



Special Centennial Issue

Caxtonian

A Newsletter of The Caxton Club of Chicago

Volume III, No. 1

January 1995

Aesthetics of the Book Link Caxtonians Over the Years



The collection of 100 years of Caxton Club publications, owned by club Historian Frank J. Piehl. (Photo by Dr. Piehl)

Historian Neil Harris To Address Club Gala

Neil Harris, distinguished Professor of History at the University of Chicago, will deliver the keynote address for the Centennial Gala of The Caxton Club, January 26, 1995, at The Newberry Library. He will speak on "High Culture and High Ambitions: Chicago of the 1890s," a prose portrait of Chicago and Chicagoans that fostered many long-lived cultural institutions of Chicago, including The Caxton Club.

Prof. Harris authored a book about that all-American of the 19th century, P.T. Barnum. As a result of that work, he has studied Chicago, the all-American city. His essay on the history of the Chicago Public Library system, published in *Chicago Magazine*, shaped public opinion to underwrite a new building for the central library — the Harold Washington Public Library — instead of a rehabbed downtown department store.

A nationally recognized scholar and speaker, Prof. Harris brings a special, personal perspective on learning, culture, and Chicago traditions wherever he speaks. Caxtonians will not want to miss the meeting, which marks the 100th anniversary of this distinguished organization.

The Centennial Gala will be preceded by the opening of the exhibit, "Personal Treasures - Favorite Books from the Collections of Current Caxton Club Members," in the Hermon Dunlap Smith Gallery of the Newberry at 5:30 p.m.. Dinner is scheduled in East Hall of the Newberry at 6:45 p.m., and Prof. Harris will speak at 8 p.m.

Thomas Joyce

NOTE: Caxtonians and guests are requested to pay in advance for dinner meeting meals to facilitate the large numbers expected at these events.

Caxtonian

The Caxton Club of Chicago
Founded 1895



President - Robert Cotner
Vice-President - Thomas J. Joyce
Secretary - Karen A. Skubish
Treasurer - Charles L. Miner
Historian - Frank J. Piehl
Archivist - Brother Michael Grace, S. J.
Past President - Hayward R. Blake

Council

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Bruce W. Hubbard
Susan F. Rossen
Alice D. Schreyer
Harry L. Stern

Class of '96

Robert L. Brooks
Eugene Hotchkiss III
Gretchen L. Lagana
Kathleen Lamb
Frank J. Piehl

Class of '97

Brother Michael Grace, S. J.
Edward Quattrocchi
Florence Shay
Glen N. Wiche
Robert Williams

First Fridays Program

Chairman - Edward Quattrocchi
Co-Chairman - Leonard Freedman

Secy - Bookkeeper - Jane Smith



Newsletter Staff

Publisher - Robert Cotner
Editor - Michael Braver

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Musings...

The slipcase, the cover and its design, the paper and ink, the typography — its technology and arrangement, the printing and binding, the words, the ideas — their beauty and power in human life — and the unifying aesthetics of the book are the ties that bind Caxtonians, today and over the years.

It is appropriate that we mark our centennial this month by publishing our 61st book, *Celebrating a Century of the Book in Chicago: The Caxton Club, 1895-1995*, one of our most ambitious publications and certainly one of the finest. Every detail of this latest book has been wrought with utmost care as artists and craftspeople coalesced to bring it into being — for the sheer joy of seeing fulfilled in book-form the labor of their hands and minds and the concern of their spirits. It has been done.

Book lovers, perhaps more than others in the scheme of things human, believe deeply. Their belief, like the carefully crafted book itself, is formed of fragile elements, with an awareness that *something* in the whole of the structure will be recognized as indestructible and understood, in part at least, for what it is.

Franz Kafka, whom Harold Bloom in his marvelous book, *The Western Canon*, called "our icon of the writer's vocation as a spiritual quest," wrote: humankind "cannot live without a permanent trust in something indestructible in himself, though both the indestructible element and the trust may remain permanently hidden from him."

I posit that it is the perpetual search for something indestructible — in the book, in life, within ourselves — that forms the strong common bond linking men and women from many walks of life, from various cultures, religions, and races, and from a host of disciplines into an active association of people of books through The Caxton Club.

It is equally appropriate that we celebrate our centennial by sharing with fellow residents of this metropolis the joys of the book arts in their most diverse and compelling ways through the 22 exhibits at more than a dozen institutions. It is indeed significant that Mayor Richard M. Daley has proclaimed 1995 as "The Year of the Book in Chicago" in honor of our centennial.

As I study the superb centennial program developed under the able general leadership of Karen Skubish and Frank Williams and their hard-working Centennial Committee — volunteers all — I stand in awe of what they have accomplished for the club, for Chicago, for the book. A sentence from Robert Frost rings in my mind regarding our centennial: "Strongly spent is synonymous with kept." The history of The Caxton Club in our time is captured in the wholeness of that indestructible truth, it seems to me.

Robert Cotner
President



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

RICHARD M. DALEY
MAYOR

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the mind is our most precious human heritage and the life of the mind our most important human freedom; and

WHEREAS, the book has been, and continues to be, the single-most important creation toward the cultivation, refinement, expansion and preservation of the mind, individually and collectively; and

WHEREAS, the book is the keystone in the edifice of civilization, holding humankind and her ideas in balance with human dignity in building a truly effective society; and

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago has been an important center for the development and publication of the book in the nation and the world; and

WHEREAS, for 100 years, the Caxton Club has been Chicago's premier organization dedicated to the book in society and all that it means to the life of the mind in our time, and beyond:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RICHARD M. DALEY, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO, do hereby proclaim 1995 to be THE YEAR OF THE BOOK IN CHICAGO, in honor of the 100th anniversary of The Caxton Club, and its celebration of a Century of the Book in Chicago, 1895 - 1995.

Dated this 23rd of August, 1994.


Mayor

Caxton Club Will Cover the Town During 'Year Of The Book' in Chicago

THE CAXTON CLUB



*Celebrating
a Century of
the Book in
Chicago*

1895-1995

**Join us often this
year for our
monthly exhibits
and lectures**

If Caxtonians look closely at a copy of the centennial broadside, they will notice that fully 15 institutions are mounting 22 exhibits throughout the Chicago area over the next six months. These exhibits will be under The Caxton Club centennial theme, "Celebrating a Century of the Book in Chicago, 1895-1995."

Colorful Caxton Club banners (see illustration, left), designed by Hayward Blake, will wave over each exhibit, in a broad triangle that extends across Greater Chicago, from Naperville to Lake Forest to Hyde Park.

Caxtonians will be pleased to note that, in every case, these exhibits were freely and graciously offered to the club as a contribution by the curators of all participating institutions.

The Exhibit Committee of six stalwart Caxtonians — Mary Ann Bamberger, Kathryn DeGraff, Gretchen Lagana, Kathleen Lamb, Ned Rosenheim, and Paul Gehl — contacted some 48 institutions in a campaign that began four years ago.

The process began with a call to identify an appropriate curator, and then follow up with a written proposal, followed by a second call. Eventually numerous calls had to be made to each institution, right up to the moment the broadside copy finalized. Many curators had good ideas and wanted to participate, but could not mount an appropriate exhibit in the centennial period. Others could not marshal the institutional resources to participate.

The committee — and all Caxtonians — are thrilled with the result of the extensive work. The exhibits, presented so marvelously in the broadside — designed by Hayward Blake (see illustration, right) — are immensely varied in subject. They offer, quite literally, something for *almost* everyone.

The committee — and the Caxton Council — urge all Caxtonians to make it their mission to see as many of these marvelous exhibits as possible. See them ALL, if that is not asking too much of our devoted membership. (And bring a friend or two to share the pleasure!)

Paul F. Gehl

THE CAXTON CLUB



*Celebrating a
Century of the Book
in Chicago
1895-1995*

Caxtonian Aide Jane Smith Retires After 23 Years Service

Jane Smith, who, since her retirement as secretary to the President of The Newberry Library, was Caxton secretary/bookkeeper, has retired after 23 years of service to the club.

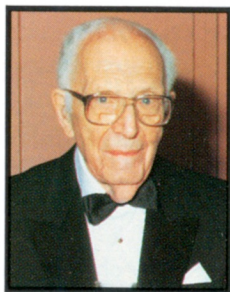
In a brief ceremony at the December 21 dinner meeting, The Caxton Club recognized Mrs. Smith with a framed citation from the Council, presented by President Robert Cotner.

Members and guests gave Mrs. Smith a standing ovation.

In Memoriam: Samuel L. Rosenthal, June 6, 1899 -- November 1, 1994

Caxton Club member since 1940, Council member 1961-66 and 1972-77, Vice President, 1972-74, and President 1974-76. Member of the Grolier Club, Fellow of the American Antiquarian Society and of the Morgan Library.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Michigan and a Harvard Law School graduate, Sam was not simply academically gifted; but he also was wise. I suspect he was born that way. Sam and his wife Marie-Louise collected private press books, especially the publications of Officina Bodoni and fine bindings. Sam considered Marie-Louise to be an equal partner and someone who should be recognized in her own right. As Caxton Club Presi-



dent, he advocated and spearheaded the admission of women as members.

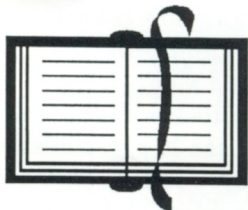
As the first woman president of The Caxton Club, I sometimes called on Sam for his sage advice. He was never too busy. His approach was always reasoned. He took you by the arm when he spoke with you. He had a twinkle in his eye when he knew

something that you didn't. It gave him great pleasure to share with you his knowledge and wisdom. Use your head, but trust your heart, Sam might have said. But he would have used a story or two to illustrate his point. Sam told me that although he was more comfortable with the reasoned approach to issues, he had learned from Marie-Louise that sometimes the right thing to do was to trust your intuition.

He loved life and the law, learning and books, ideas and people. Sam was a philanthropist, humanist, and humanitarian. He was a wise counselor, trusted friend, and genuinely kind person. He was a caring, gentle and generous human being. We shall not see his like again. He will be dearly missed.

Mary Beth Beal

The Caxton Chronicles



One hundred years ago, on January 26, 1895, 11 bibliophiles gathered in the University Club,

then located in a building erected after the Great Chicago Fire, at 116 Dearborn Street, in the block north of where The Caxton Club now meets, in the First National Bank Building. These prominent Chicagoans met to create a new club and share their common love of books.

They were men of experience, dedication, and foresight, for they preserved the minutes of their meeting for posterity in a bound record book measuring 10x7½ inches, with the title *Caxton Club Record* stamped in gold within gold rules on the front cover. Charles L. Hutchinson, a Chicago grain merchant and banker, who devoted much of his energy to the Art Institute of Chicago, was elected temporary chairman. George Higginson, Jr., an investor and railroad magnate, served as secretary and re-

corded the minutes in a graceful and literate hand.

The meeting proceeded briskly, for the founders came well prepared. After electing a temporary chairman and secretary, they passed seven motions: to constitute themselves a club, to incorporate the club, to adopt as their objective "the literary study and promotion of the arts pertaining to the production of books"; to name the new organization the "Caxton Club," to elect the 11 present plus four others to the board of directors, or Council; to designate a committee of three to draft a constitution and by-laws, to recommend officers, a publications committee, and a meeting place, and to sponsor an exhibition of bookbindings from Chicago collections that Hutchinson was already preparing at the Art Institute of Chicago. The business was concluded in 30 minutes, and the meeting adjourned.

In addition to Hutchinson and Higginson, the other nine at the meeting were philanthropist George A. Armour,

publisher Charles J. Barnes, John Vance Cheney, librarian at The Newberry Library; industrialist James W. Ellsworth, George M. Millard, in charge of the rare book department at the A. C. fine press of Way & Williams; and banker and broker John H. Wrenn. The other four named were capitalists Edward E. Ayer and Martin A. Ryerson, manufacturer and merchant Augustus N. Eddy, and Herbert S. Stone, co-founder of the fine press of Stone & Kimball.

The founding fathers rolled up their sleeves and infused life into The Caxton Club in short order. Four days after the January 26 organizational meeting, Illinois Secretary of State William H. Henrichsen signed the Articles of Incorporation of The Caxton Club, and the founders met for the first time as the legally constituted Council of the club on the following Saturday. Caxtonins can read about what happened next in the history of the club, which will be available at the Centennial Gala on January 26.

Frank J. Piehl

Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation Makes Donation

The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation has award an unrestricted grant of \$15,000 to The Caxton Club for use in the centennial program of the organization.

"This is excellent news," Caxton President Robert Cotner commented, "for it brings in much-needed revenue for our exceptional program of publication and exhibition during the centennial year. And it makes more intimate the historic ties between Gaylord Donnelley and The Caxton Club. Gaylord would be delighted, I am certain."

Gaylord Donnelley, following in family tradition, joined The Caxton Club in 1933, according to club Historian Frank J. Piehl. He was an officer of the club and a member of the Council 1934-42 and 1949-54.

In 1977, he addressed the club on "Seventy-Five Years of Lakeside Classics." In 1985, he hosted Caxtonians at the R.R. Donnelley Memorial Library and spoke about the Donnelley printing traditions and library surrounded by thousands of fine products of the Lakeside Press.

The linkage between The Caxton Club and R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co. is one of those remarkable, rare, and unbroken bonds of people and institutions over four generations and during the century of The Caxton Club.

"We are both grateful for and honored by the continuation of the tradition that this gift represents," Cotner said.



RR DONNELLEY
& SONS COMPANY

Caxton Club Completes First Century, December 21, 1994

The last dinner meeting of 1994 was the final meeting, as well, of The Caxton Club's first century, President Robert Cotner reminded 102 members and guests at the close of the dinner meeting, December 21.

Following a program of delightful, informative presentations by several past-presidents, Cotner asked all past-presidents at the meeting to join him at the podium. These included Ken Nebenzahl, Frank Williams, Arthur Miller, Mary Beth Beal, Bill McKittrick, and Hayward Blake.

"Surrounded as I am by past presidents of The Caxton Club behind me and as yet undesignated future presidents before me, I asked all to rise as I pronounce a benediction for tonight's gathering and for our first one-hundred years as an organization.

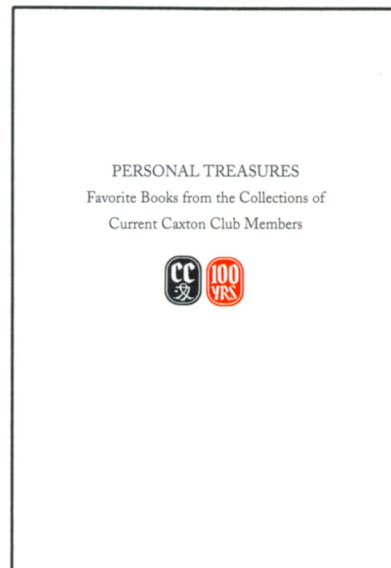
"I can think of no better words to

conclude this occasion than the final lines of Alfred Lord Tennyson's 'Ulysses.'" Cotner then recited:

Come, my friends,
'Tis not to late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides. and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved heaven and earth, that which we are, we are,
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Those present applauded this final moment as the first century of the "gathering of book lovers dedicated to the literary study and promotion of the arts pertaining to the production of books" in Chicago came to a most suitable conclusion.

'Personal Treasures' Checklist Completed



Caxtonian Muriel Underwood designed and supervised the printing of "Personal Treasures: Favorite Books from the Collections of Current Caxton Club Members," a checklist now ready for distribution at the Centennial Gala. Printed on 80-pound Mohawk Superfine smooth white stock with a cover of Splendorlux stock, the 20-page checklist contains both an introductory essay by Paul F. Gehl and a listing of the exhibit items of the 50 Caxton members in the "Personal Treasures" exhibit, opening at The Newberry Library, January 25 and running through April 23, 1995.

The six categories of the exhibit are: Chicago and the Midwest, Medieval Manuscripts and Early Printing, Bindings Ancient and Modern, Press Books, Heroes and their Books, and Miscellany of Marvels.

Among the many fine items in the exhibit is a copy of *Cordiale: Of the Four Last Things*, printed by The Caxton Club's namesake, William Caxton, in 1479, from the collection of Abel Berland.

The checklist was underwritten by a grant from Rand McNally and printed by River Street Press, Aurora.

Former Caxton President Kenneth Nebenzahl Recalls a 'Highlight' of His Tenure 30 Years Ago

One of The Caxton Club's great moments was when we celebrated our 70th anniversary in 1965 and we invited the Grolier Club to join us for a bibliophilic weekend in Chicago. Quite a number came, led by their president Gordon Ray, the renowned book collector and president of the Guggenheim Foundation. The opening event was a black-tie dinner at the Casino. This historic moment in the annals of our club came close to being the worst catastrophe of my then young life.

The Caxton never has been big on the black tie thing, but I had observed that the Grolier was. So, in order not to provide ammunition for condescension by our guests, who were thought to be capable of such an emotion, I, as president, had pushed hard for the welcoming dinner to be formal — and, it was far from unanimous when adopted.

Josy and I had taken a room at the Drake, to change for dinner, and to spend the night, so as to be on hand for the proceedings in the morning. She drove from Glencoe, bringing clothes for the evening and we met there late that afternoon. On went my shirt, black tie, studs, cuff-links, socks, shoes, and, when I reached for the trousers, we were both shocked to learn that everything had arrived but the tux.

As you can imagine, there was very little time. What to do? We phoned home, where the au pair girl who took care of our children confirmed that the tux was safely hanging on the closet door, ready to go. We asked her to throw the kids in her VW and bring the tux to the Casino, pronto. Fine, but she was so unfamiliar with Chicago that she didn't know where to exit the Kennedy. What to do? We called my associate,

David Lasswell, fortunately catching him at home, and he agreed to go to the Ohio Street exit of the Kennedy, flag her down, and drive to the Casino.

While she sped down the expressway with my tux *and* our kids, the guests were arriving. I greeted them in black tie, blue plaid sportcoat and gray pants. Talk about irony!

I suspect that a number of the Easterners wondered about Midwestern sartorial elegance, but I struggled to keep a stiff upper lip with my most hospitable smile. I won't even speculate on what anti-formal Caxtonians were thinking!

During dinner, I received a signal, slipped away to the gents room, and quickly swapped sportcoat for dinner jacket and formal trousers for gray slacks, arriving back at my place just a second before my time to welcome "formally" the Grolier, and introduce Gordon Ray, without disgracing our great and ancient club.

Is there a moral to this fable? There are several:

* Never miss a Council meeting, Caxton Councilor, and find yourself elected president.

* But, should you be, don't lead the club away from its traditions.

* And, if you do, make certain, if you are playing emperor, that you are *not* caught without the emperor's clothes on.

Ken Nebenzahl

First Meeting of FABS Scheduled for February

Caxton President Robert Cotner attended the fall meeting of the Fellowship of American Bibliographic Societies (FABS), November 4, at the Grolier Club, New York City.

Attending, besides Cotner, were Bruce McKittrick, a Caxtonian from Pennsylvania; Martin Antonelli, a Chicagoan from the Grolier Club; Larry Siegler, of Cleveland's Rowfant Club; Jack McKlatchey, also of Rowfant, and George Allen, of Philadelphia's Philobiblon Club. Mr. Siegler serves as FABS chair.

A proposal was offered to have the first meeting of FABS for book society members across the country coincide with the opening of the ABAA Antiquarian Book Fair, February 23, 1995, in San Francisco. Cotner commented that many Caxton Club members would find it difficult to attend at this time because of the club's centennial programs.

It was further proposed that meetings alternate from West Coast to East Coast to Midwest, annually, and Cotner invited FABS to join Caxtonians in Chicago in 1997.

The first meeting, therefore, is set for Thursday, February 23, 1995, 6 to 8 p.m., at the headquarters of the Book Club of California, 312 Sutter Street, San Francisco. The event will be co-sponsored by the Roxburghe Club of San Francisco. All Caxtonians are invited to attend.

R.C.

Book Marks

Luncheon Programs

All meetings, unless otherwise noted, are held in the Mid-Day Club, 56th floor of the First National Bank of Chicago, Madison & Clark, Chicago. Luncheon and discussion, 12:30 p.m.

February 3.

Frank J. Piehl, club Historian, distinguished collector of Chicagoana and Eugene Field, and author of the centennial history, will speak on the founding of The Caxton Club and its development through the first 100 years. The luncheon is scheduled at The Newberry Library, 60 West Walton Street, Chicago, 12:30 p.m., with viewing of the "Personal Treasures" exhibit before and after the presentation.

March 10.

Caxtonian Glen Wiche will tell the little-known story of the naval side of the American Civil War, utilizing memoirs and other personal documents from his extensive research. In a talk entitled, "Rhett Butler and Company," he will link both literature and history in his presentation.

*Ed Quattrocchi
Leonard Freedman*

Newberry Library Lyceum Includes Caxtonian Lecturer

The Newberry Library, long a benefactor to The Caxton Club, offers annually, in the tradition of American culture, the "Lyceum," whose roots extend back to the Lyceum movement, founded in New England in 1826.

Each year, beginning in October and running through March, the Newberry Lyceum provides exhibits, lectures, tours, performing art programs, children's story hours, and seminars. Although all events of this important program will be of interest to Caxtonians, the seminar offered by Caxtonian and Council member Ed Quattrocchi will be of particular interest.

Dr. Quattrocchi will offer a seminar, "The Renaissance Prince," on Thursday evenings, 5:30-7:30 p.m., between March 23 and May 25. The 10-session seminar will deal with such issues as how did 16th century ideas about leadership and statecraft fit into their contemporary context and how might they be relevant, if at all, for us today?

Dr. Quattrocchi commented recently, "I believe the Lyceum is a rich source of humanistic education that The Caxton Club should not only support but promote." The cost of the seminar is \$95. For more information, phone the Newberry at 312/943-9090, ext. 318.

Dinner Programs

Caxton Centennial meetings will be held in historic sites throughout the city rather than at the regular meeting site, The Mid-Day Club. Members will want to consult the Centennial brochure for more details and read carefully their program announcements for information regarding parking.

January 26.

Centennial Gala, featuring Neil Harris, speaking on "High Culture and High Ambitions: Chicago of the 1890s," at The Newberry Library, 60 West Walton Street, Chicago. Cocktails and Exhibit Viewing, 5:30 p.m., Dinner, 6:45 p.m., Program, 8:00 p.m.

February 15.

Following a tour by Caxtonian Glen Wiche of the Fine Arts Building, former Caxtonian Greer Allen, Yale University Printer Emeritus, will speak on "R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company in the World of Books." at the Fine Arts Building, 410 South Michigan Ave. Cocktails and Tour of building, 4:30-6:30 p.m., Dinner and Program, 6:45-9:00 p.m.

Tom Joyce

Advance reservations are absolutely necessary, and meals must be paid for, in advance, by club members. Members - \$30; all others, \$50.



The Caxton Club of Chicago
60 West Walton Street
Chicago, IL 60610