curator of Maps, Rare Books and Print Cultures and the first endowed Patrick Coleman

Chair, gave an introductory talk in the Heffelfinger Room before we visited the exhibition “Julia Child: A Recipe for Life.” Cate Cooney then highlighted the Minnesota Historical Society’s collection of Cookbooks on display.

The University of Minnesota Medical Center’s Phillips-Wangensteen Building was the location for “A Tour of Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine” in its new location on November 20, 2025. Curator Lois Hendrickson and Associate Curator Emily Beck displayed many items in their new classroom and took us to view their storage area for the artifact collection and books.

Ampersand Club President John Moriarty presented “The Illustrations of Francis Lee Jaques” by Zoom on December 18, 2025. John showed items from his extensive collection and discussed his work with the Jaques Art Center in Aitkin, MN.

The Winter Party on January 24, 2026, was hosted by Past Ampersand President Peggy Korsmo-Kennon and Michael Kennon in their new Eagan residence.

On February 19, 2026, we met online to hear “A Colorful World: Advertising and Collecting in the 19th Century” presented by Sierra Laddusaw, Curator of Maps & Graphics at the William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan.

Please visit our website theampersandclub.org for the complete schedule of our future 2026 meetings.

Richard Sveum, *Program Officer*

The Baltimore Bibliophiles

We had scheduled a “Meet & Greet” for February. We discovered, to our chagrin, that inclement weather in Baltimore can be a deterrent to things bibliophilic. However, we had more success with our February 18 “field trip” to Baltimore’s Walters Art Museum, where Dr. Lynley Hebert gave us a tour of the delightful exhibit “Paws on Parchment,” Paws meaning cat actual cat paws or cat images. On March 19, we will welcome back Reid Byers, who will regale us with “Collecting the Imaginary and the 1840 Fortsas Affair” (literary hoax). On Thursday, April 16, Dr. Lindsay DiCuirci, Associate professor of English, UMBC, will present a talk on “Comstockery” (censorship.) And on Tuesday, May 26, Margaret Stetz, Mae and Robert Carter Professor of Women’s Studies and Professor of Humanities at the University of Delaware, will discuss “Picture Books: How We Learn to Value Print and Love Libraries.” The three previously mentioned talks are via ZOOM and are at 7:00 pm.

On June 6, we will have a change of pace – a field trip to the Frederick Book Arts Center. Our host, Executive Director Casey Smith, will give us a tour, as well

as engage us in a “hands on” activity, which I believe will be related to printing. The rest of the summer is open to discussion, but I suspect we will try to re-schedule the “Meet & Greet” that yielded to Baltimore’s winter.

In September, we hope to tour the Baltimore Museum of Art Library, hosted by Sarah Dansberger. In October, Chris Needham will present a talk on “Library Ghosts: The Afterlives of Vanished Collections” in the Edgar Allan Poe Room of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. We will close out the year with our Annual Meeting, which includes the election of officers. Our speaker will be Elisabeth Long, Dean, Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University, who will discuss Artist’s Books. Dates of our Fall events are still to be determined.

All are welcome to Baltimore Bibliophiles events, whether ZOOM or in person.

For more information about the Baltimore Bibliophiles, please contact Binnie Syril Braunstein: BSBGCAOL.com

Binnie Syril Braunstein

The Baxter Society

The Baxter Society is the bibliophilic society of northern New England, the territory Frost designated as “North of Boston.” Its membership is a happy confabulation of book collectors and book arts lovers, along with the usual sprinkling of librarians, academicians, independent scholars, and general bibliophiles.

At our September meeting, Distinguished Professor Emeritus Richard Kopley, Penn State DuBois, spoke to the Baxter Society about his brilliant new book, *Edgar Allan Poe: A Life*, just published by the University of Virginia Press. The story of his discovery of a new trove of unknown Poe documents made this a most exciting and surprising tale.

In October, we hosted Peter and Donna Thomas, book artists from Santa Cruz, California. Peter and Donna work collaboratively, making both editions and one-of-a-kind books. They make the paper, print, illustrate, and bind their books, combining the precision of the fine press aesthetic with the structural creativity found in contemporary artists’ books. Between 2009 and 2019, they made four cross-country road trips, traveling in their tiny artistic home on wheels as the “Wandering Book Artists” teaching classes and giving talks about the book arts as they visited universities and community-based book arts centers around the country.

In November, Jenna Ware, Director of the Crane Museum of Papermaking, discussed “Preserving Papermaking History: The Crane Museum Collection.” Her talk explored the rich legacy of Crane papermaking, tracing its evolution from

traditional rag-based handmade paper to modern machine manufacturing, and highlighting Crane's pivotal role in producing secure currency paper for the U.S. Treasury, offering insights into the craftsmanship and innovation behind its production. We were given an up-close look at anti-counterfeiting technologies used in currency paper, alongside a display of historic documents and artifacts from the Crane Museum Collection.

In December, at our Annual Meeting and Carouse, Bob Macdonald received the presidential gavel from Reid Byers, who has led the Society for the last three years. Reid's exhibition, "Imaginary Books: Lost, Unfinished, and Fictive Books" will run through mid-April at Glickman Library at the University of Southern Maine.

And finally, next season: The Baxter Society expects to release its first major publication in many years.

Bob Macdonald, *President*

The Book Club of California

Folklore and fairy tales were at the heart of our latest exhibit in the Book Club's San Francisco headquarters. "Folklore, Fairy Tales, and Other Worlds," showcasing five centuries of printed books and ephemera from our Albert Sperisen library, spanned three thousand years of literature and explored the ongoing human fascination with the mythical and marvelous. This exhibit was curated by our librarian Elizabeth Newsom.

This year we published Liliias Napier Rose Robinson's *Our Trip to the Yosemite Valley and the Sierra Nevada Range* and *A Short Account of Our Trip to the Sierra Nevada Mountains* in one fine press publication with thirteen full-page pen and ink illustrations by Colleen Dwire. Robinson and her husband traveled to Yosemite and the Sierra Nevada mountains in the 1880s. Her tales of adventure and exploration inform our appreciation of her pursuits that were usually the exclusive domain of men. The original accounts were privately printed in very small numbers for family and friends in 1883 and 1884. The pen-and-ink drawings bring to life the flora, fauna, and countryside that Robinson encountered while two maps created by Ben Pease unfold to invite readers to follow her on her journey.

The Pony Express was the focus of our annual member keepsake. "The Pony Express: Legend of the Wild West" was written by Jacqueline Lewin and Chris Loker. The publication was designed by Matthew Kelsey. Filled with maps, pictures, and poster advertisements, the keepsake is a delight to read and view.

Our regular programs continued to be a big draw for members online and in both Southern and Northern California. Members learned about lesser-known influential Oregon publishers in "The Binfords & Mort Story: Publishing Books About Oregon, 1930-1983," the Kenneth Karmiole Endowed Lecture on the History

of the Book Trade in California and the West. Members discovered stories behind encrypted books in a program by Elonka Dunin and Klaus Schmeih titled “Encrypted Books – Mysteries that Fill Hundreds of Pages” and the truth and lies behind the myth of books bound in human skin in a program titled “Dark Archives: A Librarian’s Investigation into the Science and History of Books Bound in Human Skin” by Megan Rosenbloom. Paul Haddad shared the history of Los Angeles while talking about his book *Inventing Paradise: The Power Brokers Who Created the Dream of Los Angeles* while James Michael Buckley talked about San Francisco and the architecture of the redwood lumber industry in his program titled “City of Wood: San Francisco and the Architecture of the Redwood Lumber Industry.” Among many others, we presented programs on art deco buildings, native women’s labor resistance, and car cruising culture in Japanese American communities.

In February, actor, musician, comedian, songwriter, playwright, author, and book collector Eric Idle spoke to a packed audience about his new book *The Spamalot Diaries* and he shared stories of his own book collection. We awarded him Book Club membership, adding his name to the roster of famous Book Club of California members past and present. We are extremely grateful to Rare Books LA for organizing this entertaining evening as a fundraiser for the Book Club of California.

Finally, due to the generosity of our members as part of our #GivingTuesday fundraiser, we’ll be able to offer 60 more free student memberships in the coming year, bringing the total to 160. We hope this cultivates the love for books and for the history of California and the West into a lifelong passion.

Our schedule of talks for the remainder of the year can be found at bccbooks.org, along with a list of our publications. We hope you’ll join us for a talk and consider becoming a member!

Daria E. Topousis, *Vice President*

The Caxton Club

The Caxton Club’s officers are Rudy Altergott (president), Leslie Winter (secretary), and Jeff Jahns (treasurer). The office of vice president is vacant and will shortly be filled by a vote of the club’s Council.

The Caxton Club continues to pursue a vigorous program of membership recruitment, meetings, grants and awards, and publication of the *Caxtonian*.

Membership: We currently have 342 members.

Meetings: The club’s midday and evening meetings continue to attract good audiences, both physical at many events and virtual (via Zoom). The latter are a benefit to all, especially non-resident, members and enable the club to invite speakers from many areas of the US and other countries who deliver their pre-

presentations virtually and interact with the audience via Zoom after their talks. Programs since our last report (in September 2025) include Vanessa Pintado on *Treasures of The Hispanic Society of America Library and La Celestina – the tragicomedy of Calisto and Melibea*; Michelle Margolis on *History and Highlights of the Collection of Jewish Books and Manuscripts at Columbia University*; Lindsay DiCuirci, professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, on *Traps for the Young: Comstockery and Its Legacies*; Jeremy Dibbell, Special Collections Librarian at Binghamton University on *The Libraries of Early America: Bringing Historical Libraries to Life*.

Grants and awards: Since 2002, the Caxton Club has bestowed more than \$135,000 in awards and grants. The T. Kimball Brooker/Caxton Club Scholarship (\$2,500) is given to a deserving, talented individual in the Midwest with professional interests in bibliography, book history, or the book arts, for attending a course at Rare Book School (RBS). 2025’s recipient was Perry Harrison, assistant professor in the English Department at Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas. The club’s 2025 Bibliographical Society of America award (\$3,000) went to Christopher Walsh, a PhD candidate in the Library & Information Science Department at Rutgers.



ABAA FAIR CALENDAR

abaa.org/events
hq@abaa.org | 212.944.8291

VIRTUAL FAIRS

ABAA Spring Book Fair

March 12 – 14, 2026 | abaa.org/vbf

ABAA Autumn Book Fair

Sept 24 – 26, 2026 | abaa.org/vbf

ABAA Holiday Book Fair

Dec 3 – 5, 2026 | abaa.org/vbf

IN-PERSON FAIRS

New York International Antiquarian Book Fair

Apr 30 – May 3, 2026 | Park Avenue Armory

Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair

Nov 6 – 8, 2026 | Hynes Convention Center

Caxtonian: The *Caxtonian* is published six times yearly and contains illustrated essays and articles on a wide range of bibliophilic topics. Members can gain access to digitized copies from the beginning in 1993 though the most recent issue, the latter is available for anyone to view on the club's website (caxtonclub.org). In addition, all copies from 1993 through 2020 are available for anyone to view at caxtonian.org.

Notable articles since the last report include: "The Freedom to Read: Stories of the Fight Against Library Censorship in the 1950s" by ALA Archivist Cara S. Bertram; a two-part article by Sidney E. Berger on "What Goes Into a Book?"; a detailed discussion of every aspect of book design; and reviews of Paul F. Gehl's *The Designer-Craftsman Speaks*, a book on Robert H. Middleton and *The Medieval Scriptorium* by Sara Charles.

Michael Gorman

The Book Club of Detroit

On September 27, we enjoyed "Pulp fiction: Why 'trashy' books are our treasure," a presentation by Book Club of Detroit (BCD) board member Victoria Landes and Max Tortoriello. They traced the rise of pulp books and how these inexpensive, easily produced items paved the way for science fiction, horror, detective fiction, and similar genres to reach readers and ultimately enter the "respectable" literary mainstream. They also explained how pulp fiction, with its frequent focus on violent and lurid scenes, became a source of concern for those who feared it would have a corrosive effect on society. We enjoyed seeing many examples from their collection, including books from the Tarzan and Doc Savage series. BCD member George Hagenauer, affectionately known as "the comic books wizard of Ypsilanti," added to the presentation by bringing some examples of pulp fiction covers from his extensive collection of illustration art.

On October 26, BCD again had a table at the Ann Arbor Antiquarian Book Fair, a benefit for the University of Michigan's William L. Clements Library. Organized each year by BCD past president Jay Platt, proprietor of Ann Arbor's West Side Book Shop, the fair does not disappoint! The many attendees enjoyed browsing (and buying) old and rare books, photography, maps, and more.

December 6 was the date for our annual holiday gathering, held at the Grosse Pointe History Center in Grosse Pointe Farms. We enjoyed champagne, appetizers, and the company of fellow bibliophiles as we browsed the items in the annual BCD silent auction, an important fundraiser for the club.

Our first event of 2026 will be a special treat: "From Papyri to the 20th Century," a presentation by BCD past president Sam Gatteno. Sam is an eminent antiquarian book collector and bookseller with extensive experience on earliest printing and publications. His incredible collection of books and manuscripts

runs the gamut from Shakespeare forgeries to 16th century books to 20th century livres d'artistes – and more. We are very much looking forward to Sam's presentation – truly a privilege!

Some sad news: Since we last submitted our club news to the Journal, BCD has lost two much-beloved and valued members. BCD lifetime member David Kull, husband of BCD past president and lifetime member Charlene Kull, died on August 22, 2025. David, an attorney, was a strong supporter of BCD and was always a convivial, welcoming presence at BCD gatherings. Joan Knoertzer, who died on March 4, 2026, was a lifetime member and past president of BCD, a past vice chair of FABS, a member of the Florida Bibliophile Society, and the longtime proprietor of The Library B & B in Ann Arbor. Her many friends can attest to Joanie's wit, kindness – and talent for composing limericks on the spot. David and Joanie are deeply missed. Requiescant in pace.

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

Marcia McBrien, *President*

The Early Book Society

The Early Book Society invites new members. Founded as an independent entity in 1987, the Society was formed to bring together all those who are interested in any aspect of the study of manuscripts and early printed books produced between 1350 and 1550. This includes scholars, both affiliated and independent, students, and collectors. Membership brings announcements of EBS activities, including the biennial conference, as well as the membership list and the *Journal of the Early Book Society*, published annually, along with pre-publication discounts on books of interest to members and access to the EBS listserv. The *JEBS* editor is currently reviewing papers for publication (through May 2026). If interested, please contact Martha Driver (marthadriver@hotmail.com). More about the Society can be read at earlybooksociety.org.

Martha Driver, *President*

Florida Bibliophile Society

Florida Bibliophile Society (FBS) members gathered in September at the Seminole Community Library to open the new season with a Show and Tell. Everyone gave a short presentation on what they read and purchased during the summer hiatus. A field trip in October took a group to visit the Old Mill House Gallery and Printing Museum in Homosassa, an hour north of Tampa. The owner and operator, Jim Anderson, showed off the numerous pieces of antique printing

equipment that he's saved and restored, including iron hand-presses, type cases, and Linotypes. After holding meetings alternately for years at the Seminole library and the library at the University of Tampa, it was decided to find a new location. A Panera Bread in Largo was chosen and the first meeting was held there in November. *The Booksellers*, the 2019 documentary about the antiquarian book trade, was screened, followed by a Q&A with former bookstore owners Sean Donnelly and Irene Pavese moderated by Mark McMurray. In December, Ben and Joyce Wiley hosted the holiday party once again. Nearly two dozen members and plus-ones met to eat, drink, and see who would get which book in the gift exchange.

The new year began with a field trip to Tombolo Books in St. Petersburg, an independent bookstore co-owned by Alsace Walentine and Candace Anderson. They sell new books and regularly host authors for talks and signings. Back at Panera Bread in February, members were treated to a lively talk by Cathy Salustri, a local writer, journalist, and editor. She also owns *The Gabber* newspaper in Gulfport with her husband Barry. One of her books is *Backroads to Paradise*, in which she retraces driving tours mapped out in a 1939 WPA guide to Florida. In early March we'll be back in St. Petersburg for the Florida Antiquarian Book Fair. We'll have tables in the foyer of the Coliseum and an alcove inside the venue where we can enlist new members. Free book evaluations will be offered for three hours on Sunday afternoon. The regular March meeting features a talk by long-time member Carl Mario Nudi, who will give a presentation on the FBS archives that he maintains at the Largo Public Library. We're honored to welcome Deborah Prosser, incoming editor of the *FABS Journal*, as guest speaker at our April meeting. The season wraps up with the banquet in May. It will be held again at the St Petersburg Marriot Clearwater. Jim Anderson, who hosted us in Homosassa in October, will be our guest speaker. He'll talk about his lifelong career as a printer and the history of his printing museum. The winners of the Lee J. Harrer Student Book Collecting Essay Contest will be awarded there.

Sean Donnelly, *Secretary*

The Grolier Club

At the Annual Meeting in January, Grolier President Nancy Boehm, having given a most heartening account of the Club's work over the last four years, passed the gavel to Ken Soehner. Ken, our new President (and, happily, the chair of the Library Committee) joined the Club in 2004 and is a longtime member of Council.

The Spring will bring the Grolier Club three new exhibitions. The first is "Running Through Heaven: Visions of Jack Kerouac," on show from March 5–May 16. The exhibition examines the origins of Kerouac's quintessential American

novel *On the Road*, whose stream of consciousness writing had a tremendous impact on the world's literature. The exhibition explores Kerouac's life through approximately sixty objects from the collection of Jacob Loewentheil. An accompanying catalogue, published by the Grolier Club, will be available in spring 2026.

Running April 29–July 25 will be “Risings: The Irish Literary Revival and the Making of a Nation.” “Risings” explores the formation of Irish identity in the literary revival of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the parallel political quest for nationhood. Drawn from the collections of The New York Public Library, Alexander Neubauer, Alan Klein, and Colm Tóibín, and presented in collaboration with The New York Public Library, the exhibition features items from the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection.

The seasonal New Members Collect exhibition will run from May 14–July 31. This final Grolier Club exhibition this season comprises contributions from the collections of members admitted in the previous year.

Additionally, lobby and library exhibitions this season include “The Grolier Club Arms: A Visual Retrospective” (lobby through July 31), “The Road to 1976: Women in The Grolier Club Before Membership” (library from January 12–May 14), and “Greetings from the Library: Bookish Places and Spaces in the Grolier Club's Collection” (library from May 14–July 31).

Grolier public lectures during this period include “After Oscar: The Legacy of

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a Scandal,” with Merlin Holland on April 8, “The Irish Literary Renaissance,” with Colm Tóibín on May 4, and “Jessica Mitford and Her Sisters, In Print: Which Story is True?” on May 27, with Cara Kaplan. Additionally, a new series of talks on “How I Came to the World of Books” will include Alvin Patrick (March 23) and Jim Cummins (June 1).

Several special events are scheduled: A preview of *Are You a Librarian?*, an in-progress film exploring the untold story of black librarians (March 16), a tour led by Irvin Ungar of “Art of Freedom: The Life & Work of Arthur Szyk at the Museum of Jewish Heritage,” and a live recording of “Person, Place, Thing” with Randy Cohen with the curators of “Risings” (May 27). Musical performances will include “Pull My Daisy” with David Amram, jazz composer and Beat Generation friend of Jack Kerouac (March 31) and “Live at the Grolier – Celebrating Bloomsday with an Evening of Traditional Irish Music” (June 16).

Spring Readings begin April 21 with the Shakespeare Aloud project’s *Romeo and Juliet*, read in parts at an in-person dinner. On May 16, Paul Muldoon and Kevin Young will read poems from the Irish Literary Renaissance, as well as their own, and there will be a reading of Colin Murphy’s play *Inside the GPO* on June 25.

A cascade of panel discussions will support other programs: On May 6, Randy Gue, Michael Inman, Elizabeth Ott, and Carolyn Vega will bring us “Librarians and Artists on Jack Kerouac.” Later the same day, Ann Charters, Holly George-Warren, Joyce Henderson, and Regina Weinreich will talk about “Noted Kerouac Scholars and Biographers,” and on May 26, R. F. Foster, Belinda McKeon, Fintan O’Toole, and James Pethica will hold “A Conversation about the Irish Literary Renaissance.” On June 11, Charlotte Priddle, Dr. Miranda Garno Rossa, Elyssa Maxx Goodman, and Chris Hammer will discuss “LGBTQ+ in Print.”

A major Grolier Iter runs March 15-20, when the Club offers “A Bibliophilic Journey through Texas.” Led by Susan Tane and Brian A. Garner, members will visit ten magnificent collections in Dallas, Waco, Austin, and Houston, hosted by some of the country’s great collectors and enjoying regional cuisine.

And throughout the period, the Grolier Virtual Common Room is open continuously to members and offers regular events: a weekly Happy Hour on Fridays at 5:00, the monthly Collectors’ Showcase on the third Wednesday at 4:00 pm, the New Englanders gathering on the third Tuesday at 5:30, and Poetry Night, the first Thursday at 7:00.

Reid Byers, *FABS Trustee*

The Book Hunters Club of Houston

The Book Hunters Club of Houston continues its regular gatherings at Good Books in the Woods where local and national rare book news is discussed, items

of interest by members are shared, and guests drop in to heighten the already lively scene. This year a field trip to the Bryan Museum in Galveston is forthcoming as is a visit to view the private collection of founding member Douglas Adams. We also plan to have a special speaker from the great state of Ohio if her schedule permits.

The big news is the publication under the Club imprint of member Dr. Michael L. Wehmeyer's bibliography *Collecting Books That Won the Pulitzer Prize for the Novel / Fiction 1917-2025* (2025). This three-volume work of almost 1,400 pages is a monumental effort. Not only does Wehmeyer describe in depth the bibliographic details of each Pulitzer Prize winner, including the first printing, identified states and issues, and later editions and printings, but also the history behind the selection of the winning work. This encompasses information about the author, the Pulitzer selection committee for that year, runner-up entries, and the background regarding the selection process, often revealing controversies and nuggets of interesting information.

His work is an example of an important bibliographic contribution by a gentleman collector and scholar—a decades long labor of love that one would be hard-pressed to imagine coming to fruition via committee or by professional academic pulled in many directions. As a bonus for collectors, Dr. Wehmeyer has extracted essential information regarding first editions and published a companion volume via our Club entitled *Identifying Books That Won the Pulitzer Prize for the Novel / Fiction 1918 to 2025: Details, First Impression Points, and Dust Jacket First Printing Points*. (2025).

Kurt Zimmerman, *President*

The Manuscript Society

As the nation marks its 250th anniversary, there could not be a more fitting place for us to gather than Boston. The Manuscript Society's 2026 Annual Meeting, May 27-30, will immerse us in the history, collections, and stories that define both our country and our shared passion as members of The Manuscript Society. We'll enjoy special access to Revolutionary-era materials at the American Antiquarian Society, Thoreau manuscripts and more at the Concord Museum, the Congregational Library & Archives and its newest exhibition, "Sacred Rebellion: Congregationalists in Revolutionary Massachusetts," the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and their *Archives & Manuscript Collection*, the Museum of Fine Arts, and a day in Plymouth to view original Mayflower-era documents. An optional add-on day in Salem offers even more to explore. It is truly an exceptional pro-gram. See our website for details, www.manuscript.org.

Not coincidentally, our Annual Meeting overlaps with the Boston 2026 World Expo, an international philatelic exhibition which occurs only once every 10 years

in the United States. It runs May 23-30. We will be sharing a booth with the Ephemera Society so join us at our annual meeting and take the opportunity to visit the exhibition. Our presence at this exhibition serves to highlight the strong overlap between postal history and manuscripts.

If you are not a member, this is a good opportunity to join. Society membership includes our quarterly journal, *Manuscripts*, edited by Bradley D. Cook, and the *News* and the *Digest*, each issued quarterly, edited by Patricia K. Vaccaro. The current issue of *Manuscripts* features Chris Dahl's article, "The Confederate Cabinet, 1861-1865," Richard G. Lomax's article, "The 1917 Parade of President Woodrow Wilson Viewed Through the Correspondence of West Point Cadet Henry Henlet Chapman," Bill Butts' review of three books ranging from the Medieval Scriptorium to John le Carré and the idea of "Tradecraft," and more.

Lastly FABS members and interested guests are invited to Manuscript Monday, a free monthly presentation on Zoom. Each hour-long webinar provides an opportunity to peek behind the scenes at interesting manuscripts, valuations, writing & publishing, purchasing/selling, auctions, and more. Information on upcoming Manuscript Monday presentations and recordings of past presentations are available at manuscript.org/events/manuscript-mondays.

James West, *President*

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Northern Ohio Bibliophilic Society

With spring fast approaching, NOBS is once again busy putting the final touches on another edition of the Akron Book Fair. The April 3-4 event will be a milestone for us, as it will be the 40th Akron Antiquarian Book & Paper Show. From its humble beginnings in 1983, the Akron Fair has become an annual institution in northeast Ohio and we expect this latest fair to live up to the successes of the past. We already have more dealers signed up than last year and will once again be holding a ticketed preview night with live music and small bites Friday evening and then the main event will be all day on Saturday. We hope to see all the familiar faces from past fairs and welcome many more new ones at the ruby anniversary edition of the Akron Fair.

The NOBS board voted in Wendy Wasman as its new president in January. Wendy, who served as vice president from 2022 through 2025, is Antiquarian Books Specialist at Loganberry Books in Shaker Heights and teaches an online rare book librarianship course at San Jose State University's School of Information. She succeeds Ellen Strong, who stepped down from her post as president at the end of the calendar year. We greatly appreciate the decades of service Ellen has given to NOBS, including serving the past three years as president and many more before that on the board. We also welcomed two new board members in the past year, John Skocdopole last spring and Matthew Mace in January.

In the programs department, we held two fascinating NOBS Forums last fall. In September, John Milton collector Chase Donaldson told us about the history of printing and illustrating *Paradise Lost* and displayed some of the highlights from his remarkable collection. Jennifer Weinbrecht, owner of Jane Austen Books, then gave a talk titled "Jane Austen's Intellectual World" the following month. NOBS Forums resumed in January with our always lively annual Show and Tell, held this time at the new home of Strong Bindery next door to Loganberry Books. And in anticipation of the upcoming Akron Fair, we held a Zoom Forum in February to reminisce about one of our club's founders, Frank Klein, and the early days of NOBS and the Akron Fair.

We also have several Forums on the horizon we are looking forward to hosting. In May, librarian and former Agency Historian for the Government Publishing Office (GPO), George Barnum, will be giving a talk about his book on photographs of the GPO, *Picturing the Big Shop: Photos of the U.S. Government Publishing Office, 1900-1980*. Following a summer field trip that's still in the planning stage, Forums will pick up in July and August first with a presentation on preserving a 1663 Haggadah owned by a local congregation and then we'll hear a talk about Toni Morrison by Marilyn Mobley, Professor Emerita of English and African American Studies at Case Western Reserve University. Lastly, in September we are looking forward to co-sponsoring a symposium on Cleveland native

Charles Chesnutt with the Rowfant Club. More details will be forthcoming about that exciting event on our website, where you can also find recordings of past NOBS Forums as well as more information on other upcoming events (nobs books.org).

Paul Heyde, *FABS Trustee*

The Philobiblon Club

The Philobiblon Club is nearing the end of its 2025-26 season and so far, attendance at our meetings has been at an all-time high. Meeting at the Rosenbach Museum and Library in combination with a strong program of speakers seems to have reinvigorated existing members to attend, many of whom bring guests who become members themselves. At a time when electronic media are changing the meaning and importance of books in American culture, it is a positive development for us that our veteran membership is being augmented by a whole new generation of bibliophiles.

The talk in October by Clarence Wolf on his memoir, *Fifty Years a Bookseller*, attracted many friends from the Philadelphia book trade to hear stories from someone who has been on the scene in Philadelphia and among our membership for as long as anyone can remember.

Christine Nelson's talk in November on the relationship between A. S. W. Rosenbach and Bella da Costa Greene attracted a great deal of interest from the home crowd. Christine's fascinating research, much of it gleaned from the Rosenbach archives, shed light on the competitive yet loving relationship between the two icons of booklore.

It is a longstanding tradition of the Philobiblon Club that our December meeting be devoted to a members' Show and Tell evening. Individual members bring in some of the choicest books and ephemera from their personal collections. This year's presentations included a Christopher Morley volume inscribed by the author to the book's designer, a long-time member of our club; a 19th century Arabic/Syrian liturgical book; 19th century publishers' bindings of women reading; a scurrilous anti-Irish tract by Samuel F. B. Morse and another illustrated by Thomas Nast; a John Cage exhibition catalog in a mirrored box filled with loose ephemeral items; and works of Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. Our members' amazing collections demonstrate the remarkable bibliophilic richness of our city.

Philadelphia is the place to be in 2026, as our nation celebrates its 250th, and the bibliophilic world will be part of that celebration. Our city was the nation's birthplace and simultaneously the home of some of the earliest publishers of books and ephemera. We began the year with a panel discussion on plans for the United States Semiquincentennial with representatives from the German Society

of Pennsylvania, Andalusia Estate, the University of Pennsylvania, Swarthmore College, the American Philosophical Society, the Library Company, the Rosenbach, the Free Library of Philadelphia, the Atwater Kent Collection at Drexel University, and Haverford College. Suffice it to say there are almost non-stop programs scheduled throughout the year.

Besides supporting our speakers' program, the board has been mulling over the disposition of the club's archives, dating back to our founding in 1893. Currently on deposit at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the publications, invitations, account books, and meeting introductions represent a who's who of Philadelphia politics and business in addition to the city's book world.

Janine Pollock, *President*

The Ticknor Society

The Ticknor Society is the bibliophilic organization for lovers of all things related to books who reside in the greater Boston area, and throughout the fall and early winter we enjoyed a wide range of programs both in person and on Zoom.

In November at the 47th Annual Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair, a standing-room-only crowd came to hear three presentations on collector-built collections finding permanent homes in their libraries at our Collectors' Roundtable. Christian Dupont, Burns Librarian at Boston College, Leslie Morris, Gore Vidal Curator of Modern Books and Manuscripts in Houghton Library, and John Buchtel, Curator of Rare Books and Head of Special Collections at Boston Athenæum were our speakers.

At the Roundtable we also announced the winner of the 2025 George and Anna Eliot Ticknor Book and Book Culture Collecting Prize. Winner Jessica Chapel came in person to accept the \$1,000 prize for her entry "Preserving Hidden Voices: A Collection of Thoroughbred Racing Culture."

In December two in-person events were held, including a Show and Tell where members brought and briefly talked about one of their favorite books about books. Later in the month we enjoyed a tour at Harvard's Houghton Library of the exhibition "Edward Gorey: The Gloomy Gallery." Gorey was a graduate of Harvard College, and he left extensive materials from his personal collection to Houghton. Molly Schwartzburg, Philip Hofer Curator, and Maggie Erwin, Curatorial Assistant, both in Houghton's Department of Printing and Graphic Arts, were our guides.

In January we enjoyed several presentations on Zoom. First, three librarians responsible for building and curating historic and distinguished collections in their membership libraries talked with us: they were Barbara Bieck, Special

Collections Librarian at the New York Society Library; Kate Wodehouse, Director of Collections and Library Services at the Providence Atheneum; and Jean Marie Procioius, Executive Director of the Salem Athenaeum. Later in the month we were treated to a fascinating presentation by Melanie Mowinski, a book artist working and teaching in Western Massachusetts, about one of her latest creative projects that she has named Plunder Books, which is a series of handmade editions fashioned from items that would otherwise end up in the trash heap. We were treated to many close-up views of her wonderfully imaginative works.

A less formal gathering took place on a cold Saturday morning in February when a group of us gathered at the Brattle Book Shop, one of Boston's oldest and most loved used book stores, where we enjoyed coffee, donuts, lively conversation and much browsing!

As I finish writing this report in mid-March, I am still savoring our curator's tour that took place just yesterday of the exhibition "Imaginary Books: Lost, Unfinished and Fictive Works Found Only in Other Books" currently on view at the University of Southern Maine (after stints at the Grolier Club and the Book Club of California). Our guide was Reid Byers, curator of the exhibition and creator of this unique and extraordinary collection.

Janet Steins, *President*

The Utah Bibliographic Society

Hello everyone, I think this is our first contribution to the Club News. Last fall, the Utah Bibliographic Society (UBS) co-sponsored with the J. Willard Marriott Library at the University of Utah an informative panel discussion on the past, present and future of the book trade. The panel participants were Chris Bench of Benchmark Books, Glenda Cotter of the University of Utah Press, Brad Farmer of Gibbs-Smith Publishing, Anne Holman of the King's English Bookstore, Barbara Jones Brown of Signature Books, Ken Sanders of Ken Sanders Rare Books, Kent Tschanz of Tschanz Rare Books, and Tony Weller of Weller Book Works. Lyuba Basin, rare book librarian at the Marriott Library, kicked off the evening with a short history of book publishing and then fed the questions to the panel.

This diverse panel of book publishers, used and rare book dealers, and owners of stores with new books provided an interesting overview of the business of books from their differing points of view. The first topic of the evening was the amount of labor required to publish and sell books. Of course, the answer was that a tremendous effort was necessary to bring a new book to the light of day or bring a rare or used book to the right customer. The many steps to publishing a book once a final manuscript is received include formatting, editing, proofing, indexing, and then printing and distribution. An antiquarian bookseller has to first obtain

the books, often having to dig through a hoarder's house, and then process and catalog the books with the hope to eventually find a buyer. They can only sell what they can find, and much effort is involved with locating rare books. A publisher has to predict far in advance what will be of interest by the time the book is ready for distribution, often two years after the decision to publish was made. Another interesting topic focused on the changes through time in the kinds of books readers and collectors buy. What the aging generation bought and valued is not what younger collectors pursue. Younger buyers often chase newer books dating mostly to the last 75 years, partly due to their available financial resources. Even though books in digital and audio formats have flooded the market, printed books are not going away. New bookstores are continuing to open and young people are still buying books.

During the discussions, some of the book publishers admitted that they now use print-on-demand to print their books in limited numbers on an as needed basis and even use printers at different locations such as in the UK to save on shipping. The use of print-on-demand reduces the number of books that accumulate in warehouses, eventually to be pulped or have their covers stripped if they do not sell. Some of the publishers no longer indicate in the book the imprint or printing number, thereby making it virtually impossible to collect different printings of a book. The evening closed with the final question of whether digital and audio formats were true books, resulting in strong differences of opinion. Overall, a very interesting and informative evening.

All UBS members received a keepsake, limited to 75 copies, of a broadside of a quote and illustration from *The Old-book Peddler* that was signed by the panel members. The Tryst Press of Provo, Utah hand-printed it on handmade paper. A lovely presentation to be added to the growing collection of UBS keepsakes.

Craig Smith, *FABS Trustee*

The Book Club of Washington

Members and friends of the Book Club of Washington (BCW) have recently demonstrated their extreme generosity and deep commitment to our programs and mission through their response to our fundraising efforts. At our Annual Holiday Dinner and Auction in early December we raised \$5030. A subsequent year-end fundraising appeal brought us an anonymous gift of \$5000 and a gift of another \$4000 from a BCW Life Member in the new year. In addition, in March we held a Book Sale, with friends and members donating hundreds of books, art works, and other unique items that added an additional \$1600 to our coffers. These monies support honorariums for our speakers, a scholarship to Rare Book School, and a new initiative, a travel grant co-sponsored with the Cascade Booksellers

Association, awarded to someone attending the CABS-Minnesota Antiquarian Book Seminar – and so much more!

We continue to have a solid program schedule that includes in-person, online, and social components. In November we were thrilled to virtually host Eric Marshall White, Scheide Librarian and Assistant Librarian for Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscript at Princeton University, who spoke about his latest book, *Johannes Gutenberg: A Biography in Books*. In January, we had a tour of The Book Mongers facility in Tacoma. The Book Mongers are members of BCW who specialize in redistributing excess books to readers, thereby keeping them circulating and out of landfills. February brought an afternoon visit to the Tateuchi East Asia Library on the University of Washington campus where we learned more about their exhibit “From Brush to Type: The Evolution of Bookmaking in East Asia.” Our first BCW Bookstore Social of the year was held on March 9, at Arundel Books, in Seattle’s Pioneer Square. Owner Phil Bevis, who also owns Chatwin Books, described some of the challenges of his early experiences in publishing. Two guests also ended up joining the club!

Our annual meeting featuring a hybrid presentation will be in April. We are excited to welcome Doug Leen as our speaker. His talk “Ranger of the Lost Art – Rediscovering the WPA Poster Art of our National Parks” promises to be a real delight. We will also elect officers and address other business as required. In May we anticipate having another Show and Tell. Our summer programs have not yet been determined but will likely include a summer barbeque.

For more information, check out our website at www.bookclubofwashington.org or email us at info@bookclubofwashington.org

Tamara Belts, *Vice President and FABS Trustee*

The Zamorano Club

Displaced by the disastrous Altadena fire of January 2025, the Zamorano Club – under the leadership of new president Helena de Lemos, special collections librarian at Occidental College – began its 2026-2027 season by returning to its previous home: Pasadena’s landmark Blinn House. As the Women’s City Club, it served as Zamorano’s long-time venue until its sudden closure in 2019. Pasadena Heritage recently purchased and restored the 120-year old former residence, designed by Chicago architect George Washington Maher with a later addition by Myron Hunt.

Zamorano kicked off the year at its October meeting on a light-hearted note, as club member Jim Tranquada delivered a talk titled, “Anathema: The Literature of Books as Decoration.” Using book-decor volumes from his own collection dating back to 1968, Tranquada discussed the still-flourishing business of selling

books by the yard, the current TikTok trend of #shelfwealth, and the long history of the book as aspirational status symbol.

Also drawing on examples from his personal collection, Zamoranista Joe Bray stepped to the podium in November with a fascinating presentation on “Mexican Fotoescultura and the Shape of Memory.” Often commissioned through traveling salesmen to honor individuals or memorialize the dead, Bray explained how fotoesculturas – typically a hand-tinted portrait photograph, trimmed and glued to a carved backing and set in an elaborate wooden frame – appear to have originated in Mexico City and flourished between the 1920s and 1980s.

At Zamorano’s annual Gaudeamus celebration in December, we were honored to host printer Andrew Hoyem, founder of San Francisco’s Arion Press, one of the most important fine presses of the modern era. Hoyem discussed the factors that led to the publication of monumental editions of such works as *Ulysses*, *Moby Dick* and Arion’s folio Bible, patiently answered questions, and regaled the club and its guests with examples of his poetry – an 18-line form of his own invention that he calls a “pseudo-sestina.”

In January, club member Steve Turner spoke on “Reuben the Guide,” his detailed reconstruction of the remarkable life of Reuben Williams (1856-1903), a turn-of-the-century African-American resident of San Diego and the city’s first tour guide to lead tourists to Tijuana. Turner’s talk was based on years of research and the collecting of Williams photos and other ephemera, including cigar bands with his portrait – created for what was apparently his own brand of cigars.

At our most recent meeting in February, Zamoranista Miranda Garno Rossa delivered a deeply researched talk on “Learned Ladies and Notorious Whores: The Women of the Scandalous Memoir.” Like other speakers, she drew on her own collection of memoirs by three generations of 18th- and 19th-century European courtesans who, barred from polite society, developed a genre of writing that defied convention, exposed men’s hypocrisy and reconsidered women’s worth – often quite profitably.

Jim Tranquada, *President*

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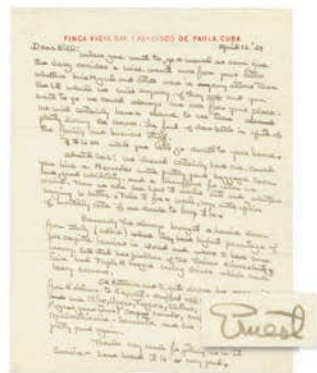
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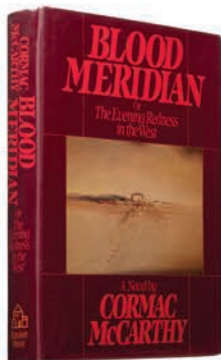
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