

FALL 2026 · VOLUME XXX · NUMBER 2

1 Letter from the Chair GRETCHEN HAUSE

3 Discovering Merle Armitage ROBERT DANCE

11 Concord to North Elba: John Brown and Henry David Thoreau JAMES MATHEW

21 Starting Point: Artists Books TONY WHITE

31 An Ascensius Press Exhibition SCOTT VILE

37 Kurt's Biblio Wanderings: The Rewards and Challenges of Collecting Thinsies KURT ZIMMERMAN

44 Review of Richard Kopley, *Edgar Allan Poe: A Life* MICHAEL RYAN

46 Review of Gerald Howard, *The Insider: Malcolm Cowley and the Triumph of American Literature* WILLIAM BUTTS

49 Affiliate News

51 Club News

68 Postscript

The Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies

MEMBER CLUBS The Aldus Society, Columbus, OH ¶ The American Society of Bookplate Collectors & Designers ¶ The Ampersand Club, Minneapolis, St. Paul, MN ¶ The Baltimore Bibliophiles, Baltimore, MD ¶ The Baxter Society, Portland, ME ¶ The Bixby Club, St. Louis, MO ¶ The Book Club of California, San Francisco, CA ¶ Book Hunters Club of Houston, Houston, TX ¶ The Caxton Club, Chicago, IL ¶ The Delaware Bibliophiles, Wilmington, DE ¶ The Book Club of Detroit, Detroit, MI ¶ The Early Book Society ¶ Florida Bibliophile Society, St. Petersburg, FL ¶ The Grolier Club, New York, NY ¶ The Himes & Duniway Society, Portland, OR ¶ The Manuscript Society ¶ The Miniature Book Society ¶ Northern Ohio Bibliophilic Society, Northern Ohio ¶ The Philobiblon Club, Philadelphia, PA ¶ The Roxburghe Club of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA ¶ The Book Club of Texas, Dallas, TX ¶ The Ticknor Society, Boston, MA ¶ The Utah Bibliographical Society, Salt Lake City, UT ¶ Washington Rare Book Group, Washington, DC ¶ Book Club of Washington, Seattle, WA ¶ The William Morris Society in the United States ¶ The Zamorano Club, Los Angeles, CA. INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATES Aberystwyth Bibliographical Group, Aberystwyth, Wales ¶ Nederlands Genootschap van Bibliofielen, Amsterdam ¶ Associació de Bibliòfils de Barcelona ¶ Berliner Bibliophilen Abend E.V., Berlin ¶ Biron Stables Bibliophile Club, St. Petersburg ¶ The Book Collectors' Society of Australia ¶ Société Royale des Bibliophiles et Iconophiles de Belgique, Brussels ¶ The Fine Press Book Association, United Kingdom ¶ International Federation of Ex-libris Societies, Helsinki, Finland ¶ Moscow Club of Bibliophiles, Moscow ¶ National Union of Bibliophiles, Moscow (formerly Organization of Russian Bibliophiles) ¶ The Society of Bibliophiles in Cape Town ¶ The St. Petersburg Society of Bibliophiles ¶ Les Amis Du Livre Contemporain, Paris ¶ Private Libraries Association, Pinner, Middlesex ¶ Maxmilian-Gesellschaft e.V. für alte und neueBuchkunst, Stuttgart ¶ Book and Graphics Section attached to the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg ¶ The Dublin Odde Volume Sette, Dublin, Ireland ¶ Pirckheimer-Gesellschaft e.V. ¶ Jerusalem Club of Bibliophiles, Israel ¶ International Union of Bibliophilic Societies, Moscow ¶ University of London Biblophiles.

FABS OFFICERS

Gretchen Hause, Chair
(The Caxton Club)
chair@fabsocieties.org

Sharon Gee, Vice Chair
(The Book Club of California)
vicechair@fabsocieties.org

Gretchen Hause, Treasurer
(The Caxton Club)
treasurer@fabsocieties.org

Paul Heyde, Secretary
(Northern Ohio Bibliophilic Society)
secretary@fabsocieties.org

THE FABS JOURNAL

Jennifer Larson, Editor
larsonjennifer@mac.com

Chris Loker, Co-Editor for Issue 30.2
czloker@gmail.com

Andrew Steeves, typographer
(The Press of the Varying Hare)
andrew@pressvhare.com

Sam Lemley, Website Manager & Designer

The journal is published twice annually (Spring and Fall) and 5,000 copies are distributed to our North American Member Clubs and International Affiliates.

COPYRIGHT ©2026 BY THE FELLOWSHIP OF AMERICAN BIBLIOPHILIC SOCIETIES

Letter from the Chair

¶ As we move into the last quarter of 2026 and into 2027, I sincerely hope that everyone had a wonderful summer. The fall brings with it a few more opportunities for hunting at book fairs in the US and abroad before the quiet of the winter holidays settles in. I look forward to both the busy fall season and the winter respite.

During the annual meeting, held virtually in April, our members and affiliates expressed interest in forming 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.

Our members and affiliates also expressed interest in forming a committee to do longer-term goal-setting for FABS as an organization. The last 5 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 5 years?

In order to move these committees forward, we will reach out to our contacts at each of our member societies to find people who may be interested in participating. If you have thoughts to share, please consider joining us, or please feel free to reach out to us directly.

As ever, we welcome any comments or thoughts, and want to hear from you. I hope that as the year draws to a close, each of you finds the opportunity to enjoy the company of your fellow bibliophiles, either virtually or in person.

All best,
Gretchen Hause
FABS CHAIR

CORRECTION

☙ In "Women and Bibliophilic Clubs: The Book Club of California and the Baltimore Bibliophiles" by Michèle V. Cloonan (Issue 30.1, Spring 2026), the word "bicentennial" was used instead of "semiquincentennial." We regret the error.

Discovering Merle Armitage

ROBERT DANCE

¶ Collecting American modern illustrated books, primarily of the interwar period, has proven to be an ever-expanding exploration into the rich and varied world of art and design from the early and middle years of the last century. Rockwell Kent was the first book artist whose works I sought with enthusiasm, starting with trade editions of *Moby Dick*, *The Canterbury Tales* and Shakespeare before moving on to elegant, limited-edition productions, and finally seeking out rare works and ephemera. Kent led me to Lynd Ward, as one day a cheerful young clerk watching me hunt for books—and coming up short—suggested I "try" Lynd Ward. "Who's he?" I asked, and a nice trade edition of *Gods' Man* was offered in response. I bought the book, and this one volume sent me on a completist quest to acquire the two hundred or so volumes Ward illustrated starting in the late 1920s when he introduced the novel in woodcut to American readers. *Gods' Man* (1929) was the first in this pioneer genre, followed in 1930 by *Madman's Drum* and then three others in quick succession. These volumes secured his place in the pantheon of American book design. His later career focused mostly on children's books, sometimes as both author and illustrator, including such classics as *The Biggest Bear* and *The Little Red Lighthouse and the Great Gray Bridge*. More often Ward provided only pictures, as in *Johnny Tremain*. My collection of this material was exhibited at the Grolier Club in 2015 accompanied by a catalogue, *Illustrated by Lynd Ward*. Since the Ward show I have found only a single volume to add to his bibliography.

Although I occasionally acquire a Kent title, he is so well anthologized, and his production so vast, that I have limited my collection to about a half dozen shelves. We still await a proper catalogue of his book illustrations, but that undertaking will be left for another collector or scholar. Other illustrators have tempted me, including James Reid, who illustrated *The Life of Christ in Woodcuts* (1930) and, also working in wood engraving, created *The Song of Songs* (1931). Although he designed attractive dust jackets, such as for *O Rare Content* (1930) and *The*

ROBERT DANCE is a member of the Grolier Club and wrote the 2010 Grolier exhibition catalogue *Illustrated by Lynd Ward*. He is the author of many books on early Hollywood history. Recent publications include *Ferocious Ambition: Joan Crawford's March to Stardom, Fabulous Faces of Classic Hollywood and The Savvy Sphinx: How Garbo Conquered Hollywood.*



BROELMANN, Stephan.
Epideigma, Sive Specimen Historiae (…)
Cologne, Gerard Grevenbruch, 1608



ORTELIUS, Abraham.
Theatrum orbis terrarum, Parergon, Nomenclator
Antwerp, Christophe Plantin, 1584



ASELLI, Gaspare.
De lactibus sive lacteis venis
Milan, apud Ioan Baptistam Bidelium, 1627

ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSELLERS
www.sokol.co.uk

SOKOL BOOKS

239A Fulham Road
London, SW3 6HY
books@sokol.co.uk
+44 (0)207 351 5119

Trumpeting Crane (1934), there didn't seem to be enough out there to justify a full-blown quest, and I am pleased with my few select volumes.

Hidden in plain sight on my shelves were a few random books designed, written, or illustrated by Merle Armitage. All three categories were represented in *Accent on America* (1944), which I bought decades ago: not for the pictorial cover, stunning frontispieces (there are two, a second right after the first) and illustrations, although I liked all, but for its content, fifty short essays ranging from music (Leopold Stokowski), dance (Isadora Duncan), and art (Picasso), to food, the army, and locomotives. One chapter I didn't discover until recently was "Books Designed" (i.e. by Armitage), thereby learning that *Accent on America* is an autobiography told through stories of his friends and professional associations. It had found its place, though neglected, among a small collection of works devoted to American cultural history. Another title, hidden for years in a closed bookcase with other books focusing on the performing arts, was his *Dance Memoranda* (1946), a large-format, richly illustrated and beautifully designed tribute to its subject. Even when I spied a copy of the *Merle Armitage Bibliography* (1956) by Robert Marks, I thought little more than to add it to a group of similar literary compendia.

¶ Was Merle Armitage to be my next mid-twentieth century book illustrator enthusiasm? I am sure that my first Armitage acquisition was his 1932 biography *Rockwell Kent* for Alfred Knopf, which I purchased in the late 1980s from Morrissey and Kline in Santa Monica. This exquisite, limited-edition book of 550 copies is in nearly pristine condition and retains its fragile dust jacket with the title, publisher's name and a compass star printed in deep blue on an otherwise bare black field.

The collecting spark ignited on a summer afternoon not long ago in Gloucester, Massachusetts, when, in a second-hand bookshop, hot and unairconditioned but beckoning nevertheless, I found a trade edition of *George Gershwin: Man and Legend* (1958). The spine of the dust jacket, printed in a shade of white that cried out Armitage, with black lettering and dancing musical notes moving from back to front cover caught my eye, and I pulled it off the shelf. On the back was a superb caricature of the composer initialed MA. Not put off by the twenty-dollar price, I bought it. That evening, before bed, I took a closer look at the elegant volume and admired the rich yellow paper he used to set off his many illustrations. I wondered who this fellow was, who not only designed books but was enough of an authority to write a biography of Gershwin published by Duell, Sloan and Pearce.

An internet search gave me some basic biographical information. Noting that he was born in Iowa in 1893, the entry was quiet on his early years (some sources claim he was self-educated). By the time he turned forty, he had moved to California where he managed the Los Angeles Philharmonic Auditorium. Among his projects he produced works by Martha Graham, Igor Stravinsky, and Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* (1939). That helped explain the connection to Gershwin. Later, Armitage was editorial and art director at *Look* Magazine. Most intriguing were his four marriages. Who was this fellow?

Searching through my shelves (could there be more?), another of his books seemed to jump out, *Accent on Life* (1965), a volume that I couldn't remember buying. Again, I noticed what was becoming familiar: bright primary colors on the jackets, text in clean modernist type. Placed between biographies of William Randolph Hearst, on page 222 I found an old notation, a pencil check mark next to the following lines: "One morning I received … it was not an invitation, exactly—it was an order, an instruction, not rude, but firm. It read: 'You will be at the Southern Pacific station at 6:15 on the evening of April 17th.'" Although Armitage was meant to be in New York, a summons to be Hearst's guest at San Simeon trumped other plans. *Accent on Life* was another collection of essays. The Hearst story was my initial attraction, but there are also essays devoted to railroads, and, instead of the army, here he wrote about the navy. Among the many artists he knew well, he shared memories of singer Rosa Ponselle, Edward Weston and Ernest Hemingway.

Gathering together my group of Armitage volumes, I had a feeling that this small corpus would quickly expand. Armitage's books were all beautifully designed and produced, and the more I examined his color palate, selection of types and crisp design sensibility, the more I wanted to discover about him as a book artist and writer.

My first Armitage acquisition as part of a deliberate collecting strategy was *Stravinsky* edited by Edwin Corle, published in 1949 (Fig. 1). It seemed to me the proper companion to the Gershwin volume as he counted both men as professional colleagues and friends. Red and black type were used on the rich yellow paper jacket that included, above the title "A Merle Armitage Book." I had found a brilliant book artist who also had a strong opinion about his talents. He recognized other talents as well, and in this gorgeous anthology he included images by Klee and Picasso, the classic portrait photo of Stravinsky by Arnold Newman, with another by Edward Weston, and essays by Erik Satie, Aaron Copland, and Jean Cocteau, among others.

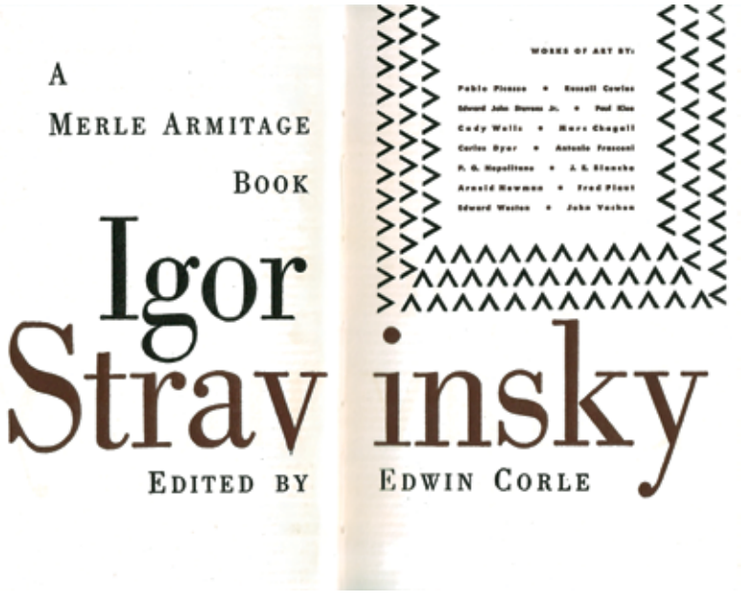


FIG. 1 Title page, *Igor Stravinsky. A Merle Armitage Book*. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1949.

The 1958 Gershwin biography I had purchased was Armitage's second book on the composer. Two decades earlier he edited *George Gershwin* (1938), an anthology of remembrances compiled shortly after the composer's death (Fig. 2). Ira Gershwin contributed "My Brother," and other contributors included a who's who of early twentieth century greats: Irving Berlin, Oscar Hammerstein II, Arnold Schoenberg, Jerome Kern and two dozen more. Published by Longmans, Green, Armitage issued a signed limited edition in yellow and black buckram which was also used for the first edition. In later printings the covers were yellow and red. All editions shared the same dust jacket. The first edition volume I acquired (alas not signed by Armitage) included a publisher's proof of the double title page with a pasted-in photograph of a David Alfaro Sequeiros painting showing Gershwin performing on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House.

Following a visit from book collector and fellow Grolier Club and Club of Odd Volumes member Basie Gitlin, gifts of rare Armitage items entered my now expanding collection. I showed him the few volumes and wondered whether he agreed that this was a worthy subject to pursue. How surprised and delighted I was a few weeks later when he gave me three bits of extraordinary Armitage

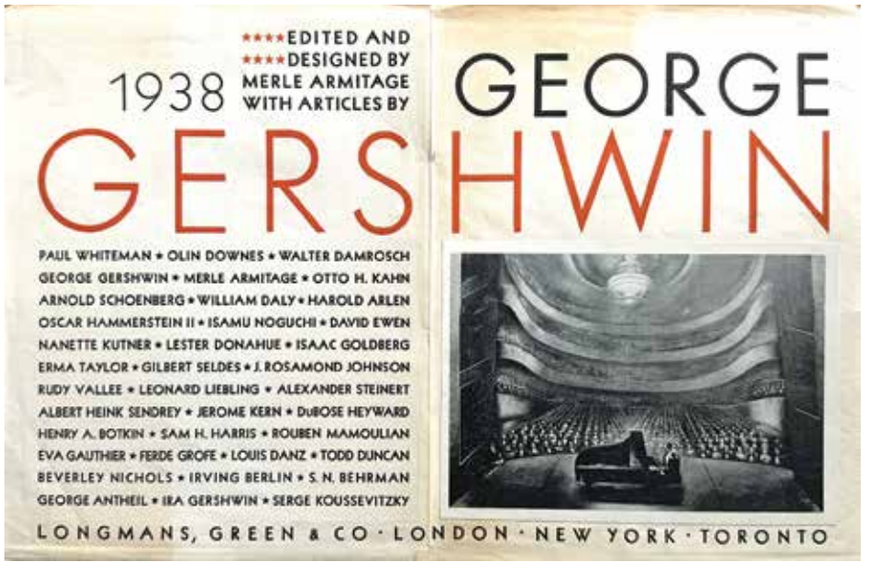


FIG. 2 *George Gershwin*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1938.

ephemera. The first was a small, elegant catalogue from the 1942 exhibition of Armitage's books at the Detroit Public Library. Included also was the American Institute of Graphic Arts related "Keepsake" (their number 17). The third was Dawson's Bookshop's (Los Angeles) 1960 catalogue, *The Personal Library of Merle Armitage*.

Some other recent arrivals include his "cookbook" *Fit for a Queen* (1958), written with his wife, Isabelle, as a follow up to his popular *Fit for a King* published in 1939. Another is Henry Miller's *The Smile at the Foot of the Ladder* (1948), his story of Auguste the clown (Fig. 3). Armitage included images of the circus selecting works by Picasso, Chagall, Rouault, Toulouse-Lautrec and Dunoyer de Segonzac, many taken from art in his collection.

Armitage retired to Yucca Valley in the desert above Palm Springs in the late 1950s and established the Manzanita Press. One of his first publications was Alan Marcus's *... of Street and Stars*. For seven years Marcus looked for a publisher, and even with praise from the likes of Saul Bellow and Archibald MacLeish, no luck. Finally, in 1960, Armitage agreed to print a limited edition of 600 copies. Dorothy Parker read a copy. "A novel of dazzling originality," she described it in her 1962 review for *Esquire*. Now publishers competed for the rights. Houghton,

Mifflin won, and it was published in a commercial edition in 1963. *Time* compared Marcus to American screenwriter Nathanael West.

As newly acquired books find their way to my shelves (the Armitage collection now numbers twenty-five), my instinct that he was a major figure in mid-twentieth century book design has been reinforced with each new volume. I don't know of any other book artist who so carefully considered every aspect of design: type, page layout, color, cloth and jackets. Each new arrival has been an education for me, and his books please the eye and the hand.

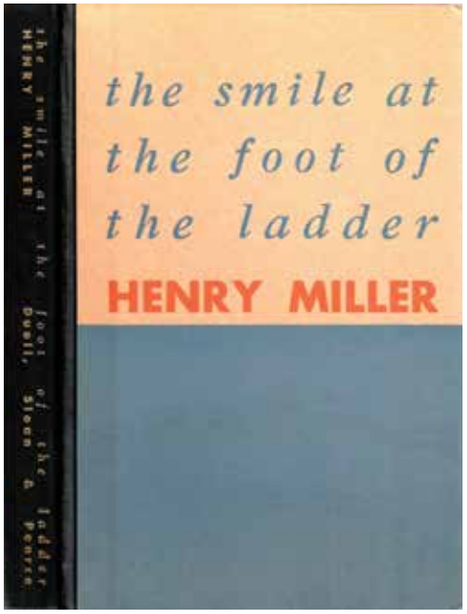
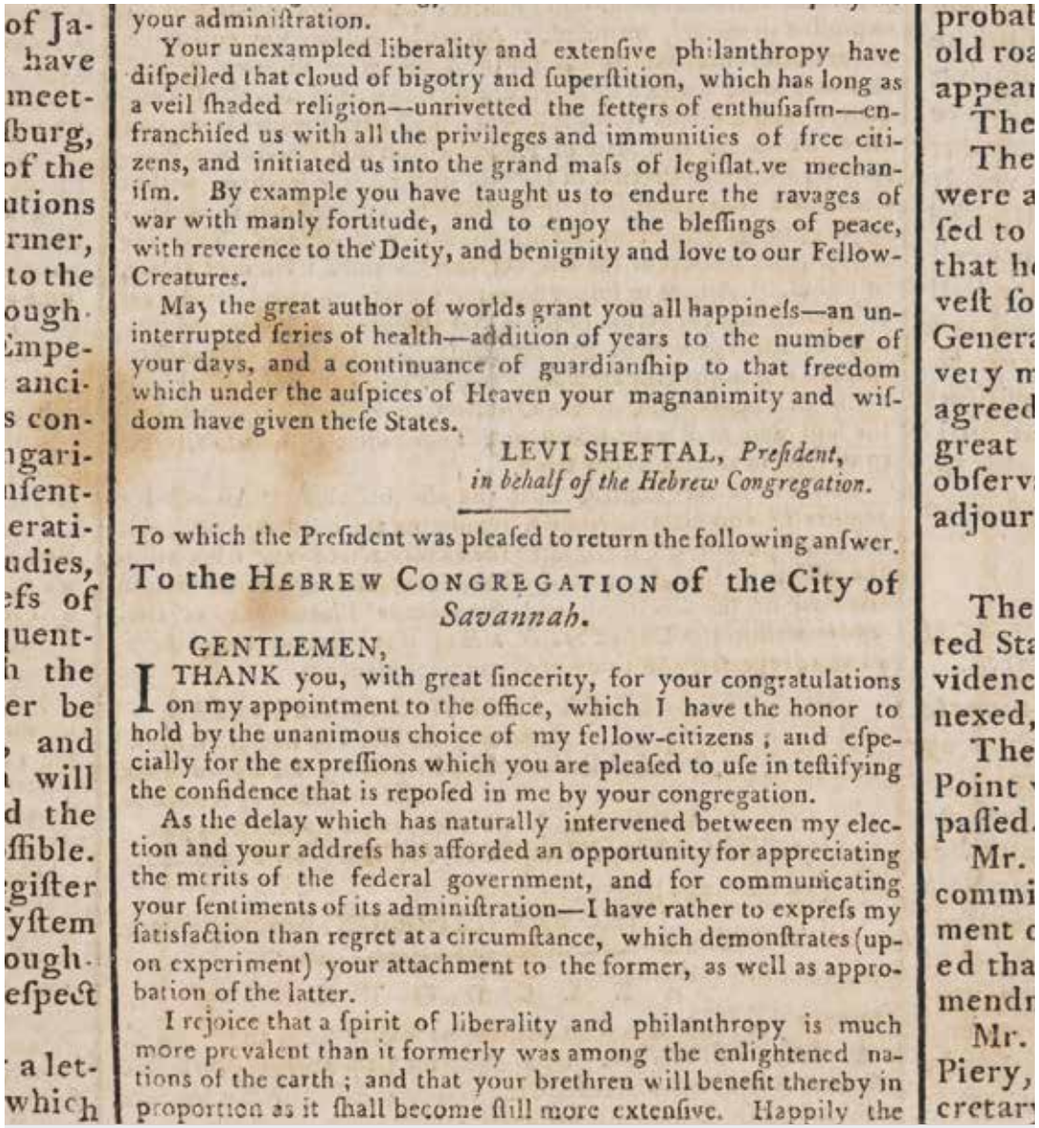


FIG. 3 Henry Miller, *The Smile at the Foot of the Ladder*. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948.

Still to be explored is Armitage's early friendship and working relationship with publisher and dealer Erhard Weyhe, whose Lexington Avenue shop in New York City I frequented before it closed in 2023. In the 1930s the pair collaborated, Armitage as designer and Weyhe as publisher (along with printer Lynton Kistler), on many books including an eponymously titled monograph on painter and print maker (and two-time Academy Award winner for Special Effects) Warren Newcomb. This book was honored in the AIGA's Fifty Books of the Year for 1932. So too was Armitage's *The Art of Edward Weston* similarly chosen the next year. Armitage served as chairman of the AIGA books committee in 1949 and the organization's president in 1950–51.

There is much more—including his work at MGM, where he designed titles for films such as *Green Dolphin Street*, *The Hucksters* and *The Harvey Girls*—and much more to discover. I have caught the bug and now seek out Armitage whenever entering a bookshop or receiving a dealer's catalogue. I don't intend to be a completionist, but felt the same way that afternoon, decades ago, when a young bookseller placed a copy of *Gods' Man* in my hands. ❧



your administration.

Your unexampled liberality and extenſive philanthropy have diſpelled that cloud of bigotry and ſuperſtition, which has long as a veil ſhaded religion—unrivetted the fetters of enthuſiaſm—enfranchiſed us with all the privileges and immunities of free citizens, and initiated us into the grand maſs of legiſlat.ve mechaniſm. By example you have taught us to endure the ravages of war with manly fortitude, and to enjoy the bleſſings of peace, with reverence to the Deity, and benignity and love to our Fellow-Creatures.

May the great author of worlds grant you all happineſs—an uninterrupted ſeries of health—addition of years to the number of your days, and a continuance of guardianſhip to that freedom which under the auſpices of Heaven your magnanimity and wiſdom have given theſe States.

LEVI SHEFTAL, *Preſident,*
in behalf of the Hebrew Congregation.

To which the Preſident was pleaſed to return the following anſwer.

To the HEBREW CONGREGATION of the City of *Savannah.*

GENTLEMEN,

I THANK you, with great ſincerity, for your congratulations on my appointment to the office, which I have the honor to hold by the unanimous choice of my fellow-citizens; and eſpecially for the expreſſions which you are pleaſed to uſe in teſtifying the confidence that is repoſed in me by your congregation.

As the delay which has naturally intervened between my election and your addreſs has afforded an opportunity for appreciating the merits of the federal government, and for communicating your ſentiments of its adminiſtration—I have rather to expreſs my ſatisfaction than regret at a circumſtance, which demonſtrates (upon experiment) your attachment to the former, as well as approbation of the latter.

I rejoice that a ſpirit of liberality and philanthropy is much more prevalent than it formerly was among the enlightened nations of the earth; and that your brethren will benefit thereby in proportion as it ſhall become ſtill more extenſive. Happily the

GAZETTE OF THE UNITED STATES
New York: John Fenno, 1790
First letter of appreciation sent by a Jewish congregation to U.S. President George Washington in 1789, along with his reply, published by the Federalist newspaper 'Gazette of the United States' on June 19, 1790. Jews in Savannah, Georgia credited Washington with dispelling the bigotry that severely limited non-Protestants in Great Britain. As free White men, Jewish males were enfranchised with the full privileges and immunities of federal citizenship: the right to serve on juries, be lawyers, judges, military officers, to hold civil and political positions, worship or not, attend university, own property, receive equal justice under the law, and for free White immigrants to be naturalized as citizens—rights almost totally denied in Britain and Europe. Some colonies with restrictive laws ignored them during the Revolutionary War. Eight of 14 states revoked most of theirs after the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights were ratified.
(52510) $27,500
Portions of the letters, issue No. 20, Vol. II

ERIC CHAIM KLINE BOOKSELLER
ART
PHOTOGRAPHY
ARCHITECTURE
MODERNISM
JUDAICA & BIBLES
HOLOCAUST
YIDDISH & HEBREW
FOREIGN LANGUAGE
OLYMPIC GAMES
APPRAISAL SERVICES
KLINEBOOKS.COM

NEDCC
NORTHEAST DOCUMENT CONSERVATION CENTER
Serving archives, libraries, and museums nationwide.
Conservation • Digitization • Audio Preservation
Preservation Training • Assessments

nedcc.org

Q
BERNARD QUARITCH LTD
Antiquarian Booksellers since 1847
EARLY PRINTED BOOKS · INCUNABULA
MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS · TRAVEL
ENGLISH LITERATURE & HISTORY
POLITICS · PHILOSOPHY · ECONOMICS
LAW · ART & ARCHITECTURE
SCIENCE & MEDICINE · MUSIC
VALUATIONS · ARCHIVES
36 Bedford Row, LONDON WC1R 4JH
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7297 4888
E-mail: rarebooks@quaritch.com
www.quaritch.com

Auctions of Exceptional Books And Private Libraries Every Two Weeks

Catalogues online 3 weeks before the sale.
Sales begin at 11 am Pacific Time.
Live bidding by phone or online.
Absentee bids accepted by phone, fax, email or online at www.pbagalleries.com
We invite consignments for upcoming sales.
For more information, contact the galleries at 415-989-2665
SPECIALISTS IN EXCEPTIONAL BOOKS & PRIVATE LIBRARIES AT AUCTION
BOOKS - MANUSCRIPTS - MAPS - PHOTOGRAPHS - WORKS ON PAPER
PBA GALLERIES
605 Addison Street : Berkeley, CA 94710
415.989.2665 866.999.7224
www.pbagalleries.com

Concord to North Elba: John Brown and Henry David Thoreau

JAMES MATHEW

¶ In the summer of 2000, visiting Concord, Massachusetts, I spent my mornings wading into the warm waters of Walden Pond and my afternoons in winds scented by the pines planted by Emerson and Thoreau. By evening, "I went fishing in the stream of Time."

My reading of Henry David Thoreau began with *Walden*, whose companion essays "Civil Disobedience" and "A Plea for Captain John Brown" first led me to John Brown. Its premise, "It costs us nothing to be just," raises a troubling question: What if it did cost us something? And why did Thoreau not condemn Brown's violence but praise it? I cast my line deeper and caught a few pearls along the way.

On the morning of October 18, 1859, Thoreau awoke to startling headlines in telegraph dispatches from the *New York Daily Tribune* and the *Boston Daily Courier*:

INSURRECTION AT HARPER'S FERRY.
ABOLITIONISTS AND SLAVES IN ARMS.
AN ARMED BAND OF ABOLITIONISTS HAVE FULL
POSSESSION OF THE GOVERNMENT ARSENAL.

Later editions corrected the reports: the supposed hundreds of insurrectionists were only a small band. Yet the event's significance was even greater to Thoreau, who must have seen Brown as slavery's assailant.

The following day, Horace Greeley advertised the assailant's name in the *New York Tribune*: "Old Brown of Osawatomie, who was last heard of on his way from Missouri to Canada with a band of runaway slaves, now turns up in Virginia."

Brown was no stranger to Concord or Thoreau; the two men had met at the home of Franklin Sanborn, a young abolitionist, in March 1857, as Brown returned

---

JAMES MATHEW, a Caxtonian, lives in Milwaukee, WI. With Kent Bicknell he has published *Book of Books: Pearls From the Stream of Time* (2021) and with Denis Xavier *Climbing Mountains: The Journey to Beat the World's Biggest Killer* (2026) both by Libri Publishing, UK.

from Kansas, where he had fought in the struggle between Free-State settlers and proslavery insurgents. Asked how he could venture into a town with a price on his head, Brown replied that "no little handful of men were willing to undertake the work, and a large enough body could not be got together in season." Brown showed Thoreau a bowie knife concealed in his trousers, taken from a proslavery opponent in Kansas, and a notebook containing the names of his men and the rules to which they had sworn allegiance. The next day, speaking at Concord Town Hall and recalling certain proslavery men from Missouri, Brown said, according to Thoreau, that they "had a perfect right to be shot."

Brown returned to Concord in May 1859 wearing a flowing white beard. Among those who heard him at Town Hall was Thoreau, who described him as "a man of rare common sense and directness of speech and action." Thoreau, too, had a full beard, adopted at an uncertain date: a crayon portrait by Samuel W. Rowse (1854) shows him clean-shaven, a daguerreotype by Benjamin Maxham (June 18, 1856) shows a "neck-beard," and an ambrotype by E. S. Dunshee (New Bedford, August 21, 1861) shows a full beard.

Dunshee took two slightly different photographs; in a cabinet card (Fig. 1), Thoreau's eyes gaze into the distance rather than at the viewer, as in the more familiar photograph. This copy may derive from the 'lost' ambrotype.

Brown's abhorrence of slavery began in childhood, when he watched a Black boy about his own age cruelly beaten by a man who treated Brown with tenderness. A descendant of Puritan stock, Brown vowed "eternal war with Slavery." The war intensified in Kansas after the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act, as antislavery activists from the North settled the territory to keep it free while proslavery Missourians, or Border Ruffians, crossed the border to establish it there.

In the winter of 1854 and spring of 1855, five of Brown's sons—John Jr., Jason, Owen, Frederick, Watson and Salmon—moved from Ohio to Kansas and settled near Potawatomie Creek. They brought cattle and plows; the Border Ruffians came armed. Skirmishes between Free Staters and Border Ruffians grew increasingly violent. Brown heeded his sons' call for help and went to Kansas to protect his family and resist slavery. The struggle escalated: the siege of Lawrence by Missourians and the assault on Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner on the Senate floor enraged Brown. Then he learned of an imminent plot by proslavery settlers near Potawatomie Creek to burn his children's house at night and kill them if they fled.

Brown decided to act: under his supervision, five men from the Potawatomie settlement were taken from their homes at night and summarily executed. Soon



FIG. 1 Albumen cabinet card of Henry D. Thoreau, *author's collection* (T. G. Mathai Rare Book Museum)



FIG. 2 Albumen photograph of John Brown, *author's collection*

afterward, a proslavery preacher shot Brown's son Frederick dead on the road, and a battle ensued at Osawatomie, where a small band under Brown defeated several hundred Missourians. Osawatomie became a symbol of resistance in Kansas, and another name for "Old Brown."

A few years later, I drove from Chicago to Osawatomie. At John Brown Memorial Park, a bronze statue depicts Brown with a full beard, open collar, and rifle slung over his shoulder—a sentinel over the town he once defended. Nearby, a stone museum encloses the Adair cabin where Brown stayed in Kansas.

Greeley's October 18, 1859, *New York Tribune* report referred to Brown's earlier rescue of two enslaved families from Missouri: Brown escorted eleven rescued slaves and a baby born en route more than 1,000 miles across the heartland, on foot, by cart, and by train, a bounty on his head. Along the way he met Allan Pinkerton in Chicago, who collected money for Brown and received a portrait of himself.

An albumen print of Brown's portrait (Fig. 2), 6.5 by 7.5 inches, held in the T.G.M. Rare Book Museum, is attributed to a daguerreotype by Martin M. Lawrence (New York City, 1858); an alternative account credits John Bowles of Kansas City, Kansas. James Wallace Black later made an enhanced negative.

From Chicago, Brown continued to Michigan and ferried the rescued slaves

across the Detroit River to Canada West (present-day Ontario) in March 1859. The story of this mission must have caught Thoreau's attention, but nothing moved him as much as Harpers Ferry: "It is the best news that America has ever heard. For once the Sharp's rifles and the revolvers were employed in a righteous cause."

Kansas had been only a staging ground for Brown's war against slavery. In July 1859, he moved with family members and followers to a farmhouse six miles from Harpers Ferry to prepare for the campaign's final act. One day, at the farmhouse, his daughter Anne heard birds wailing in distress: a snake had climbed toward a wren's nest to devour their young. She summoned her father, who crushed the snake's head; the birds then sang cheerfully, and Brown asked his daughter whether she thought it a propitious sign.

On the evening of October 16, 1859, Brown said his prayers, instructed his men, and ordered them to "get up their arms and march to the Ferry." At Harpers Ferry he seized the federal arsenal and took hostages, stating that he was there to free the slaves of Virginia.

Fighting broke out, leaving several dead and wounded. Brown and his surviving men barricaded themselves inside the armory's engine house with their hostages until U.S. Marines under Colonel Robert E. Lee arrived. Brown refused Lee's demand for unconditional surrender, and the Marines stormed the engine house: Lieutenant Israel Green thrust his sword at Brown's belly, but the blade struck his belt buckle and bent, and Green then struck Brown's head with the handle.

Brown's son Oliver lay dead beside him; another son, Watson, was dying. Brown felt for Watson's pulse with one hand and held his rifle with the other, urging his men to "sell their lives as dearly as they could." Brown survived, and, covered in blood, was carried to the paymaster's office and placed on the floor, where Virginia Senator James Mason, Governor Henry Wise, Ohio Democrat Clement Vallandigham, and others stood over him and questioned the wounded prisoner.

Thoreau followed events through verbatim reports, took up his pen, kept paper under his pillow, and wrote in the dark. On October 30, he spoke at Concord Town Hall:

> It was his peculiar doctrine that a man has a perfect right to interfere by force with the slaveholder in order to rescue the slave. I agree with him. When a man stands up serenely against the condemnation and vengeance of mankind, rising above them literally by a whole body—even though he were of late the vilest murderer, who has settled that matter with himself—the spectacle is a sublime one.

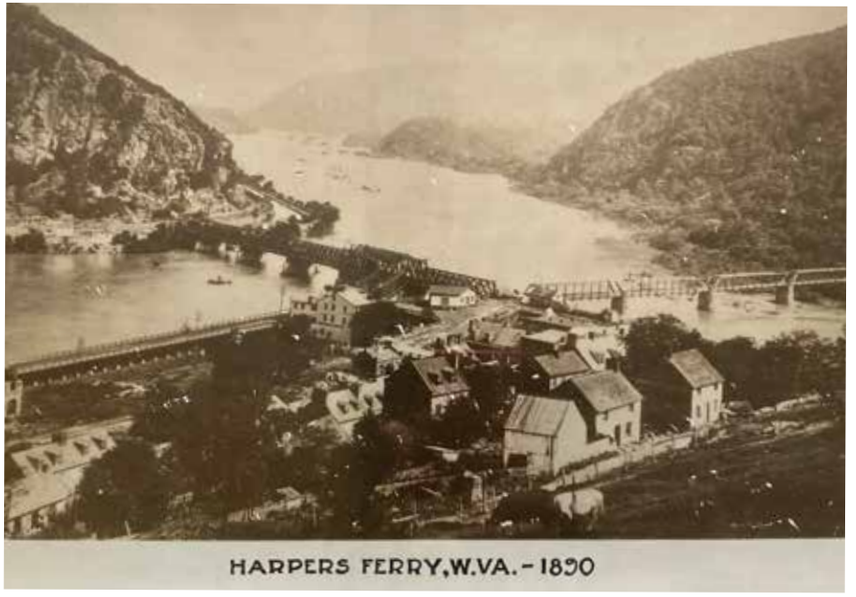


FIG. 3 Harpers Ferry, 1899 lithograph of a photograph dated 1890, *author's collection*

This was the essence of Thoreau's defense of Brown: he approved of the use of force for a cause he believed just. Brown must have known what he was risking; Thoreau was not pleading for his life but for his cause.

On December 2, 1859, a Friday, as the sun climbed to mid-sky, the state of Virginia hanged Captain John Brown.

That same hour, Thoreau and Emerson organized a memorial service in Concord Town Hall, curating a "ritual for which no church had provided," including only the most noble verses ever written. Thoreau recited:

> All heads must come
> To the cold tomb;
> Only the actions of the just
> Smell sweet and blossom in the dust.

Harpers Ferry is a poignant point on the map of American history. I traveled there by Amtrak; exiting the train, passengers cross the covered bridge over the Potomac. The old stone wall of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad depot is now

an exhibit wall, and a short walk along Shenandoah Street leads to John Brown's Fort—the engine house where Brown and his men made their last stand.

A vintage lithograph (Fig. 3) reproduces an 1890 photograph taken on a dry glass plate, capturing a striking confluence of geography and history: the foreground houses stand in present-day West Virginia, Maryland Heights rises to the left, and Loudoun Heights of Virginia to the right, where the Potomac meets the Shenandoah before flowing east to the Chesapeake Bay.

After Brown was hanged, Virginia retained the rope but released his body to Mrs. Mary Brown. His remains traveled north by land and water to his farm in North Elba, New York. Thoreau doubted whether the railroad had "ever carried a more precious cargo since it carried him alive south." Brown was buried on December 8, 1859, before his farmhouse. Lyman Epps, the leading Black farmer in the area and a family friend, sang to the accompaniment of Brown's daughter Ruth on the melodeon:

> Blow ye the trumpet blow!
> The gladly solemn sound.

Brown's farm in North Elba is now a New York State Historic Site, its entrance marked by a larger-than-life statue of Brown guiding a Black boy forward. The farmhouse still stands; a few steps away, I stood at the grave where "John Brown's body lies a-moldering in the ground."

I circled back to Concord fifteen years after my first visit, having traveled meanwhile to Osawatomie, Harpers Ferry, and North Elba. I sat by Writers' Ridge in Sleepy Hollow and revisited the questions that had vexed me from the start.

Though he practiced peaceful resistance to civil government and famously wrote "Civil Disobedience," Thoreau never rejected the use of force, if it be necessary, for a just cause. He admired the soldier who willingly risked his life to free a slave as much as he loathed the one who returned a fugitive to bondage.

Although he had reservations about erecting statues, Thoreau preferred a statue of Captain Brown in the Massachusetts State House yard above any other man's, foreseeing the day when "the poet will sing it, and the painter will paint that scene." On New Year's Day 1863—the day the Emancipation Proclamation took effect—Brown's bust was unveiled at the George L. and Mary Stearns estate (Evergreens) in Medford, Massachusetts, where Ralph Waldo Emerson read the "Boston Hymn" and Julia Ward Howe sang the "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

No one would have been more pleased than Henry David Thoreau. ❧

Sources

Libby, Jean. *John Brown Photo Chronology: Catalog of the Exhibition at Harpers Ferry, 2009.* Palo Alto, CA: Allies for Freedom Publishers, 2009.

Moore, Cleon. *John Brown's Attack on Harpers Ferry.* 1904.

Redpath, James, ed. *Echoes of Harper's Ferry.* Boston: Thayer and Eldridge, 1860.

Sanborn, Franklin B., ed. *The Life and Letters of John Brown, Liberator of Kansas, and Martyr of Virginia.* Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1885.

Thoreau, Henry David. *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau.* Manuscript Edition. 20 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1906.

The author thanks Anna Floch Arcello, Stephen Brummer, and Janet Wittes for critical review and editing.



LORNE BAIR

RARE BOOKS, MANUSCRIPTS & EPHEMERA

SPECIALISTS IN THE HISTORY, ART & LITERATURE OF RADICAL SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

RADICAL POLITICS :: LABOR HISTORY :: COMMUNAL SOCIETIES :: WOMEN'S HISTORY :: ANARCHISM AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY & LITERATURE LGBTQIA+ :: POSTCOLONIAL MOVEMENTS ECONOMICS :: SOCIAL WELFARE & REFORM REVOLUTIONARY ART & ARTISTS :: SURREALISM CHICANO-PUERTORRIQUEÑO-LATINO HISTORY & LITERATURE :: ANTI-FASCIST MOVEMENTS :: PROLETARIAN LITERATURE :: AND OTHER REAL OR INVENTED SUBJECTS OF OUR CHOOSING

WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA :: USA
WWW.LORNEBAIR.COM

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

Bull's Head
RARE BOOKS

RARE BOOKS & MANUSCRIPTS IN ALL FIELDS BOUGHT & SOLD

QUALIFIED ESTATE, TAX & INSURANCE APPRAISALS

MEMBER ABAA, ILAB, AAA

MOUNTAINVILLE, NJ
(908) 310-8554
INFO@BULLSHEADBOOKS.COM

British, Continental, and American
MEDICAL BOOKS
published before 1900
CATALOGS AVAILABLE

WEBB DORDICK
141 Rindge Avenue, apt. 1
Cambridge, MA 02140
U.S.A.

PHONE:
617-945-5425
EMAIL:
MEDBKS@AOL.COM
WWW.MEDBKS.COM

BY MAIL ONLY
MEMBER ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSELLERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

COLLECTABLE and RARE with specialities in
FINE PRESS & ILLUSTRATED BOOKS

Swan's
FINE BOOKS

2161 Ygnacio Valley Road, Suite 107
Walnut Creek, California 94598
THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY 10AM TO 5PM
925-935-1190
www.swansfinebooks.com

APPRAISAL & ADVISORY SERVICES

RARE BOOKS | MANUSCRIPTS | ARCHIVES

Assisting private collectors, institutions, and attorneys for over thirty years.

Appraisers Association of America, Certified Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America

IRS Qualified and USPAP Compliant

Learn more at:
leckyartgroup.com

THOMAS LECKY
LECKY ART GROUP LLC
631 Saw Mill River Road
Ardsley, New York 10502

tom@leckyartgroup.com
914 - 216 - 1336

DOYLE

Rare Books, Autographs & Maps



A fine set of *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, 1625, including the important Smith map of Virginia
Estimate $20,000–30,000

AUCTION IN NEW YORK

November 24, 10am

DOYLE Auctioneers & Appraisers
175 East 87th Street, New York, NY 10028

PREVIEW

November 20–22
Noon–5pm

View catalogue and
bid at Doyle.com

CONTACT

Peter Costanzo
Edward Ripley-Duggan
Kevin McKinney
212-427-2730, ext. 234
Books@Doyle.com

DOYLE AUCTIONEERS & APPRAISERS DOYLE.COM INFO@DOYLE.COM 175 E 87TH STREET

NEW YORK BEVERLY HILLS BOSTON CHARLESTON CHICAGO
CONNECTICUT NEW JERSEY NORTH CAROLINA PALM BEACH PENNSYLVANIA WASHINGTON D.C.

Starting Point: Artists Books

TONY WHITE

¶ In 1973 Dianne Vanderlip first used the phrase "artists books" as the title of an exhibition at Moore College of Art, Philadelphia, immediately capturing the imagination of artists and creatives.[1] While the phrase has remained indelible in successive decades, many artists, librarians, and curators have promoted the adoption of other terms and terminology either as a full replacement, or by mistake through the addition an apostrophe,[2] and similar adjustments. Description and definition are essential for understanding artists books, in large part due to the timing and emergence of this genre of contemporary art initiated during the long 1960s.[3]

In the decade prior to 1973 Fluxus members and conceptual artists published influential avant garde books that became foundational for artists who later adopted the phrase "artists books" to describe their work. Fluxus was a loosely affiliated group of visual and performance artists primarily active in the 1960s and 1970s who focused on everyday experiences of every person as new expressions of art production, and who rejected elite galleries and commercialism. They focused on making art accessible to a broad public, with the ideal that these works would have populist appeal. Fluxus artists leveraged their appreciation of Marcel Duchamp's readymade practice of recontextualizing everyday objects as artworks. For example, they routinely used office supplies, such as manila envelopes, and elevated them as artworks or components of artworks, many of them sent through the mail. Also, at this time many conceptual artists printed photobooks as conceptual artworks, and utilized concepts and strategies embraced by Pop artists.

Through the long 1960s most conceptual artists books were printed in black

---

TONY WHITE worked in art libraries for 30 years, and for 10 years he served in library director positions. At Rare Book School, the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, he teaches The History of Artists' Books Since 1950. His recent publications include "Curating Artists Books: Intentional Collecting and Innovative Collaborations," in *Radical Visions: New Perspectives on Special Collections Curatorship*, The Society of American Archivists, and "artists books and after," *Art Documentation* 42, no. 2 (2026): 213–230, an article on the legacy of Dianne Vanderlip's pivotal exhibition. White chairs the new Grolier Club affinity group on Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts.

and white to contain costs, and with subventions from commercial and nonprofit galleries. These were simple books in layout and binding, reminiscent of pamphlets, booklets, small books, and magazines. Edition sizes were often between 500 to 1000, allowing each book to be sold at a modest price. This fueled the misconception that these books as artworks could be sold to a general audience outside of the established artworld and art market. Though naïve, this ideal continues to animate artists new to the production of artists books. Most people in the orbit of artists books are aware that Lucy Lippard, the art critic and co-founder of Printed Matter bookshop in New York City, promoted this ideal for a couple of years, but fewer people are aware that Lippard quickly realized the financial folly of such a proposition.

Definitions

¶ Though the phrase "artists books" has enjoyed consistent usage for many decades since its inception in 1973, the critical discourse and focus on finding other suitable replacements is ongoing. The following are some starting points for everyone interested in this topic, whether you are new to this genre or a renowned scholar in the field.

I suggest starting with Dianne Vanderlip's exhibition catalog and reading it in its entirety. Then read the four exhibition reviews, especially the scathing review in *Artforum*.[4] Vanderlip's catalog, and the growing interest in the phrase she coined, inspired the editors of Art Rite magazine to issue a call to its readership in issue 11/12, asking for readers to opine on what they thought artists books were or could be. In issue 14 the editors published 50 responses from a wide variety of readers. Among these responses, there is no consensus on how artists books were defined. Ultimately, art librarians have played an outsized role in sustaining and promoting the evolution of terminologies following Vanderlip's exhibition. Two books by Keith Smith, *Text in the Book Format* (1985) and *Structure of the Visual Boo*k (1984) are helpful for assisting readers of artists books to better understand some of the conceptual, visual, and textual strategies utilized by creative practitioners of the book just ten years after Vanderlip's exhibition.

While conversations about artists books continued to evolve in the United States into the early 1980s, the art librarian Clive Phillpot was actively promoting his preferred word, bookwork, as a replacement for *artists books*.[5] It wasn't until the end of the 1990s that art librarian Stefan Klima published a book titled *artists books* as a direct homage to Vanderlip's pivotal exhibition title. Klima devoted

the first chapter of his book to documenting the evolution of definitions for Vanderlip's phrase. And in 2003, Duncan Chappell published a condensed version of his master's thesis as an article in *Art Libraries Journal*, titled "Typologising the Artist's Book."[6] Chappell's essay is the pinnacle of the obsession with granularity in defining artists books and related publications. With many artists books inherently taking the form of commercially printed books sold at generalist bookstores, there continues to be a need for specialized terms to differentiate romance novels and coffee table books from artist-authored books as artworks.

For many years members of the Book Arts Special Interest Group within the Art Libraries Society of North America have labored to produce a useful glossary for the study and cataloging of artists books.[7] The most recent iteration is hosted by the University of Utah and titled *Opening Artists' Books*.

Interventions

¶ One category of artists books that gives me tremendous pleasure is the intervention with contemporary publishing and publication practices. Whether it's Dieter Roth grinding up books or magazines mixed with gelatin and spices, stuffed into sausage casings, for his *Literaturwurst* series (1961–1974), or his experimentations cutting down newspaper pages, stacking and perfect binding them like books, as with *Daily Mirror* (1961), his interventions were innovative and continue to inspire contemporary artists to experiment in similar ways. Instead of starting your Ed Ruscha journey with his cryptic alphabet book, *Twenty-Six Gasoline Stations*, I suggest reading Ruscha's book, *Various Small Fires* (1964), followed by unfolding and viewing Bruce Nauman's oversized poster, playfully titled *Burning Small Fires* (1968). Or enjoy Caryl Burtner's artist book titled *Exorcism of Page Thirteen* (1993) in which she lays out 1 × 1 inch squares in a 6 by 8 vertical grid on a black background (Fig. 1). These page 13 fragments serve as documentary proof that she cut them out from books in her library.

In *A Rearranged Affair* (1996) by Sally Alatalo, she gathered 188 Harlequin romance novels, sliced off the spines, and recollated them into 188 new books each with a page from all 188 books in page order. With a more conceptual approach, Karen Reimer (nom de plume Eve Rhymer) published a pulp romance-styled pocket book titled *Legendary Lexical Loquacious Love* (1996). In this book she alphabetized a romance novel into 26 chapters, each for a letter of the alphabet. And the artist Doug Huston (nom de plume Moore Lande) published an artist book modeled on pulp westerns titled Vast (1994). In this pocket book the entire

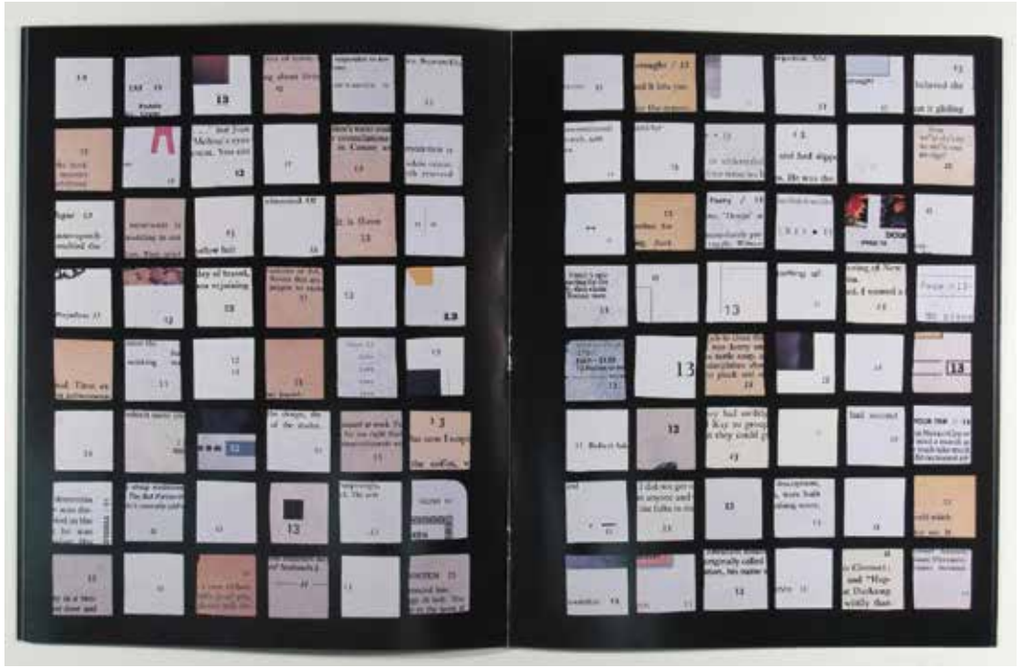


FIG. 1 Caryl Burtner. *The Exorcism of Page Thirteen*. Gates of Heck, 2003. Photographed by Tony White, copyright 2026.

text is made from quotes from other western novels, all of which are footnoted on each page of the book (Fig. 2).

Rearrangements

¶ Over the past decade, I've been collecting artists books that introduce serendipity and chance into the reading experience by offering opportunities to rearrange loose visual and textual printed elements—photographs, notes, pages, cards—within the text block. The three most common versions of these publications include 1) insertions of materials into the text block, 2) paper pockets adhered to pages with cards tucked into the pockets, and 3) unbound gatherings meant to be rearranged into any order for re-reading.

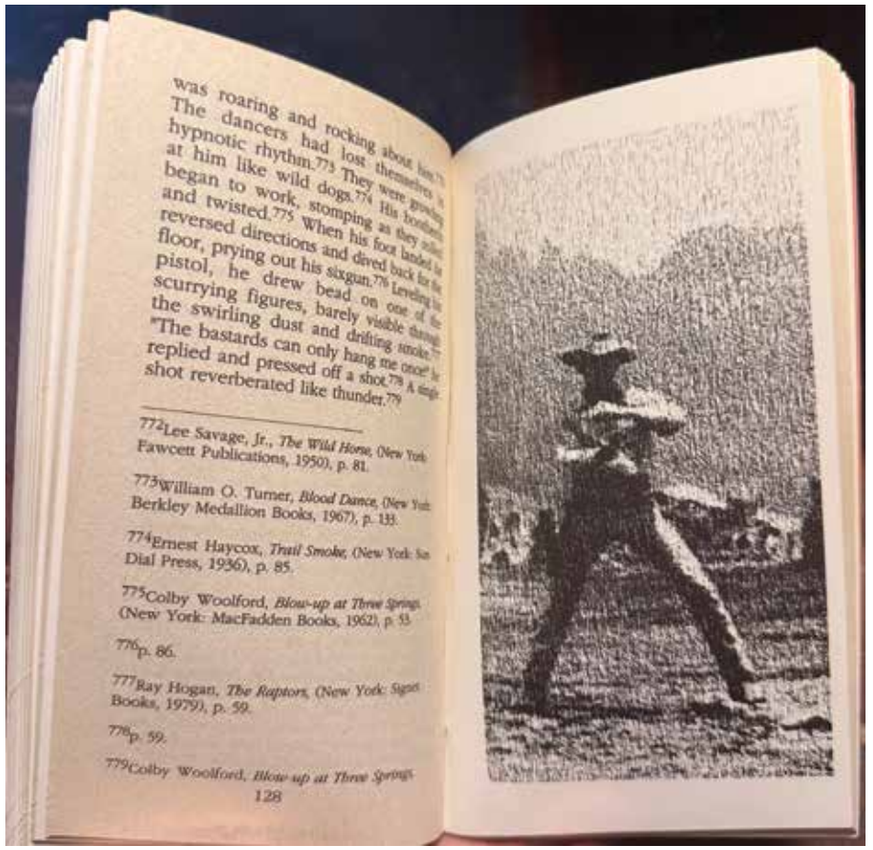
Below I highlight four books which are worth an extra look, each utilizing one of the three strategies noted above. Alexander Jackson Wyatt's book titled *Mode*



FIG. 2 Alexander Jackson Wyatt. *Mode Intersit Express*. Backbone Books, 2015. Photographed by Tony White, copyright 2024.

Intersit Express follows the first format (Fig. 3). It includes six facsimile snapshot color photographs, loosely inserted into the text block. These photographs can be pulled out and reinserted into any location within the book. Such actions reorder the narrative flow within, creating new and unplanned associations between images and text. The reader is an accomplice and collaborator producing a new reading relationship with each resorting of the loose elements.

Judy Levy's *Telling Time* utilizes the second strategy. The book's fixed imagery is constructed using a haloid Xerox machine from the 1960s, allowing Levy the opportunity to manually manipulate and smear the toner before it is heated and fused to the surface of the paper. Levy adhered paper pockets to many pages within the book; each pocket holds loose cards with typed texts. As with Wyatt's book, when I reorder the cards, I change the associative meanings with the fixed pages and set up a new story variation for when I next open the book. Another example of a book with loose cards-in-pockets meant for readers to actively


was roaring and rocking about him.[772] The dancers had lost themselves in a hypnotic rhythm.[773] They were growling at him like wild dogs.[774] His horse began to work, stomping as they spun and twisted.[775] When his foot landed in reversed directions and dived back for the floor, prying out his sixgun.[776] Leveling the pistol, he drew bead on one of the scurrying figures, barely visible through the swirling dust and drifting smoke. "The bastards can only hang me once!" he replied and pressed off a shot.[778] A single shot reverberated like thunder.[779]

[772]Lee Savage, Jr., *The Wild Horse*, (New York: Fawcett Publications, 1950), p. 81.

[773]William O. Turner, *Blood Dance*, (New York: Berkley Medallion Books, 1967), p. 133.

[774]Ernest Haycox, *Trail Smoke*, (New York: Sun Dial Press, 1936), p. 85.

[775]Colby Woolford, *Blow-up at Three Springs*, (New York: MacFadden Books, 1962), p. 53.

[776]p. 86.

[777]Ray Hogan, *The Raptors*, (New York: Signet Books, 1979), p. 59.

[778]p. 59.

[779]Colby Woolford, *Blow-up at Three Springs*.

128

FIG. 3 Doug Huston. *VAST: an unoriginal novel.* Sara Ranchouse Publishing, 1994. Image permission courtesy of Sara Ranchouse Pulp Series, Sally Alatalo, editor & publisher. Photographed by Tony White, copyright 2026.

rearrange is a type specimen book by the Viennese artist collaborative Gelatin, titled *Das Kakabet*.[8] The book includes a full font with numbers, punctuation marks, upper- and lower-case letters, each on its own color-printed card. This allows readers to arrange the cards to spell words and lay out sentences with capitalization and punctuation. This is a challenging book and not one for the squeamish, as the font is made from photographs of human excrement excreted directly onto white tile flooring in the type font characters before being photographed. Yet there is a playfulness and relatability among these letter forms as they resemble something each of us experiences nearly every day.

The last example, following format number three above, is *#INGRID* by Zoé Aubry, composed of a large, single gathering bound with an elastic band. Removing the band allows readers to reorder the pages. The book includes images created as a response to the Mexican news media's uncensored, gruesome images of the femicide committed by Erik Francisco Robledo Rosas against his companion Ingrid Escamilla Vargas, a 25-year-old woman. Photographs from the murder were splashed across newspapers and media outlets with no consideration for the dignity or modesty of the deceased young woman. Shortly after this traumatic public spectacle, as an antidote, many people began posting images to social media channels of highly romanticized and rose-hued images of sunsets, beaches, fields of flowers, sparkling bodies of water, and related images of tranquility and beauty. Many of these idealized images were reprinted as pages of this book. Each rearrangement of pages changes and extends the book's visual narrative, permitting a seemingly infinite number of combinations.

These four books all require extra handling and an engaged reading practice enabling the reader to make choices about whether and how to reorder the loose elements presented by the artists/authors in these editioned artworks. These strategies for author and reader collaboration are exciting enhancements to an otherwise predictable reading/viewing experience.

Arguably the most enjoyable aspect of artists books is that they are artworks that require haptic engagement to activate them. Artists books encourage readers to view images and layouts, and to read texts and symbols, by holding/touching, opening/closing covers, turning pages, activating moveable features in popup, flag and accordion books, and otherwise experiencing books in the ways the artist meant the work to be read, viewed, and performed. More traditional artwork formats such as sculpture, painting, photography, and installations are created to be viewed and not touched. Simply looking at a book without perusing its contents is a marginal experience. For activation and visual communication to be considered successful, artists books rely on viewer interaction. ❧

Notes

1 In this essay I am using the title phrase "artists books" from Dianne Vanderlip's exhibition catalog; it does not include an apostrophe. See Dianne Vanderlip, *artists books* (Philadelphia: Falcon Press, 1973).

2 For example, in Joan Lyons' *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Source Book* (Rochester: Peregrine Smith Books, 1985), in the chapter titled "Bibliography of Secondary Sources," and under the subheading "Exhibition Catalogues" she mistakenly added an apostrophe and cap-

italization to the title of Vanderlip's exhibition title, from *artists books* to *Artists' Books*. This error is somewhat tragic considering that Lyons' book is frequently referenced and cited by many scholars.

3 The long 1960s is generally defined as the late 1950s to the early 1970s.

4 Start with Tony White, "artists books and After," *Art Documentation* 42, no. 2 (July 2024): 225–65, for full citations of and discussion of these reviews. I also suggest reading each complete review for a better understanding of the foundation of a critical discourse.

5 See his article titled "Books, Book Objects, Bookworks, Artists' Books," *Artforum* 20, no. 9 (May 1982): 77–79.

6 *Art Libraries Journal* is a periodical of the Art Libraries Society of the United Kingdom and Ireland.

7 Catalogers reading this article will enjoy reading or obtaining a copy of the *Manual for Artists' Publications: Cataloguing Rules, Definitions, and Descriptions* edited by Anne Thurmann-Jajes, Susanne Vögtle, Sylvie Boulanger, and Lilijana Stepancic (Bremen, 2010).

8 FABS members visiting New York City can find a copy at the Thomas J. Watson Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

A good life,
built by hand.

Two-year career training program and single classes in bookbinding, conservation, and more in Boston's North End.

Financial aid, scholarships, and veterans benefits available for qualified students.

2026 Exhibition: Disciplines Across Decades | May 1 - July 3

NBSS.EDU/BOOKBINDING



POTTER & POTTER AUCTIONS

FINE BOOKS AND
MANUSCRIPTS DEPARTMENT

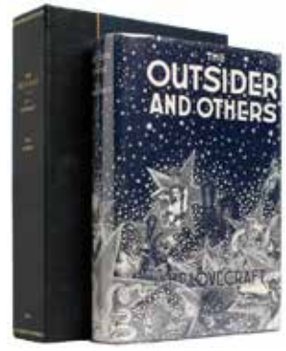
ALWAYS ACCEPTING QUALITY CONSIGNMENTS



Samuel Langhorne Clemens. (Mark Twain). ***The Innocents Abroad, or The New Pilgrims Progress.***
Sold for $60,000



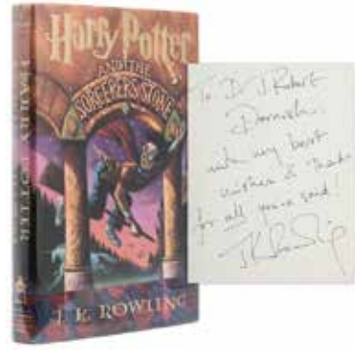
Isaac Asimov. ***The Foundation Trilogy,*** **All First Editions.**
Sold for $14,400



H. P. Lovecraft.
The Outsider and Others.
Sold for $18,000



Joseph Smith. ***The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon…***
Sold for $240,000



JK Rowling. ***Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone.***
Sold for $11,400

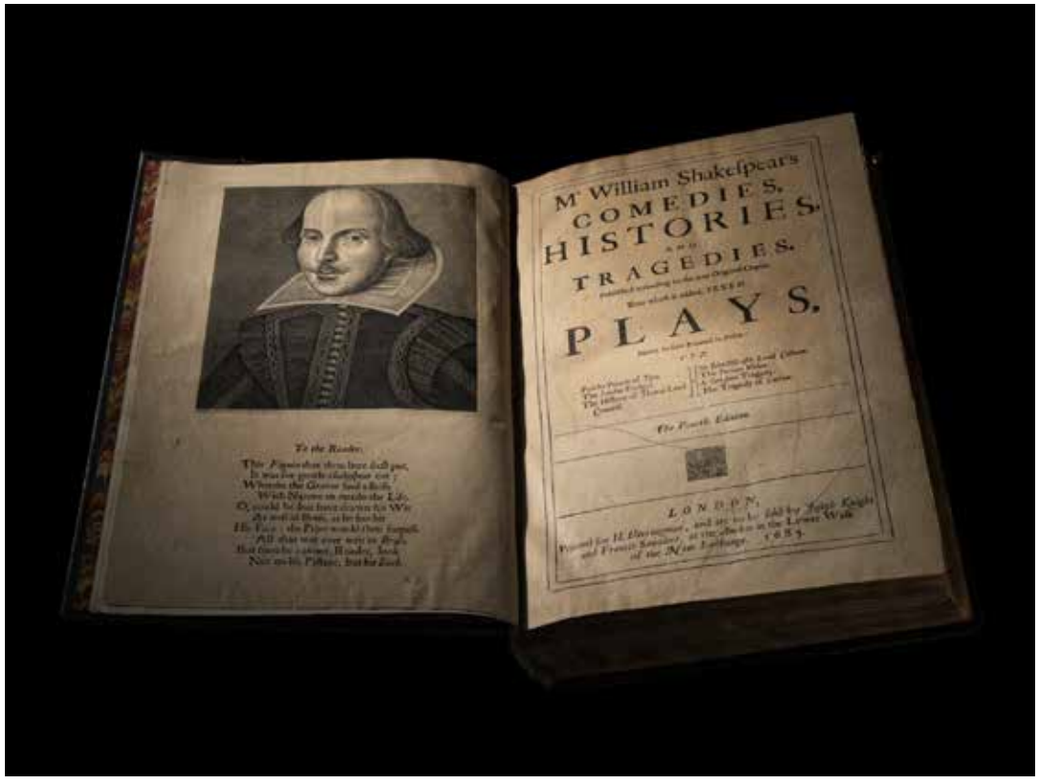


Napoleon. **A Screenplay by Stanley Kubrick.**
Sold for $50,400

Contact specialist Chad Reingold to discuss a single item or a featured sale of your entire collection. chad@potterauctions.com

POTTER & POTTER AUCTIONS, INC.
5001 West Belmont Avenue, Chicago, IL 60641

773.472.1442 | *info@potterauctions.com*
WWW.POTTERAUCTIONS.COM



Shakespeare's Fourth Folio, Printed by Robert Roberts, Robert Everingham, and John Macock for Henry Herringman, 1685.
SOLD FOR $140,800

HISTORY GOES TO
THE HIGHEST BIDDER

Always welcoming exceptional
Fine Books & Manuscripts consignments

Christopher Brink | +1 312.334.4217
christopherbrink@freemansauction.com
CHICAGO

Darren Winston | +1 267.414.1247
darrenwinston@freemansauction.com
PHILADELPHIA

FREEMANSAUCTION.COM

FREEMAN'S
AUCTIONS AND APPRAISALS

An Ascensius Press Exhibition

SCOTT VILE

¶ It was sometime in early 2025 during a board meeting of the Baxter Society that the president, Reid Byers, asked if there was any possibility that I might consider having an exhibition of my work, as Baxter had not had an exhibition of any sort for many years. The last one I put together was at 77 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, for what I remember may have been a twenty-fifth anniversary of the press, but we were now up to almost forty years, and in a moment of weakness I said sure.

Why forty? I remembered that the first book I actually produced (designed, composed in hot metal, printed, and bound) was in 1980 at Rochester Institute of Technology. The students in printing at that time spent the first two years in hands-on study of paper making, typesetting (hot metal and cold type), design, bookbinding, and the four major printing processes (we even spent a few days on a four color gravure press); the second two years included business law, accounting, estimating, and production management. This book was a requirement for a typography class taught by Archie Provan in the Letterpress Lab. Fast forward to 2025 and it seemed to be a good time for a forty-year retrospective exhibition of our work. The Baxter Society always had a relationship with the University of Southern Maine Library, as that is where monthly meetings are held, and they have a good book exhibition space created by Thos. Moser Furniture Makers (Fig 1). Of course the easy part is saying you can do it; it's finding the work, organizing, cataloguing and labeling that is the difficult part.

The exhibition opened at the end of May 2025 with an illustrated talk by me in the fifth floor lecture hall, and a reception afterward. The exhibition cases included over forty books that we have designed and printed, and sixty feet of flat exhibition tables under glass of bookplates, ephemera, meeting notices and the like. Unfortunately, as many of you have probably experienced, that "first book" from RIT was nowhere to be found. Some of us have too many books, and I am sure it is stuffed away somewhere on a shelf behind a row of books.

When the Anthoensen Press (1875–1988) closed down operations in the summer of 1988, I went to work for a large commercial printer in Lewiston, Maine, and then another in Portland. As those positions did not work out, and I had a studio space with George Benington and some miscellaneous letterpress equipment in Portland, it was time to start a print shop on my own. Due to Anthoensen closing,

there were a handful of miscellaneous customers who still wanted work using letterpress printing and I was happy to accommodate. I acquired a small Heidelberg Cylinder press from Dan Keleher that joined the No. 4 Vandercook I had purchased from Yale in 1982. Then in 1992 I was given the opportunity to purchase the assets of the Shagbark Press, owned by David Wolfe and Harry Milliken, who had been in business for some ten years in South Portland, also specializing in commercial letterpress printing. They had also left Anthoensen ten years earlier, as they did not agree with the new owner about how to continue the business of fine letterpress printing on a commercial scale. Their customers included the Bibliographical Society of America, *The American Oxonian*, the Boston Athenaeum, *The American Neptune*, Bowdoin College, *The New England Quarterly*, and many other other scholarly institutions and publications. I acquired the customer list and press from David and Harry, and moved all of my equipment into their South Portland building. Young and crazy.

We had two Linotypes and three Heidelberg cylinders to print book and job work. We also had a full-time Linotype operator, Maurice Beaudin. At that time we were still setting the *PBSA*, *The American Oxonian*, the *Athenaeum Items*, and the *Athenaeum Annual Reports* all in Linotype hot metal. But we had to adapt and eventually got a Mac, as nearly everyone was electing to use cold type. But my roots were always in hot metal.

Martin Antonetti, at that time Librarian of the Grolier Club, came by for a visit, and soon we were designing catalogs and printing miscellaneous items for the Club. Grolier and other institutions wanted the occasional piece printed letterpress, so we adapted to having large commercial printers do our color offset work and we would do the letterpress work. I did own a large Heidelberg offset press for about five years, but the additional equipment required to print offset was just too expensive to sustain it.

Hanging out at book fairs and dining with book dealers led to more work. I started buying books in the early years from Edward Ripley Duggan of Wilsey Rare Books in NJ. He'd invite me over for Saturday lunch with his wife, and we'd drink and he'd sell me books, many, many of which I still have today.

The shop moved a few times, roughly every seven years, and after a divorce I was able to purchase a 4,000-square-foot building in Buxton, Maine. As my letterpress colleagues were either retiring or moving on in old age, more letterpress equipment started coming in. We acquired the majority of the equipment and types from Darrell Hyder's Sun Hill Press (on an interesting note, a substantial amount of the types he owned came from when Anthoensen closed: what



FIG. 1 The Ascensius Press exhibition at the University of Southern Maine Library, 2025

goes around …) and an Elrod from Ed Rayher. Then John Kristensen, owner and operator of the Firefly Letterpress Press of Boston, joined the shop in Buxton as the rent on his shop was outrageously expensive. We now have two operating Monotype Composition Casters (one with a Welliver Interface), two Monotype Composition keyboards, a Model 29 Linotype, a Monotype Supercaster, an English Thompson Caster, two Heidelberg cylinders, and two Vandercooks (down from four). It is a well-equipped letterpress shop, with many hundred Monotype composition mat cases and fonts of display type mats.

The Baxter Society exhibition came down after three months. We had several gatherings of friends and colleagues for tours, which were as interesting for me as for them. Every item held a story, many forgotten; the oddest being a book catalog for a rare book dealer that had a 1.5 inch diecut circle, a peephole in black paper on the cover. What showed through the circle was an eighteenth-century hand-colored image of a woman's bare bottom seated on a commode, one illustration of several of that sort. At that time we were mailing book catalogs in a clear shrink-wrap package through the USPS. Apparently the post office did not like the "pornography" that we were mailing, because three quarters of the catalogues did not make it to the addressee. Another was a small casebound book,

an edition of 45 copies that we printed in 1990 for an under-the-radar exclusive club of fly fishers. After the book was printed, the president of the club asked me to destroy all materials associated with the book. When we were asked to print a new edition in 2025, also in an edition of 45 copies, we found out that a single copy of the older edition was currently valued at $3,000 due to its rarity (and that fly fishers are notorious collectors of books like this).

Letterpress printing is currently experiencing a Renaissance, something that in my lifetime has happened every twenty years or so. In another twenty we'll have to hope that the remainder of us have passed down our technical expertise, or there won't be another. ❧

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Scott Vile is the proprietor of The Ascensius Press in Buxton, Maine, and a member and past president of The Baxter Society. He has played an important role in the history of FABS, editing and printing the first* FABS Newsletter *(1996) and serving as production designer of* FABS Journal *from 2012 through Spring 2026. We are grateful to have enjoyed his guidance, skills and support over the decades.*



MUSINSKY RARE BOOKS
Early Continental Books



www.musinskyrarebooks.com

Rulon-Miller Books
Interesting & Unusual Books in Many Fields
Including...
Language & Literature
Fine & Unusual Printing of all periods
Voyages & Travel
Americana
...and the generally unexpected

APPRAISALS :: CONSULTATIONS
CATALOGUES ISSUED REGULARLY
FAIRS & AUCTIONS MONITORED

400 Summit Avenue
St Paul, Minnesota 55102-2662
800.441.0076 or 651.290.0700
rulon@rulon.com www.rulon.com

Simon Beattie Ltd
Rare books, manuscripts, music, ephemera, prints, specialising in European (cross-)cultural history, Russia, decorated paper, and the history of print culture.

84 The Broadway, Chesham,
Buckinghamshire, HP5 1EG, UK

T / +44 (0)1494 784954
M / +44 (0)7717 707575
E / simon@simonbeattie.co.uk
W / www.simonbeattie.co.uk

/simonbeattierarebooks
/simon_beattie
/simonbeattieltd

THE LAWBOOK EXCHANGE LTD.
ESTABLISHED 1983

BOOKS, MANUSCRIPTS AND EPHEMERA ON LAW AND RELATED FIELDS

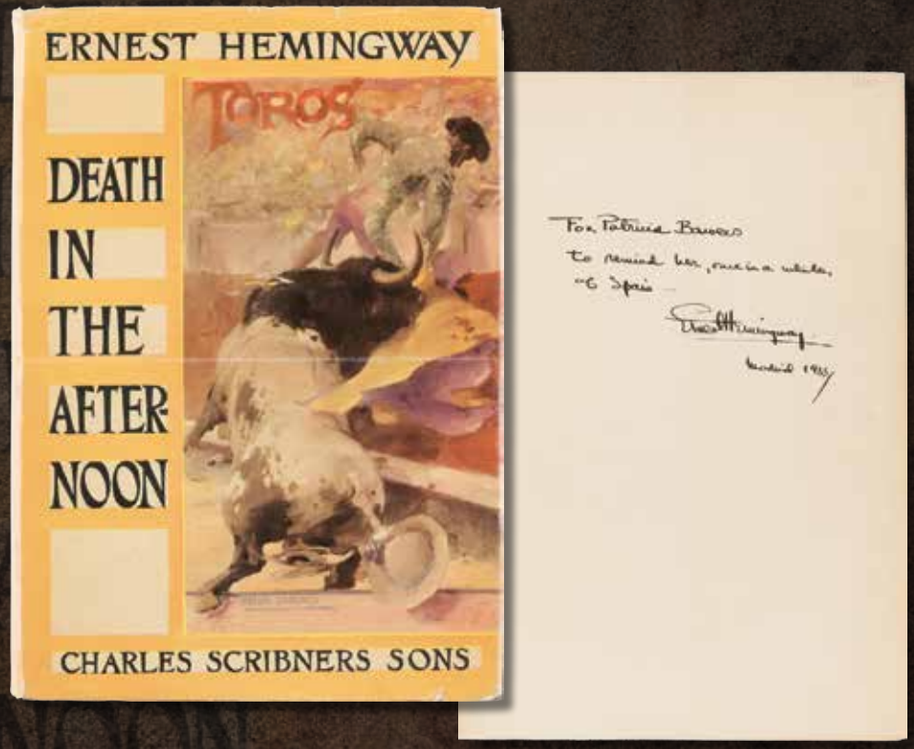
OUR DIVERSE INVENTORY includes American, English and Continental law, Americana, incunabula, crime and trials. Many of our items address politics, government, religion, class, ethnicity and gender.

- Catalogues issued quarterly in print and online.
- E-Lists issued weekly.



33 TERMINAL AVENUE, CLARK, NEW JERSEY 07066
732-382-1800 ◆ 800-422-6686 (USA OR CANADA)
law@lawbookexchange.com
www.lawbookexchange.com

RARE BOOKS
Signature® Auction | November 18
Property from the Estate of Maurice F. Neville



Ernest Hemingway. *Death in the Afternoon.*
INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR to the daughter of the Spanish Ambassador.

HA.com/Books

Inquiries:
Francis Wahlgren | 214.409.3018 | FrancisW@HA.com
Samantha Sisler | 214.409.1385 | SSisler@HA.com

HERITAGE AUCTIONS

Dustin Johnston #18229. BP 25%; see HA.com 91331

Kurt's Biblio Wanderings: The Rewards and Challenges of Collecting Thinsies

KURT ZIMMERMAN

¶ Many years ago, in a substantial coup, I acquired a large cache of material from the library of bibliographer Jacob Blanck (1906–1974) including numerous copies of books and pamphlets inscribed to him. It was a fateful day for the English language when I cataloged his copy of John Winterich's *The Grolier Club: An Informal History* (1950), inscribed, "To Jacob Blanck, for his shelf of thinsies with all good wishes from John T. Winterich."

The phrasing provided me an appreciative laugh and began my use of the term "thinsies" to describe the thousands of pamphlets, separates, and offprints that I've gathered for my biblio-collection. Winterich (1891–1970) was a writer and journalist deeply integrated into the rare book world. In the 1930s, he served as an editor of *The Colophon* and authored many books about books including *A Primer of Book Collecting* (1927, 1946), and *Early American Books and Printing* (1935).

Thinsies are most closely associated with pamphlets. For clarity, I turn to John Carter's *ABC for Book Collectors* for his definition of a pamphlet. Uncharacteristically, he provides no personal input and simply defers to the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, which defines a pamphlet as "a small treatise occupying fewer pages than would make a book, composed and issued as a separate work; always unbound, with or without paper covers."

I prefer a more expansive definition that can include anything that is thin in size. Most thinsies are bound in wrappers, but on occasion they are bound in firmer covers, such as thin boards, like Winterich's *The Grolier Club* presentation copy that started all this. So thinsies by their nature are quite wide-ranging in my mind.

When thinsies are gathered together on shelves or in boxes or in stacks, they are often unwieldy and occasionally obstinate, leaning this way and that, fall-

---

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.

ing over and scattering about at inopportune times, wedging into hiding places between their bookish brethren, and typically being a nuisance to organize. This can become a full-blown crisis when one needs to locate a thinsy in the collection, and I have found no game of inadvertent hide-and-seek more challenging.

Another challenge involves the cataloging of thinsies. Cataloging can mean anything from a short-title list to a full-blown description. But all variations of cataloging thinsies can generate frustration compared to cataloging regular books. I've given this issue much thought, and I believe it relates to the innate pursuit of reductive happiness.

When I look at my piles and shelves of uncatalogued material, I instinctively reach for the meaty tomes, perhaps that rotund quarto, or wide set. My next choice is a row of regular size books and so on. When I finish having a delightful time cataloging such books, I lean back in my chair, my hands clasped behind my head, feeling satisfied, and I enjoy the noticeable reduction created in the uncatalogued mass.

Then there are thinsies, which are just as interesting in content and association. I gather them with similar relish. But to catalog them, I must mentally brace myself as if preparing to mow my Houston lawn in July. The pleasure of the actual cataloging process mirrors the more substantial tomes. However, hardly any space is freed when I complete my stack of thinsies, and it appears I have achieved little, creating a measure of unhappiness that lingers. Thus, I don't catalog thinsies as often as I should. This is a challenge as my collection is particularly thinsy-rich.

The importance of gathering thinsies can vary depending on your collection's focus. Poetry is a thinsy magnet. Science and medicine generate many of them in the form of pamphlets and offprints. Americana is also well-represented. But any field would be hard pressed to out-thinsy my collection about the rare book world. I've gathered autobiographical reminiscences, biographical sketches, memorial numbers, small exhibitions, checklists, addresses to various organizations and libraries, chapbooks, and individual essays on every imaginable biblio-topic in separate or offprint form. And if the race is close at this point, the lead widens when bookseller catalogs are included, many qualifying as thinsies.

But where are the extra rewards associated with my thinsies? What separates them from their fatter brethren? A significant portion of mine are association copies, inscribed by the author to a biblio-friend or colleague. Often, they are separates and offprints of journal appearances provided to authors in small quantities for personal use. These association thinsies exemplify the breadth

and connections among the participants of the rare book world in ways that association copies of regular books do not. It is important to point out that many rare book people published no books or very few, but they did produce shorter writings preserved in various kinds of thinsies. These I have gathered assiduously, filling in historical gaps and illuminating forgotten corners beyond even the overreach of AI.

A personal reflection is not unwarranted at this point. My work life is done for the day, it is raining out, and I'm settled contentedly on top of our guest bed upstairs to read a small stack of newly acquired thinsies. I've learned not to get too comfortable, or I'll attend Nappy Hour and wake up with the thinsies precariously strewn about me. The guest bed is kept pristine by my wife Nicole. She has banned me from using it as a reading lair. Sometimes I don't listen, and I try to cover my tracks when I'm finished, but one glance at the bed and she knows.

The first in the stack is Warren Weaver's very scarce *In Pursuit of Lewis Carroll* (1970) from the library of collector, bibliographer, and appraiser John R. Payne. Weaver (1894–1978) formed an exceptional Carroll collection which was acquired by the Ransom Center at the University of Texas in the late 1960s. Weaver is generally remembered as a scientist and mathematician who wrote important works on communication theory and probability, but he was just as good a book collector.

His childhood enjoyment of *Alice in Wonderland* took an unexpected turn years later when he was perusing a bookseller catalog of science books and

> found listed a small volume with a title that hinted at an elementary discussion of a dull topic in Algebra; but the author was C.L. Dodgson and the price was very low indeed. I ordered it, and when it came, it proved to be a copy with a presentation inscription. Quite clearly, this dealer did not know, or failed to remember, that C.L. Dodgson and Lewis Carroll were the same person; and that any book with a presentation inscription from either was worth more than the dollar or two which I paid … I was hooked! Then along came a good copy of the first edition of *Through the Looking Glass* at a price even an Assistant Professor could slyly absorb into his budget without a confrontation with his wife. So for well over fifty years my collecting interests have been concentrated on Carroll.

Weaver would eventually gather dozens of presentation copies, the very rare first edition of *Alice*, letters, manuscripts, lots of thinsies, and hundreds of transla-

tions into foreign languages. He could also write well, and his essays on collecting are under-appreciated gems. Discovering this recollection led me to Weaver's extremely good essay published in the Princeton *Library Chronicle*, Autumn, 1951, "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland: Its Origins and Its Author." (I hope to find an inscribed offprint.)

The next thinsy in my reading stack, Charles W. Smith's *Collecting Pacific Northwest Americana* (1939) is an excellent association copy inscribed to legendary Americana collector, Thomas W. Streeter (1883–1965). Smith originally presented the topic as a talk at the Sixtieth Annual Conference of the American Library Association in 1938. The essay represents both the camaraderie and occasional rivalries between libraries and collectors. A librarian at University of Washington, Smith was extremely active over many decades. He built virtually from scratch the library's holdings of this subject area. By 1938, the collection numbered some 10,000 volumes.

Smith is best remembered for his *Check-List of Books and Pamphlets Relating to the History of the Pacific Northwest* (1909), which went into later editions. The work served as an important reference and as Smith notes, "It proved of great value as a handbook for librarians and collectors… and has been the means of supplying information about items to collect, location of copies, and the like, and has brought me in touch with collectors and authorities."

The value of Smith's connections in the book world is amply demonstrated by the wide variety of collectors, dealers, and friends of the library that made the collection possible. Smith writes:

> There was … an increasing interest in the history of the West and a few ardent collectors here and there were urging the importance of securing local history while it could still be had. One important stimulus was the arrival of numerous catalogs from book dealers specializing in Americana. We were soon seized by a conviction that something should be done.

Smith provides many examples of the enthusiasm surrounding the building of the collection. These give first-hand details of happenings that are often lost, including several great acquisition stories. For instance, he acknowledges the critical support provided by University of Washington history professor and bookman, Edmond S. Meany:

> At a time when Edward S. Curtis was sorely in need of money to carry forward his project of preparing his photo-history of *The North American Indian* (1907–1930), Professor Meany dropped his work at the University and spent a full week with Curtis, taking subscriptions. Fifty thousand dollars was raised that week and in gratitude Curtis told Meany he would give him a personal set of the publication. To this arrangement Professor Meany would not agree but told Curtis he might donate a set to the University Library. This is how we happened to have a complete set of the twenty volumes and twenty portfolios then valued at $3,000.

A complete set of this masterpiece sold at auction in 2026 for $1,664,000.

The association of Smith's thinsy with Thomas Streeter raises interesting questions. Smith and Streeter knew each other through their respective collection building, but whether Streeter provided any support to the University of Washington Library's Pacific Northwest collection is (yet) unknown to me. It is more likely that Streeter was competing against Smith for important material. The Streeter auction sale of 1966–1969 contained many Pacific Northwest rarities. It may have been friendly competition, but Streeter was relentless and omnivorous in his pursuit of Americana.

Was there any collecting rivalry or tension between the two men? I wonder this as I finish the thinsy, and I gaze lost in thought at the slowly spinning ceiling fan above the bed. Later I will learn that there is a file of correspondence between Smith and Streeter in the University of Washington Library archives. This would be a good starting point for research.

Next, I select Phyllis Goodhart Gordan's *Of What Use are Old Books? A Talk 4 April 1972 Bryn Mawr College Library* (1973). Gordan describes the collection of incunabula formed by her father Herman Lehman Goodhart (1884–1951) with her assistance. This collection of over 1,000 volumes was eventually given to her alma mater Bryn Mawr.

Phyllis Gordan (1913–1994) was an important scholar and collector herself, the author / translator of *Two Renaissance Book Hunters: The Letters of Poggius Bracciolini to Nicolaus de Niccolis* (1974). She also received the prestigious Sir Thomas More Medal for Book Collecting from the Gleeson Library Associates, the University of San Francisco. She married notable rare book librarian and bookman John Gordan of the New York Public Library. Books were in her blood.

Phyllis Gordan makes an observation about the pricing and availability of many incunabula in the early twentieth century that is hard to comprehend nowadays:

> My father began collecting to provide me with texts that were necessary for my work as a student here in medieval and Renaissance Latin and that had rarely been printed since the fifteenth century. This may sound today like a very extravagant gesture, but in the early 1930's it was not. Reprints which are common now did not exist then; microfilm was almost unknown. My father, who had been a member of the New York Stock Exchange and was of a financial turn of mind, carefully compared the cost of the incunabula he bought for me to use here at Bryn Mawr with the cost of photostats from the New York Public Library and found that he was coming out ahead.

Gordan points value of old books as primary sources of information for the study of cultural interests of the time period, the history of the texts, the history of printing, type and book design, as well as the wider examination of the book trade, printers' guilds, and the formation of printing firms. She adds:

> It is no coincidence that while I have been writing this paper I have been reading *Future Shock*. Probably all of you know that the author [Alvin Toffler] deals primarily with the transience of everything that we use now, the impermanence of our possessions and our relationships. It would be easy to say that the fact that we are here today to celebrate Bryn Mawr's ownership of incunabula is a proof of our irrelevance and of our being out of touch with modern thought. I submit that it may be an indication that we are trying to save our sanity or that we are trying to preserve and enjoy what others may learn to value too late.

My reading a variety of thinsies may or may not save my sanity, but it does supercharge my biblio-mind, or at least enlivens it, and leads me in new directions, fostering a wider view of the rare book world while simultaneously connecting people, books, and places on a more revealing level. There is also the immense satisfaction of being able to read and finish multiple thinsies in one go. This sense of completion counterbalances, and I would say outweighs, the frustration that builds when cataloging thinsies makes nary a dent in the piles.

Speaking of finishing, let us agree that the rewards and challenges of collecting thinsies is a worthy topic, allowing me to not only augment the English tongue via Mr. Winterich, but also provide a modicum of guidance and entertainment without bloating into a book-length work (much to my readers' relief and huzzahs). For let's be honest, there are many books that upon reflection might have been better served as thinsies. ❧

AUTHOR NOTE: *I am unable to resist creating a printed pamphlet of this essay and bringing to life yet another thinsy ready to complement if not outlast its digital twin.*



from Man Ray, Photographs 1920 1934

TRIOLET RARE BOOKS

surrealism, modernism, avant-garde

info@trioletrarebooks.com
trioletrarebooks.com

Reviews

Richard Kopley, *Edgar Allan Poe: A Life.* Charlottesville VA: University of Virginia Press, 2025. $49.95. Reviewed by Michael Ryan.

¶ At the outset, a disclaimer and some framers. I am not—probably like most of you—a Poe scholar. I am a historian by training and a librarian by choice. I do believe, however, that Edgar Allan Poe is one of Antebellum America's greatest gifts to world literature. You may not agree, and that's OK.

I did not find Poe on my own. He was delivered to me. First, by a kindly priest, my high-school English teacher, who thought I should read "Anabel Lee" before any other Poe. A beautiful melancholy lyric, readily accessible to the lovesick teen. Then, I encountered him as a newly anointed librarian, accompanying the man who had hired me, to New York to pick up a copy of what I learned was a "very rare" copy of a Poe work I had not known of, *Tamerlane*, Poe's first published piece. We were admitted to the East 57th Street townhouse that John Fleming used as his place of business. His assistant greeted us, and we were shortly met by the man himself, in his velvet slippers and smoking jacket, who apologized for keeping us waiting. He had been swimming with Jack Benny. Finally, when I was a fully vested professional and working at Columbia University, I was blindsided by an article in the student newspaper saying that my department had been hiding the actual mantel upon which Poe composed "The Raven." Such a squawk it raised. I had no idea it was there, but, alas, there it was. We had no choice but to move the thing out into a public space; otherwise the student newspaper would have wheeled into attack mode.

And now, Professor Richard Kopley has given me Poe again: the whole man. I am grateful.

If a writer's life experiences inform his art, Edgar Allan Poe's chaotic life practically dictated his art, as Kopley amply documents in his new biography of the man. Indeed, as Prof. Kopley demonstrates, the themes of mourning, melancholy, loss, memory, and consolation describe the writer's life as well as his art. For collectors, scholars, and Poe aficionados who want to understand the creative genesis of Poe's work, Kopley's masterful sourcing of the stories and poems is surely the ultimate guide. Prof. Kopley, arguably the current dean of Poe scholars, is now Emeritus at Penn State and has been a Grolier Club member since 2005.

From an early age, Poe was persuaded of his own genius as a writer, a self-assessment that rang true then and now. His aspirations were enormous and unrelenting, encompassing nothing less than the cosmos itself, which he attempted to account for in his late work *Eureka*. As if in compensation for periods of manic artistic activity, Poe seemed to need to self-destruct in periods of injurious inebriation that punctuated his otherwise brilliant career. Kopley documents the evolution of this erratic genius in considerable and fascinating detail. The master narrative is an ongoing dialogue between Poe's life and his art, how each shaped the other in myriad ways.

Kopley is wise to ignore the temptation to "diagnose" Poe, other than to suggest that there was probably some underlying medical issue. Rather, he gives us Poe without authorial intervention, reconstructed not only from Poe's works and letters but from the testimony of myriad contemporary friends and foes. Indeed, one of the great merits of Kopley's narrative is the fact that he gives us a worm's eye view of Poe in his times, instead of larding the story with academic commentary. Contemporaries found Poe a gentleman, a scholar, a genius to be sure, warm, gracious, and kind. But they also found him outrageous, disgraceful, amoral, and an empty braggart. They could swoon over his poetry and marvel at his inventive tales, but they also found him pretentious and hollow. Occasionally, his ardent supporters concurred with his most devastating critics. Poe was a living conundrum, a writer who could scale sublime heights only to collapse on a tavern floor. The esteemed poet James Russell Lowell caught the mood in a couplet: "Here comes Poe with his Raven, like Barnaby Rudge —/Three-fifths of him genius and two-fifths sheer fudge."

Kopley duly acknowledges the work of the three major Poe biographers in the twentieth century that preceded him: Arthur Hobson Quinn, Kenneth Silverman, and Jeffrey Meyers. However, Kopley's research is deeply archival in ways not always available to his predecessors. Himself a bibliophile, Kopley had access to Poe material in private collections, in particular that of Susan Jaffe Tane, a fellow member of the Grolier Club. The accumulation of archival evidence does not make for easy reading, but for scholars, collectors, and anyone with a genuine interest in Poe and his milieu, this biography is worth the effort.

Poe was orphaned at an early age, and one could say that, in spite of being adopted and raised in relatively comfortable circumstances, he remained an orphan for the rest of his life. Penury made him peripatetic—there are, according to Kopley, eight places in the Northeast Corridor that host "Poe houses." He found fame, but financial stability eluded him. For a time he had a personal, spiritual anchor, his wife Virginia. But once she died, he was unmoored and easy prey

for the demons that lurked inside him. By the late 1830s he was coming into his own, driven now by his one, all-consuming ambition: to start his own magazine, publishing his own work and that of writers whose work he deemed worthy. His initial prospectus trumpeted a journal informed by "a criticism self-sustained; guiding itself only by the purest rules of Art." His quest to meet this gnawing ambition paralleled his related quest to find another wife, one who might love him as well as support him materially. And just as it seemed that these two pursuits might finally coalesce and bring him personal stability and artistic freedom, the demons re-emerged and plunged him into the fatal abyss. In 1850, at the age of 41, the genius writer succumbed to his last binge.

Edgar Allan Poe: A Life provides a detailed and moving study of a needy soul who mastered himself long enough to produce a remarkable body of work integral to the American canon. ❧

MICHAEL RYAN directed rare book and manuscript libraries in several universities for over fifty years. His final position was Librarian of the New York Historical Society, from which he retired in 2022. He has been a member of the Grolier Club since 1988 and currently serves on its Council.

Gerald Howard, *The Insider: Malcolm Cowley and the Triumph of American Literature.* New York: Penguin Press, 2025. $35. Reviewed by William Butts.

¶ I came to Malcolm Cowley a decade after Gerald Howard's 1973 introduction to his subject. Howard was a recent college graduate, then a novice editor at Viking Penguin, and finally Cowley's editor. I was a graduate student who interviewed Cowley, then a novice editor who on a lark published a tiny literary quarterly about Cowley and his generation for a few years. Howard confesses, "I was smitten"—so too I.

Howard cautions readers that *The Insider* is not biography. It's a biography-based interpretation of Cowley's work and influence. (A first-rate biography exists: *Malcolm Cowley: The Formative Years*, a 1993 work by Dutch literary scholar Hans Bak. It covers Cowley's life up through 1930, so fingers crossed the second volume may yet appear.)

A poetry specialist bookseller once startled me when replying to my inquiry after Malcolm Cowley that I must have meant *Abraham* Cowley, a seventeenth-century English poet; Malcolm brought zero name recognition. This

mimics Howard's experience: "When I tell my well-read friends that I have been working on a book about Malcolm Cowley, they usually think at first that I am writing about Malcolm *Lowry*." *The Insider* is a corrective and Howard's intent is to bring out the major impact of Cowley as editor, literary critic and Lost Generation chronicler par excellence. He succeeds superbly, showing how lessened the canon of American literature would be if it were not for Cowley's championing of many an underappreciated writer of the past and shepherding of struggling young writers to get their work into print.

Howard excels at getting into Cowley's head, moving beyond the facts of his life to interpret how those events shaped his views and his work. There's the vivid portrait of his strange Swedenborgian parents, who "weren't in the least bohemian or politically oppositional; they were simply *different* and more than a little apart from the wider society." Born in rural Belsano, Pennsylvania, in 1898, Cowley grew up solitary but at home among woods and streams. He was precocious in literature and writing, entering Harvard in 1915. Like many Ivy Leaguers he cut college short for a stint in the American Field Service driving munitions trucks for the French Army. Similar to Hemingway driving an ambulance in Italy, it proved a "watershed experience and the culmination of a much longer process of deracination and uprooting."

Howard cuts through the caked-on myths surrounding Paris in the 1920s. *The Insider* reminds us that along with the brilliance of the writers is the bad behavior, youthful indiscretions and world-weary posing. Cowley's time there is only two years, much of it spent earning a graduate degree, the rest struggling to write and immersing himself in the little magazine scene. The image many associate with Cowley—genteel, pipe-smoking literary statesman—is tempered by this picture of the oat-sowing bohemian being treated for syphilis and arrested for punching a café owner.

The same generational experiences that united many in the 1920s led to their dismay at the commercialized American society to which they returned. Amidst the Wall Street crash and the Depression arose the shining beacon of a worker's utopia: the Soviet Union. The mirage appealed to many writers, whose flirtation with communism earned them the moniker "fellow travelers." By this time Cowley was a rising editor and reviewer with the influential *New Republic*.

The 1930s become the bugaboo decade of Cowley's life, when he came out swinging for communism and proletarian causes—signing every petition, attending every conference, speaking at large gatherings, writing sharp editorials,

proclaiming loudly wherever he could. Howard elaborates Cowley's activities in great detail—along with the regrets and apologies that followed.

Only when World War Two took center stage did Cowley ripen as editor and literary critic. Howard breathes new life into the Viking Portable tale and Cowley's role in making it a juggernaut that has helped shape America's reading interests for decades. The *Portable Hemingway* he edited in 1944 revolutionized study of this writer, finding depth and nuance where others found only simplicity. Cowley and other critics held William Faulkner, on the other hand, in high regard—but that doesn't sell books and in 1946 all his works were out of print. Howard tells the oft-told tale of Cowley's championing of Faulkner superbly. What a poor literary landscape we would have, had Cowley not seen what others didn't. Howard sums it up nicely as he describes Cowley's influential introduction to *The Portable Faulkner*: "In its quiet, unflashy way, it is a masterpiece of critical advocacy and explication, flowing, detailed, persuasive, and adroitly pitched at both the educated general reader and other writers, critics, and scholars."

Howard's image of Cowley in his elder statesman years is frank and eye-opening. Few have shown how mulish Cowley was in taking Jack Kerouac under his wing—every publisher had rejected *On the Road*—in the years-long process of getting the staid Viking Press to publish it in 1957. He tells this with an appreciation only a seasoned editor could muster. Same too with Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, whose 1962 publication was doubtful were it not for Cowley. Howard dissects his pivotal role in these now-acknowledged classics. "For one man to have discovered, championed, edited, and published two such books in such a short period of time is a remarkable achievement."

I admit a weakness for life studies in which the author still feels affection for the subject by the book's close—having reviewed many in which the shine has completely worn off. "I am of the party of Malcolm Cowley, obviously," Howard remarks, "and I think he deserves to be remembered in a fuller, deeper, and kinder fashion." He is certainly no Cowley apologist—indeed, he points out many a flaw and misstep of which I was unaware. That's okay, for the blemishes simply make the accomplishments more impressive. Howard's argument that Cowley's critics accept his decades-long *mea culpa* and view it in the broader context of a lifetime of contributions to the American literary landscape is compelling and masterful. ❧

WILLIAM BUTTS and wife Yolanda founded Main Street Fine Books & Manuscripts (ABAA) in Galena, Illinois, in 1990. He has been book review editor for *Manuscripts*, the quarterly journal of The Manuscript Society, since 1993.

Affiliate News

¶ THE ABERYSTWYTH BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GROUP continues its annual programme of four lectures in person and two online. In 2024–5 we heard from Dr. Alexander Scott of the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool on Thomas Phillips (1760–1851), who donated more than 20,000 books to St. David's College, Lampeter; Dr. Andrea Immel on the Newbery Children's Library at Princeton University; Rasma Bertz-Meyers on 19th-century oral history; Dr. Berthold Kress of Augsburg State Library on early Bibles; Professor Raluca Radulescu of Bangor University on mediaeval Arthurian literature; and Professor Helen Wilcox, also of Bangor University, on the Gregynog Press.

Our most recent programme included lectures by Dr. Edwin Rose of the universities of Cambridge and Leeds on the 18th-century naturalist and travel writer Thomas Pennant from Flintshire in north Wales; Professor Matthew Steggle of Bristol University on a letter found in the binding of a book in Hereford Cathedral Library which throws new light on Shakespeare's domestic life; our committee member Dr. Katie Gramich on Welsh fiction of the 1920s; Dr. Frank Ferguson of the University of Ulster on the impact that Bishop Thomas Percy (1723–1811) had upon the world of literature and ballad collection; our former Secretary Dr. Rhidian Griffiths on the late 19th-century Swansea printer and publisher Benjamin Parry; and our Chairman Dr. David Stoker on children's books and steam locomotives.

Our annual outing in 2024 was to the library at Erddig Hall near Wrexham. In 2025 we visited Tŷ Mawr Wybrnant, birthplace of the Welsh Bible translator Bishop William Morgan, and on September 22nd this year we shall be visiting the library at Mostyn Hall in Flintshire, the home of Lord Mostyn.

Our next programme of lectures begins on 20th October 2026 with a lecture by Tim Pye, Libraries Curator of the National Trust, on the early Welsh-language library history of Chirk Castle and Erddig Hall. Other lectures will include Dr. Tristan Burke of Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich on Alexander Geddes's 1797 satirical poem "The battle of B-ng-r"; Professor Richard Macve, Emeritus Professor of Accounting at the London School of Economics and Political Science, on treasures of the library of the Institute of Chartered Accountants; Dr. Joseph Hone of the University of Newcastle; Stephen Pratt on John Petts and the Caseg Press; and Professor Tiffany Stern of the Shakespeare Institute at the University of Birmingham. Visitors are always welcome at our meetings, both in

UA UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

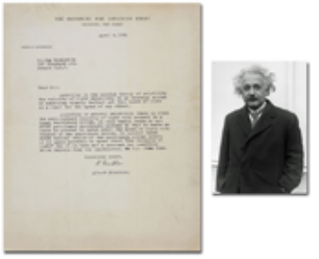
Auction & Private Purchase of
Rare Books & Manuscripts Since 1979



Lincoln Assassination ALS
Est: $15,000-$24,000
SOLD $40,625
January 2026



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
November 2025



Lincoln GEM MT 10 Signed
Est: $100,000-$150,000
SOLD $125,000
June 2024

UA UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES
88 Danbury Road, Suite 2A
Wilton, CT 06897 USA
203-454-0111
sell@universityarchives.com
www.universityarchives.com

University Archives is incredibly careful about authenticity. For 47 years, our firm has taken in an outstanding collection of fine manuscripts, important documents, rare books, relics, autographed material, & other unique treasures sure to entice the discriminating collector, dealer, or institution. A few of the superb items we've featured at auction can be seen above. Monthly auction listings can be viewed on our website.

person and online. Further information is available on our website: https://www.hugofox.com/community/aberystwyth-bibliographical-group-19783

Timothy Cutts, Secretary

Club News

¶ THE AMPERSAND CLUB met on March 19, 2026 at the Ramsey County Library-Roseville to hear "What's Up at the University Libraries? A Lot!" delivered by Kris Kiesling, Director of Archives and Special Collections at the Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota.

On April 16, 2026 we met at the Open Book in downtown Minneapolis to hear Matthew Z. Heintzelman, the curator of Western Manuscripts and Special Collections at St. John's University in Collegeville talk about the "Hill Museum & Manuscript Library and the Digital Archives." He brought many books for us to handle to go with his presentation.

We had our Annual Dinner on May 21, 2026 at Jax Café. The keynote address was "A Swindler of Widows All Over the Country" by Garrett Scott, Book Seller and Director of CABS Minnesota. At our business meeting The Ampersand Club elected for the 2026–2028 term the following: Pat Coleman, President, Dick Sveum, Vice President, John Moriarty, Treasurer, Tanya Cromey, Secretary, Peter Rokke, Membership Director, C.B. Sherlock, Printing Director, Richard Stephens, House Director, and four Board Members-at-Large, Duane Cologne, Rob Rulon-Miller, Lindsey Rulon-Miller and Todd Thyberg.

This summer we had a special road trip on July 18, 2026 to Stockholm, Wisconsin, "At the End of Schanilec Lane" to visit the studio of Ampersander Gaylord Schanilec.

Please visit our website theampersandclub.org for the complete schedule of our future 2026 meetings. *Richard Sveum, Program Officer*

¶ THE BAXTER SOCIETY is the bibliophilic society of Northern New England, the territory Frost designated as "North of Boston". Its membership is a happy group of book collectors, book art lovers, librarians, scholars, academics, and general bibliophiles.

In keeping with tradition, our January meeting was devoted to a members'

Show and Tell. During this Show and Tell, our members had the opportunity to present and discuss some of the most interesting books and ephemera from their personal collections. It was an informative, educational, and entertaining evening. It is always fun to see the treasures our bibliophilic friends have secured over the years. With respect to formal talks, at our March meeting, Curator Mary Crawford spoke on her Grolier Club exhibition "Paper Jane: 250 Years of Austen," marking the 250th anniversary of the author's birth. At our April meeting, Dr. Milly Budny, Director of the Research Group on Manuscript Evidence in Princeton N.J., spoke on "Bembino, a New Multi-Lingual Font." Dr. Budny was joined in her talk celebrating the work of Leslie French, the font designer, by Jennifer Larson, Reid Byers, and Matthew Young. Finally at our May meeting, we hosted Dr. Megan Cook, Arthur Jeremiah Roberts Associate Professor of Literature at Colby College, who delivered a talk entitled "Blame it on Caxton" during which she discussed Early Modern Printers and their Middle English Texts.

With respect to future matters, I am excited to report that we have a spectacular series of speakers and events scheduled for the upcoming year. A letterpress keepsake of the schedule has produced and provided to Baxter Society members. With respect to our first event, which takes place on September 9, 2026, photographer, printer, and book artist Peter Bogardus will discuss his interest in photogravure, woodblock, and letterpress printing. This meeting will be held in person and by Zoom. Additional meetings and speakers are scheduled monthly through May of 2026. Most of our meetings are hybrid, meaning that members may attend by Zoom.

Lastly, I am thrilled to announce that The Baxter Society expects to release its first major publication in many years. We hope to have this publication available sometime in later 2026 or early 2027. *Bob Macdonald, President*

¶ THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA On June 29th, the Book Club of California celebrated this year's recipients of the Oscar Lewis Awards. Named for California historian and club secretary from 1921 to 1946, the awards have been given each year since 1994. William Deverell received the Western History Award. Deverell is a USC professor and founding director of the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West, a collaborative research and teaching entity between USC's College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences and the Huntington Library. In introducing the award, Board President Terri Castaneda remarked on his importance as a historian and a mentor to the next generation of scholars.

John DeMerritt was recognized for his exceptional work in the Book Arts.

Since 1995, his studio has produced books and portfolios for artists, galleries, fine press publishers, and institutions. He has taught and lectured at The San Francisco Center for the Book and at colleges and arts organizations across the country. DeMerritt was recognized for his beautifully bound books, overall craftsmanship, and for his mentorship and commitment to the next generation of book makers and book binders.

In May, the Book Club published its 245th book, *A Western Publisher: Paul Elder & Company, 1898–1968*. Written by David Mostardi, this is the first book written about Elder and his career. For seventy years, his bookstore was a familiar sight in downtown San Francisco, and most people knew him as a bookseller. But Elder was also a prolific publisher. Between 1898 and 1917, he published over four hundred books, many of which remain very collectible. The finest of these were published in the years 1903–11, when he teamed with the well-known printer John Henry Nash. *A Western Publisher* was printed in both a standard and deluxe edition.

In this year's "Print Your Own Broadside Affair," we celebrated the 150th anniversary of Jack London's birth. Members enjoyed drinks, hors d'oeuvres, and desserts and got the chance to print their own broadside using the Book Club's Columbian press. Li Jiang of Lemoncheese Press, a letterpress and design studio in Berkeley, oversaw the design and printing.

We hosted two field trips for members over the past few months: one to the Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture at San Francisco Botanical Garden and the other to the UCLA William Andrews Clark Memorial Library. Often providing access to rare and exclusive collections, these field trips are popular with our members.

Finally, the Book Club continued hosting regular programs at our headquarters in San Francisco and at Pasadena Heritage in Southern California. Programs included "Digital Literary Redlining" with Amy Earhart; "Performing Chinatown: Hollywood, Tourism, and the Making of a Chinese American Community" with William Gow; "Bestselling Novels of the Great Depression" with David Welky; "The Golden Age of Neon in Hollywood" with Kathy Kikkert, "How California Comix Saved Comics" with Jorge Santos and Patrick Lawrence; and "Black Urban Landscapes of the Second Great Migration" with Wendy Thompson. All Book Club programs are free and open to the public and many are available via Zoom.

Daria E. Topousis, Vice President

¶ THE CAXTON CLUB's officers are Rudy Altergott (president), John Mon-

tes (vice-president), Leslie Winter (secretary), Nora Gabor (assistant secretary), Jeff Jahns (treasurer), and Jackie Vossler (assistant treasurer). The club's council has fifteen members serving three-year staggered terms. The new councilors (2026–2029) are Tad Boehmer, Mary Brockmiller, Cait Coker, Eddie Olewinski, and Roger Rudich.

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

Membership: We currently have 372 members, including resident members, non-resident members (fifty miles of more from Chicago), senior members, and junior 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 anyone who wishes to register at no charge (members of FABS societies are especially welcome). They enable the club to invite speakers from many areas of the US and other countries who deliver their presentations virtually and interact with the audience via Zoom after their talks. Programs since our last report included Adam Smyth on *The Book Makers: A History of the Book in Eighteen Lives* (May 2026 Zoom program); Newly appointed Chicago Poet Laureate Mayda Alexandra del Valle (an in-person program at the Union League Club presented in partnership with Chicago Collections Consortium and ULC Library and Archives); Julie Tanaka on "Is this a book?: the University of Washington Library's book arts collection" and Michèle V. Cloonan on "The visionary bookseller Alice Millard (1873–1938) and her Chicago beginnings" (both June 2026 Zoom programs). Forthcoming programs include Tim Gress on "Collector Burton Emmett and American book design" (September Zoom program) and Neil Harris on "Some women binders in Paris: the Deco years" (September 2026 in-person program at the Woman's Athletic Club).

Grants and awards: The club is pleased to record that five past Caxton recipients have been selected to be included in the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives Artist Book exhibit, which will open October 20th, 2026. The book artists selected are Ben Blount, Aimee Lee, Jose Resendiz, Amy Richards and Mardy Sears. The T. Kimball Brooker Caxton Club Rare Book School Award for 2026 went to Samuel Amendolar, a third year PhD student at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, specializing in medieval literature and manuscripts. The Bibliographical Society of America Scholarship, funded by the Caxton Club, has been awarded

to Dr. Clare Byers for her project "Forgotten journeys: the French bestsellers that shaped American exploration." On November 19th , 2026, at a presentation by Aimee Lee, the 2026–27 Caxton Club Artist Book Awards will be presented.

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 our last report include "'To hold as 'twere': Anthony Mourek's Irish collections" by Christian Dupont; "Bringing historical libraries to life: the Libraries of Early America project" by Jeremy Dibbell (both May/June 2026); "Bookplate collecting in the twenty-first century" by James B. Keenan (July/August 2026); and "Traps for the young: Comstockery and its legacies" by Lindsay DiCuirci (part 1, July/August 2026; part 2, September/October 2026).

I am resigning as *Caxtonian* editor with effect from December 31st, 2026, and extend my best wishes and any support I can give to the incoming editor, Jessica Moore.

Membership survey: As a contribution to the club's strategic planning effort, the membership committee conducted a survey of members to find out what they most value, which kinds of activity they would like to see, and what their priorities are. The response rate was about 30% and respondents represented a good cross-section of the membership. The committee received much positive feedback as well as constructive suggestions. One finding was that respondents joined the club chiefly because they sought the fellowship of like-minded people; other motivations were intellectual curiosity and personal enrichment. They value the *Caxtonian* and the awards given to book artists. They would like to see the club revive its book publishing program. A full report of the survey was given to the club's council and will be summarized in an upcoming *Caxtonian*.

Michael Gorman

¶ THE BOOK CLUB OF DETROIT Our first event of 2026 was a special treat: "From Papyri to the 20th Century," a presentation by BCD past president Sam Gatteno on March 21. Our venue was the First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak. Sam's incredible collection of books and manuscripts runs the gamut from Shakespeare forgeries to 16th Century books to 20th Century *livres d'artistes*—

and more. By popular demand, Sam very kindly reprised his presentation, this time via Zoom on June 27, with technical assistance from his son Scott; many thanks to both! This presentation can be enjoyed on BCD's You Tube channel.

On April 29, BCD was privileged to be included in an event hosted by The Henry Ford: Prof. Ned Blackhawk of Yale University discussed his award-winning book, *The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History*. Prof. Blackhawk reflected on the book's central themes, including 20th-century Native American activism and the shaping of federal Indian law and policy. (There is a family connection: Prof. Blackhawk is the son of BCD member Evan Blackhawk of Mossback Books, who is married to BCD board member Janet Blackhawk of McCormick Books.)

On May 7, we enjoyed a visit to the state capital in Lansing, organized by BCD board member Tom Meyer. The visit began with a luncheon in the magnificent Michigan Hall of Justice, courtesy of the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society. Many thanks to Lynn Seaks, the Historical Society's Executive Director, Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center Coordinator Rachael Drenovsky, and Hon. Michael F. Gadola, Chief Judge of the Michigan Court of Appeals, for leading our tour of the Hall of Justice and making us welcome! We also explored the Library of Michigan and State Archives. We were amazed to learn that the Library houses over 1.3 million titles! Among its projects: Collecting copies of every school yearbook for Michigan universities, colleges, and high schools.

As in years past, BCD had a presence at the 9th Annual Detroit Festival of Books on Sunday, July 19, at Eastern Market. Founded and organized by BCD past president Ryan Place, "Bookfest" has become one of Detroit's great occasions, with authors, booksellers, and related crafts, and many BCD members are vendors there. Many thanks to Ryan for giving us this opportunity to introduce BCD to the book-loving public.

On September 17, another treat awaits: A visit to the rare books collection of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, with Dr. Pablo Alvarez, Curator of the University's Special Collections Research Center, as our presenter.

On October 11, BCD will return to the U. of M.'s Ann Arbor campus for the 47th annual Ann Arbor Antiquarian Book Fair. Through the good offices of BCD member Jay Platt of West Side Book Shop, BCD will again have a booth at the fair.

Our annual holiday gathering is planned for Saturday, November 28, at the historic Ladies Literary Club of Ypsilanti.

Visit bookclubofdetroit.org and follow BCD on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube. *Marcia McBrien, President*

¶ THE EARLY BOOK SOCIETY sponsored six sessions at the 61st International Congress of Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University (May 14 to May 16, 2026), as well as its annual speakers' dinner and business meeting. Themes included: MSS and Books in Periods of Radical Change; Old Books, New Technologies; Old Wine, New Skins: MSS and Books Adapted, Emended, Repurposed; Late Medieval Libraries and Collections; Teaching and Learning in Medieval MSS and/or Books; and Women's Books: Writers, Makers, Owners (a roundtable). Volume 28 of the *Journal of the Early Book Society* was published by Pace University Press. The Twentieth International Conference of the Early Book Society (to be held in Poitiers, France, June 7–11, 2027) is currently being planned. The Call for Papers is below.

Recovering Book Histories: MSS and Printed Books from 1350—1550: The Twentieth International EBS Conference will be hosted by Katherine Zieman with meetings to be held at CESCM Poitiers (Centre d'études supérieures de civilisation médiévale), part of the university which is located in the center of town, in the 16th-century Hôtel Berthelot and the adjacent Hôtel Fumé, a Gothic-style building built in Poitiers between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Poitiers is most closely associated with Eleanor of Aquitaine (d. 1204) and with St Radegonde (d. 587), the Frankish queen, whose church in the city houses her tomb. The university was first established in Poitiers in 1431; the university's Médiathèque will exhibit some highlights in its medieval MS collection. Lunches, a welcome cocktail party and a party at the Hôtel de Ville, along with the conference banquet will be featured, along with paper sessions as well as a trip out. Abstracts are due Dec 15.

Papers might explore the provenance, codicology, production, script, type, and/or illustration in a specific MS or set of MSS or in a printed book or in several. Another approach might be to discuss a manuscript or book for which we have a limited history or no history; what kind of contexts might be suggested through examination of physical evidence? Or one could look at the term "history" more literally in discussing the making of chronicles, for example. Yet another approach might be to consider the ways in which texts influence each other through translation or cultural and linguistic transitions. The main language of the conference will be English, but we will consider proposals in French. Special consideration will be given to papers that include reference to our French

venue or French connections between MSS, or MSS and printed books, or scribes and/or printers. Once abstracts are accepted, papers should be timed for 20 minutes. The time limit will be strictly observed. Please send an abstract of about 150 words or less or full session proposals with your name, affiliation and email address on the abstract itself to all three organizers (marthadriver@hotmail.com, katherine.zieman@univ-poitiers.fr, mc29@st-andrews.ac.uk) by **December 15, 2026**, and include EBS Poitiers Abstract Proposal in the subject line of your email.

For more information, visit earlybooksociety.org.

Martha Driver, President

¶ FLORIDA BIBLIOPHILE SOCIETY's 2025–2026 season ending banquet in May had two highlights: the presentation by our banquet speaker, Jim Anderson, owner of the Old Mill House Café and Printing Museum in Homosassa, Florida; and the award presentations to and speeches of the three winners in our annual Lee J. Harrer Student Book Collecting Essay contest: Luna Quinlin, Kyla Jackson, and Isabella Angelov. Students from nine area colleges and universities participated in the contest in 2026. Special thanks to Roxanne Rhodes who once again chaired contest activities and to FBS members Sean Donnelly, Maureen Mulvihill and David Hall, each of whom provided books for our end-of-banquet book raffle.

FBS archivist Carl Mario Nudi has initiated a monthly pdf news sheet, *For Members Only*, which supplements our regular monthly publication *The Florida Bibliophile* (which is accessible to both FBS members and the general public via our website, www.floridabibliophiles.org). Over the summer there have been other FBS stirrings: several members participated in a June visit to an area favorite book store, Lighthouse Books, in Dade City Florida. Lighthouse Books is owned by Mile Slicker, one of the founders of the Florida Bibliophile Society back in 1983. FBS's information technology expert, Sean Marcus, has begun work on a major revision of our website. And long term FBS members Kymberlee Rau and Stephanie Montour agreed to take on roles in our FBS leadership team.

FBS Vice-President Ben Wiley has set up an auspicious schedule of activities for our 2026–2027 season. We will begin with our annual "Welcome Back / What Book Discoveries did I make this Summer?" meeting in September. In October Maxine Meilleur will speak on her forty years in Kuwait and her role as a used bookstore owner and broker for rare books on the Middle East. In November Max Dam, a master of online book sale platforms and personal book sale interactions, will share with FBS members his fascinating stories of book discoveries. In December FBS members David Hall and Lynne Shrum will host our annual holiday gathering at Westminster Shores in St. Petersburg.

Our planned schedule for 2027 begins with a January presentation by Gail Rau about her days in publishing with the "mad men" of the book publishing world in 1970s New York and Boston. In February Lawrence Martin Capuder, an author, and editor at Little Paris Books, Southwest Louisiana, will speak on "Art Immortality and Democratization through Current Book Publishing." March will be a special month: we will not only support and participate in the Florida Antiquarian Book Fair on March 6th and 7th, but later that month FBS member Tom Touchton will lead us in a field trip to the Tampa Bay History Center, concluding with the Touchton Map Library. In April Caryn Bush Baird will discuss her work as a news researcher/librarian for PolitiFact and at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies in St. Petersburg. And, once again, in May we will have our annual banquet with a festive lunch, a provocative speaker, presentations by college student essay contest winners, and a book raffle. *Gary Simons*

¶ THE GROLIER CLUB This fall will bring four new exhibitions to the Grolier, the first two opening on the same day, September 8th: on the ground floor, "Pioneers in Hand Papermaking: 50 Years of Innovation at Dieu Donné," curated by Susan Gosin and Cynthia Nourse Thompson, and in the second-floor gallery, "Henry Wessel: Photographs and Books from the Collection of Jack Gray," curated by Mr. Gray.

Opening on December 3rd in the second-floor gallery will be "Black Brilliance: An American Chronicle from the Collection of Alvin Patrick," curated by Mr. Patrick. Also in December (opening on the 15th, celebrating the 100th anniversary of quantum mechanics), will be "Uncertainty and The Quantum Revolution," curated by Derek Kaufman in the ground floor gallery.

A panel of distinguished scholars will assemble on September 14that 6:30 pm to discuss "The Declaration of Independence Printings." Michael Auslin, John Bidwell, Dan Lipcan, and Ted Widmer will present their new findings.

A second panel discussion, "We Are All Ducassians," presented by ANOTHER SPACE, will follow on October 14th at 6:00 pm. Beverly Adams, Kevin Saliou, Éric Walbecq, and Caroline Weber will explore the legacy of Isidore Ducasse and *Les Chants de Maldoror*. This panel complements the exhibition "Echoes of Maldoror" opening at ANOTHER SPACE in Chelsea NY in October.

The season will bring a cascade of public lectures, all at 6:30 pm. On Septem-

ber 22nd, Stacie Vos will speak on "Books in all their Aspects: The Publications of the Hroswitha Club." On October 20th, Christine Nelson presents "Books, Luv, and Envy: The Forty-Year Relationship of Belle da Costa Greene and A. S. W. Rosenbach," and on November 5th, Eric Colleary will address "Houdini's Library," marking both the centenary of the magician's death and a corresponding exhibition at the Ransom Center. Also in November, on the 10th, Suzanne Karr Schmidt will discuss "Impressive Textiles: Premodern Printing on Fabric," as a preview of the Newberry exhibition opening December 10th. On November 17th, James Shapiro will deliver the annual Nikirk Lecture on "The Execution of Othello," the story of an enslaved young man executed in New York in 1741, with unsettling resonances of Shakespeare and American racial violence. And finally, co-sponsored with the American Antiquarian Society, Alvin Patrick, in conversation with Frankie Hutton and Mark Whitaker, will discuss "Centuries of the Black Press in America," on December 16th.

Throughout the entire period, the Grolier Virtual Common Room is open continuously to members and offers informal gatherings as well as regular events: a weekly Happy Hour, Fridays at 5:00; the monthly Collector's Showcase, the third Wednesday at 5:30; the New Englanders, the third Tuesday at 5:30; and Poetry Night, usually the first Thursday at 7:00, all times Eastern.

Reid Byers, FABS Trustee

¶ THE HIMES & DUNIWAY SOCIETY It is an absolutely fabulous collection: the Petros G. Pelos collection was given by Perry Pelos to the Oregon Historical Society. On June 11, members of the Himes & Duniway Society, together with trustees of the Oregon Historical Society, gathered for a presentation about the gift. OHS librarian, Brian Stauffer, presented the 10,000-foot view of the holdings, which consist of 100 items largely from the Pacific Northwest. There are famously iconic and exceptionally rare first-impression printed and manuscript travel accounts, atlases, portfolios and governmental proclamations, each in as near to original published condition as one could hope to find.

Mr. Pelos took us on his collection journey, starting 25 years ago in London where he bought a map for $250. His passion for collecting grew from there. The theme behind the collection was "the way west" and its complications.

There are so many treasures in this collection. Books that originally had maps still had the maps in them. One example was the Lewis and Clark journals that were still in their original paper wrappers prior to the owner having a bookbinder add boards. Another treasure was the *North American Indian Portfolio: Hunting*

Scenes and Amusements of the Rocky Mountains and Prairies of America by George Catlin. This was a first edition first issue, as it was originally issued in the rare original portfolio. The items are unmounted, and only one other copy of the first edition first issue is known to exist.

If you are in Portland, Oregon, you can make arrangements to see this collection by contacting the Oregon Historical Society.

Later in the summer, we will join Professor Stephen Beckham at the Beckham Estate Winery for a program featuring the son of Ursula K. LeGuin. Ms. Le Guin is known in the fantasy and science fiction world as one of the first woman authors. Over the sixty years of her writing, she published twenty-one novels, eleven volumes of short stories, twelve books for children and four books of poems. For those of us that enjoy archives, the University of Oregon currently has 145 linear feet of materials with 274 containers and, as a sign of the times, 43 gigabytes of unprocessed digital materials of the Le Guin archives.

Scott Howard

¶ NORTHERN OHIO BIBLIOPHILIC SOCIETY It has been another busy year for bibliophiles in northeast Ohio. We held the 40th Akron Antiquarian Book & Paper Show on Easter weekend and it was a memorable one with good attendance. Twenty-six dealers from nine states offered selections from their inventories of books, prints, photographs, and other works on paper this year, and we saw a lot of happy faces on attendees leaving the Fair with new bibliophilic finds. The NOBS board is already hard at work planning the 41st show for the spring of 2027.

We also have had two well-attended NOBS Forums this spring and summer at Loganberry Books in Shaker, Heights, Ohio. In May, librarian and former Agency Historian for the Government Publishing Office (GPO) George Barnum gave a fascinating talk about his book on photographs of the GPO, *Picturing the Big Shop: Photos of the U.S. Government Publishing Office, 1900–1980*. Barnum shared some of the insights he learned from the years he spent working for GPO that brought many of the pictures to life. Later in the summer, Dr. Meredith Gadsby, Professor of Africana Studies and Comparative American Studies at Oberlin College, gave a talk on northeast Ohio native Toni Morrison titled "Thick Love or None at All," discussing the ways that the Nobel Prize-winning author depicted love in her novels. We also are working to reschedule a presentation originally planned for July on preserving a 1663 Haggadah owned by a local congregation and hope to have a date for that soon. Another highlight of the summer was the annual NOBS

field trip to Morgan Conservatory. NOBS members were given a private tour of the non-profit institution devoted to papermaking, letterpress printing, and the book arts. We learned about the history of letterpress printing and saw several working presses in action, witnessed a papermaking demonstration, and toured the kozo garden outside their studio space in a former industrial shop on the east side of Cleveland.

On September 26 we are looking forward to co-sponsoring a symposium on Cleveland native Charles Chesnutt with the Rowfant Club. The event will feature presentations by six scholars and a white-glove tour of the Chesnutt archives at the Western Reserve Historical Society. NOBS Forums will return in October with a talk by Julie Blitz on romance novels titled "Romance 101: The History, Evolution, and Hallmarks of the Modern Romance Novel." And we are also putting the final details together for our annual meeting in November, which will feature a talk on fore-edge paintings by Dr. Harrison Wick, Special Collections Librarian and University Archivist at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. More details about all of our upcoming events, as well as recordings of some of our past NOBS Forums, can be found on our website (nobsbooks.org).

Lastly, NOBS is deeply saddened to share that we lost beloved former president and long-time member of the club Larry Rakow to pancreatic cancer on September 1. Larry was well-known for his extensive collection and expert knowledge of children's and moveable books but will be most remembered by his NOBS colleagues for his friendly smile, clever wit, and gracious companionship. He will be missed.

Paul Heyde, FABS Trustee

¶ THE ROXBURGHE CLUB OF SAN FRANCISCO Founded in 1928, the Roxburghe Club of San Francisco is organized around the common interests of its members in book collecting and the printing arts. The Club meets monthly on the third Tuesday of each month from September through May at the Marines' Memorial Club in San Francisco for dinner and a speaker presentation, and occasionally at other times for special activities.

The 2025–2026 season's dinner-meeting presentations included collector Alex Angell giving a virtual walkthrough of the pavilions of the 1925 Paris Art Deco Exposition with examples from his collection of many of the exhibitors' creations; bookseller Kate Mitas on the archives of Nannie S. Newman and "Dr." Absalom Minola; designer bookbinder Beth Redmond on the topic "You Can Judge a Book by Its Cover"; bookseller Alexander Akin on "Proscribed Archives and Disreputable Collections: Handling Problematic Materials in the Antiquarian Book Trade"; art and paper conservator Karen Zukor on "Defeating the Measles Demon: The UCSF Japanese Woodblock Print Collection"; bookseller Liz Pollock on "Serving the Community: The Junior League Cookbook"; and collector Garth Tissol on "Robert Estienne's Press: A Look Back after 500 Years."

In addition to the Club's regular dinner and speaker meetings, members were given a private afternoon tour of the Rumsey Map Center at Stanford University followed by lunch at the home of Stephanie Kimbro Dolin, owner of First Bite Press; a private tour of Andrew Hoyem's exhibition on Porter Garnett at the Bohemian Club; and the Club's always festive annual holiday Wayzgoose was held in December at the Book Club of California.

The Club's newly appointed Master of the Press and Printer's Devil for the next two-year cycle were announced at the May meeting, and planning is underway for a commemorative publication and celebration of the Club's 100th anniversary in 2028. Inquiries may be made at roxburghe@bccbooks.org.

Randall Tarpey-Schwed, Master of the Press (emeritus)

¶ THE TICKNOR SOCIETY Greater Boston's bibliophilic organization, The Ticknor Society, was founded in 2002 and is proud to be embarking on its 25th year of existence. We have maintained a busy schedule of programs since our last report to FABS.

Curators' tours of the exhibitions mounted at Harvard's Houghton Library are always favorites for our members. In April we viewed "Thanks for Typing: Women's Type Labor in Literature and the Arts" there. In a visit to the Concord Free Public Library, also in April, we learned about and viewed some very special items from several of CFPL's extensive collections of materials related to Louisa May Alcott and other talented members of the Alcott family. Then in May we visited Boston College to view "Collecting in Conflict: The Yeats Family and the Public Arts," an exhibition jointly mounted by the college's McMullen Museum of Art and its Burns Library.

In June we combined our Annual Meeting with a much-loved activity, a Show & Tell event, where eight members each brought a favorite item from their personal collections and explained the why and the how of its acquisition.

Now, as fall begins, we are planning something brand new. With the goal of meeting informally, we have planned four get-togethers, under the moniker Convivial Biblios, each one to be held at a different Boston-area brew pub. As I write this, our first much-anticipated gathering is still two weeks away, so stay tuned!

Janet Steins, President

¶ THE UTAH BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOCIETY In June, the Utah Bibliographic Society (UBS) held a banquet and presentation at the Alta Club, a long time Salt Lake City institution. Ryan K. Shosted and N. E. Davis presented on their newly published book on the Deseret Alphabet (*The Deseret Alphabet: A Fixed and Unalterable Sound*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 2026). On the prior day, the J. Willard Marriott Library of the University of Utah along with the UBS sponsored an all-day workshop on the Deseret Alphabet (𐐔𐐯𐐲𐐨𐐯 𐐋𐐡𐐮𐐯𐐻), a 38-character phonetic alphabet of the English language developed in Utah by the board of regents of the University of Deseret at the urging of Brigham Young in 1853. Among the reasons for its creation are spiritual, Millennial, and educational for both immigrants to Utah and children.

The Deseret Alphabet was used mostly in the late 1850s in several diaries, in some correspondence, in certain LDS Church documents including the Manuscript History of Brigham Young, and in a number of other manuscripts such as an English-Hopi vocabulary. The *Deseret News,* one of the local papers, printed scriptural passages in the paper in 1859–1860. Four books (two school primers, the full *Book of Mormon,* and the first portion of the *Book of* Mormon) were printed in the alphabet in 1868–1869. A gold coin minted with a date of 1860 contains an inscription in the Deseret Alphabet. The alphabet never really caught on and its use fizzled by the early 1870s. The final printed materials from 1874 to 1876 were political tickets for Utah's People's Party listing the names of candidates for elected office. The Deseret Alphabet has seen a resurgence over the past few decades with versions of it occurring on the internet and in art.

All UBS members received a keepsake, limited to 75 copies, of a broadside printed in the Deseret Alphabet of the "Jabberwocky" by Lewis Carrol. Tryst Press in Provo, Utah printed the broadside, a nice addition to the UBS keepsake collection.

In August, members of the UBS met at the L. Tom Perry Special Collections of the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University to view rare books and manuscripts. Greg Seppi, curator of the 19th and 20th Century Americana collection, provided and spoke about a wide range of interesting items from their collection including books signed by Charles Dickens, a book inscribed and signed by Oscar Wilde, a *Book of Common Prayer* signed and inscribed by Queen Victoria to her grandson, a leaf from a Gutenberg Bible, and a number of historical items associated with the LDS Church including a first edition of the *Book of Mormon*. Members also examined a cuneiform tablet and Roman bronze plates. Some attendees gathered for lunch after the event.

Craig Smith, FABS Trustee

¶ THE BOOK CLUB OF WASHINGTON (BCW) closed out its formal 2025/26 program year with our Annual Meeting on April 26. We enjoyed a very lively and informative presentation by Doug Leen, "Ranger of the Lost Art—Rediscovering the WPA Poster Art of our National Parks," which also resulted in a poster-size keepsake featuring numerous national park posters. We presented the 2026 Robert D. Monroe Award to Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) student Axel Ericson. The Monroe Award is given annually to an outstanding student in PLU's Publishing & Printing Arts Program. We also elected a new president, Tamara Belts, and vice president, long-time member Cindy Richardson. This is a major change for our club as our beloved president, Gary Ackerman, decided to step down after thirteen years in that position. Fortunately, he did not step away and continues to serve as our treasurer.

Motivated by Gary's fine example, we established the Gary Ackerman Distinguished Service Award. This award will honor members of the BCW whose long-term service, leadership, and commitment have made a lasting impact on the BCW as an organization and community, celebrating those who advance our mission by fostering interest in books, book collecting, and the book arts. It is not intended to be an annual award but will periodically recognize extraordinary contributions to our organization.

We had a summer of social connections which included our Annual Summer Picnic on June 20 at the home of Gary Ackerman and Robin Dearling. The great food and conversation were complemented by Gary sharing some highlights from his architecture book collection. In addition, Lifetime Member Tom Rogers once again gifted another Lifetime Membership, this time to our *Journal* editor, Michael Taylor.

In August we gathered in Ballard for another BCW Bookstore Social. This time we did it a bit differently, first gathering at BCW member owned Ballard Books, where we browsed and visited prior to proprietor Nils Dickmann highlighting some recently acquired treasures. We then strolled down the street to The Ink Drinker, a book themed bistro and reading bar, for refreshments and more convivial conversation.

Programming for the 2026/27 year begins on September 27, when we honor this year's Emory Award recipient, Danielle H. Miller. The Emory Award is an annual award intended to recognize a person or organization that has made an extraordinary contribution to the culture of the book in Washington state. Danielle is the Director of the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library and has served at the helm since 2008. The library is a foundational part of Wash-

ington's reading life—one that makes participation in book culture possible for thousands of Washingtonians. The library is also a national leader in providing these services and has been recognized by the Library of Congress as Network Library of the Year in 2009, 2016, and 2022. We look forward to learning more about her library and her advocacy for its users.

October 24–25 is the Seattle Antiquarian Book Fair (SABF) an annual event cherished by the local book community. The BCW will once again host a reception for members and book dealers on Friday, October 23, which is always a popular event. We will also have a booth at the fair. Additionally, we are sponsoring an "Insider's Tour of the Seattle Antiquarian Book Fair" on both days of the fair. The tour will be led by Portland dealer Scott Brown of Downtown Brown Books.

Our November program will feature Lisa Fagin Davis, Executive Director of the Medieval Academy of America, who will be talking about Medieval Manuscripts in Washington State. We are really excited to be partnering with the University of Washington Libraries and with Textual Studies to host Dr. Davis.

We will close out the year with our Annual Holiday Dinner and Auction in December. This is our main fundraiser for the year, which is vital for our carrying out our work. It is also a lovely time to gather to celebrate our share our bookish passions.

We continue to publish a biannual *Journal* focused on articles about book history, book arts, antiquarian bookselling, collections and collectors, or book reviews on books covering similar topics. We welcome submissions from members and non-members alike. For more information check out our website and look for the "How to write for *The Journal*" under the Publications tab.

As always, if you are interested in learning more, check out our website at www.bookclubofwashington.org, or follow us on Facebook or Instagram.

Tamara Belts, Vice President and FABS Trustee

¶ THE ZAMORANO CLUB An encounter with an early U.S. president in a Southern California storage locker, a memorial to another president built in a vast orange grove, a logistically complex construction project and pioneering antiquarian bookseller Alice Millard were all the subjects of talks this spring at the Zamorano Club.

Michèle Cloonan, dean emerita of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Boston's Simmons University, discussed the remarkable life and career of Millard, the subject of her new biography, *Becoming Alice Millard: Bookseller and Tastemaker*, at our March meeting. Millard (1873–1938), who moved

from Chicago to Pasadena with her husband George in 1913, was not only one of the few women of her generation to sell rare books—she was the single most influential antiquarian bookseller in Southern California in the 1920s and early 1930s (and reportedly the first woman to bid at Sotheby's).

In April, Sandra Brooke Gordon, Avery Director of the Huntington Library, gave a detailed, behind-the-scenes look at the Huntington's most ambitious project ever—the renovation and expansion of the Library's original 1919 building. Robert A.M. Stern Architects has created an innovative approach that preserves much of the building's original fabric while creating state-of-the-art storage for the more than 11 linear miles of books and manuscripts and the Art Museum's 38,000 works on paper. Scheduled for completion in Spring 2029, the project's logistics are mind-boggling.

Every book dealer is familiar with this scenario: a long, hot, dusty search through a dark storage space, because you never know … For our May meeting, Zamorano member and past ABAA President Brad Johnson of johnson rare books & archives described a chance encounter in such a storage locker in Chino, a Los Angeles suburb not known for its literary culture. Ordinarily, volume four of a fifth edition of *Plutarch's Morals* published in London in 1718 would not set a dealer's heart racing. But Johnson described the initial clues and subsequent months of dogged detective work that ultimately demonstrated that this particular volume happened to be from Thomas Jefferson's library. (You never know.)

Zamorano's 2025–2026 season ended in June with a talk from Zamoranista Nathan Gonzales, head of special collections at the A.K. Smiley Library in Redlands, who told how this Southern California citrus boomtown became home to the Lincoln Memorial Shrine in the depths of the Depression. Gonzales, who also serves as Shrine curator, described how the Shrine, with its research collection, exhibits, tours, and educational outreach programs, seeks to deepen the public's understanding not only of Lincoln but of the causes and lasting consequences of the Civil War.

Club member Bill Donohoo and his wife Laura once again made their home amid the mountain pines in Lake Arrowhead available for the Club's traditional summer outing in July. Remarkably, Bill and Laura are regular attendees at Zamorano meetings, despite the 150-mile roundtrip drive that requires. Their dedication is more than matched by our members from the San Diego area, who regularly spend five or six hours in freeway traffic to get to and from meetings.

This year also marks the end of an era. After 29 years of service, Margaret Dickerson retired as Zamorano's business secretary as of Sept. 1. "There are only

a handful of Club members who can remember Zamorano without Margaret, who quietly and efficiently carried out the day-to-day tasks essential to the Club's operation while graciously negotiating a constantly changing kaleidoscope of presidents," said current Club President Helena de Lemos. "We are tremendously grateful to her for all she has done for Zamorano over the past three decades."

Jim Tranquada, President

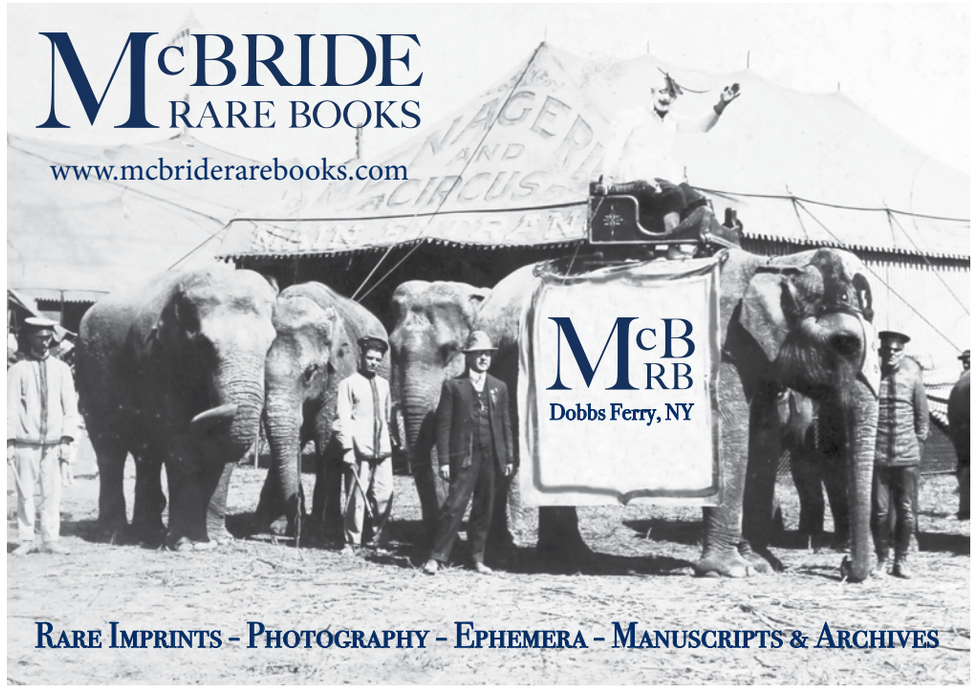
* * *

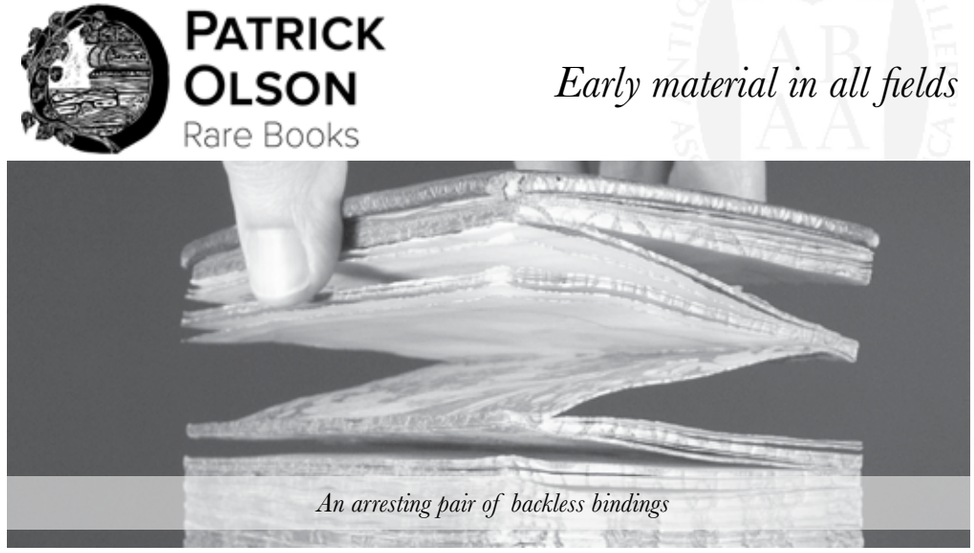
POSTSCRIPT

Books

But what strange arts, what magic can dispose,
The troubled mind to change its native woes?
Or lead us willing from ourselves, to see
Others more wretched, more undone than we?
This books can do—nor this alone! they give
New views to life, and teach us how to live;
They soothe the griev'd, the stubborn they chastise,
Fools they admonish, and confirm the wise.
Their aid they yield to all; they never shun
The man of sorrow, nor the wretch undone:
Unlike the hard, the selfish, and the proud,
They fly not sullen from the suppliant crowd:
Nor tell to various people various things,
But show to subjects what they show to kings.

From George Crabbe's *The Library: A Poem* (1781). Reprinted in *Songs of the Press and Other Poems Relative to the Art of Printing* (London: Fisher, Son, & Company, 1845).





Jean Frédéric Oberlin (1740-1826).

Collection of Nature Prints for the Use of Students.

Waldersbach (Alsace) c. 1785-1800.



The celebrated educational reformer compiled these 174 nature-printed leaves — labeled in French, Alsatian and Latin — for classroom use in the free public schools he established in rural Alsace. In the original cardboard slipcase, titled in manuscript *Impressions de Plantes.*

BRUCE McKITTRICK RARE BOOKS

43 Sabine Avenue, Narberth, Pennsylvania 19072-1741

+1 (610) 660-0132 info@mckittrickrarebooks.com

Full description on our website: www.mckittrickrarebooks.com