



Caxtonian

A Newsletter of The Caxton Club of Chicago

Volume IV, No. 5

May 1996

A Passion for Books Created the Abel Berland Library

"This is not a collection in the usual sense. I was not interested in a single author, period, or subject. When I buy a book, I buy what I want to read and make part of my library. These are books that I cherish as part of my own literary and scientific interests." The speaker is Abel Berland, Caxtonian since 1957 and collector *par excellence*.

He continues: "The heart and soul of my collection is William Shakespeare, whom I consider to be the most important writer in any language and who created the greatest body of work, other than the *Bible*. Shakespeare understood the human condition and spoke for humankind everywhere. He is as relevant today as he was in the 16th and 17th centuries."



Berland in his library, designed by wife Merideth. (Photo by Michael Berland)

The Berland library is composed of four general collections: **15th Century incunabula** — books and manuscripts produced between 1455 and 1500; **English literature, landmark scientific texts, and the works of William Shakespeare.**

The earliest document of the 63 incunabula in the Berland library is a hand-drafted manuscript on vellum of the *Magna Charta* dating from the first quarter to the first half of the 14th Century. The next earliest is the *Book of Hours*, circa 1430, containing 26 full pages of hand-painted illumination according to the custom of Sarum and numerous additional illuminations.

The library also contains three early editions of Cicero. The 1467 *Laelius* de

Amitita is a first edition. The 1468 *De Oratore* is one of two copies in the United States, the other being in the Morgan Library. The third is the 1483 *Inventone*. There are, as well, the *Nuremberg Chronicle* of 1493 containing 1,800 woodcuts, *Hypnorotamachia Polphili* of

1499, and *L'Arbe des Battailles* of 1493. Only one other copy of the *L'Arbe des Battailles* exists in the United States, a copy on paper in the Morgan Library. The Berland copy is on vellum. And there is a 1475 first edition of Vergil.

The library's English literature collection is equally remarkable for its quality and range. It contains runs of first editions by Byron, Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Lamb, Tennyson, and Coleridge — many inscribed and most in original boards. Notable in this collection is a 1633 first edition of John Donne's *Poems* and the handwritten manuscript of *Juvenilia* bound in one volume. This particular edition is found nowhere else and has been used in recent major scholarship on Donne.

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Remembrance

For five hours one day last week, I sat in the private library of Abel Berland, held many of the treasures of history, and talked with one of the country's great bibliophiles and collectors.

"I must hold your Caxton if I may," I told Berland at one point in our conversation. He obliged and pulled from the shelf his *Cordyal on Four Last Things*. This book, printed by William Caxton on his Westminster press, March 24, 1479, is one of 11 known to be extant and the only one in a private collection. To hold in your hands a book printed by Caxton is, in a remarkable way, to touch the hand of the person who created it.

Toward the end of my visit, I said, "You have a first edition of Thomas Gray's 'Elegy.' May I see it before I leave?" He found and handed me the thin, bound copy of "An Elegy Wrote [sic] in a Country Church Yard," published in London, 1751. "I like to hear you read poetry, Bob," he said. "Read it aloud to me."

And so I concluded our fellowship of books this day by reading aloud from the first edition of Gray's "Elegy." When I finished, we sat across from each other in Berland's magnificent library, surrounded by the gentle silence that always accompanies great literature read with devotion. I had held but a fraction of the Berland collection, but I had touched the sources from which Western civilization lives, moves, and has its being.

I then said, "I really must go. It's late, you're tired, and I've a long drive ahead of me." I thanked Abel for his gracious civility and hospitality, and we shook hands. I knew we would both lie awake this night, stirred by our companionships, both ancient and present.

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Caxtonian

The Caxton Club
Founded 1895



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Musings...

Civilization is like ancient, hand-crafted silver: it will tarnish if not properly cared for, but with diligent attention and hard, often tedious and solitary artisanship, it can be restored to its original beauty and richness.

This metaphor came to mind the other day when I read in William Manchester's *A World Lit Only by Fire* his observation that the awakening from medieval lethargy came as individuals established "new ties with the gems of antiquity" during what we know as the Renaissance. This awakening led not only to a "redefinition of knowledge itself," but to a "new concept of the cultivated person — *homo universale*, the universal [human being]: creator, artist, scholar, and encyclopedic genius in the spirit of the ancient *paideia*." The culmination was, he wrote, the "Western world's first community of powerful lay intellectuals since...the 4th Century."

Civilization has always been borne by individuals sufficiently fortunate to have kindred spirits sharing their enterprise of discovery, preservation, and inheritance. Our affinities as much as our affiliations link us. Ralph Waldo Emerson comes to mind, and the Transcendental Club, a gathering of one of America's earliest fellowships of *homines universales*, who gave to the land perhaps our greatest period of civilization since Native Americans — Iroquois and Cherokee in particular — graced this Continent with their own unique civilizations.

Often, it seems, we fail to understand the nature of who we are and the potential we share as people of the book in the late 20th Century. I thought of this recently as I visited again the private library of Caxtonian Abel Berland and held the rare and exquisite volumes of his world-class collection. His intimate knowledge of each volume and its provenance is a testimony to his thorough, life-long devotion to books and learning.

There are other Caxtonians, as well, who, by their superb attention to books, manuscripts, maps, fine bindings, and the whole array of learning itself, are part of this special fellowship in our time. These include Ken Nebenzahl, Marie-Louise Rosenthal, Frank J. Piehl, Jerry Fitzgerald, Rhoda Clark, and others.

They belong in that pantheon of bibliophiles so admirably introduced by Nicholas Basbanes in *A Gentle Madness*, which presents the stories, among others, of the birth of the great coastal libraries of America — the Huntington in California, the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York City, the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas (Austin), the Houghton Library of Harvard — all emerging as disciplined individuals devoted themselves to the "gems of antiquity."

It is, indeed, *devotion* of people and its consequence that give birth to and nurture civilization: institutions contain but relics. Through lineage with *homines universales* of history, members of The Caxton Club and of other book societies across the country preserve for our time, alone and in our gatherings, the treasures of the human spirit. By our personal investitures of mind and soul, we celebrate — we restore to its deep, rich lustre, as if fine silver — civilization. Is it possible that we are on the threshold of a new Renaissance?

Robert Cotner
Editor

A Review

Caxtonians Form Thread Throughout Basbanes' *A Gentle Madness*

A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books. Nicholas A. Basbanes. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995. \$35.

Reviewed by Robert Cotner

There is a microcosmic thread in Nicholas A. Basbanes' extraordinary study, *A Gentle Madness*, invisible to the naked eye, that runs throughout the 600-page book. This thread is The Caxton Club of Chicago.

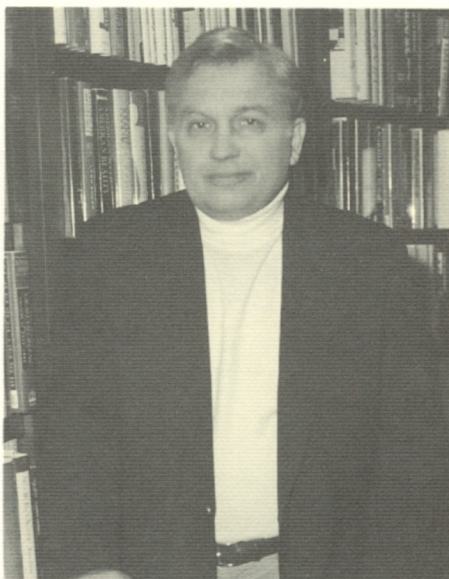
Although never mentioned by name nor listed in the index, The Caxton Club, through its members, appears at strategic times and provides, upon occasion, standards by which certain aspects of book collecting are measured.

In his "Acknowledgements," Basbanes cites Caxtonians Martin Antonetti, Sem Sutter, and Paul F. Gehl, for, along with many others, "showing me the treasures" so important to this work. In Chapter 4, "America, Americans, Americana," he cites a 1983 essay by late Caxtonian Robert Rosenthal on the books and collections destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871 — as well as those that survived. He discusses in this chapter, as well, Walter Loomis Newberry, whose will brought about the Newberry Library, which The Caxton Club calls home at the present time.

In Chapter 5, "Brandy for Heroes," Basbanes discusses the auction of the Robert Hoe III collection in 1911. Chicago bookseller, the late Walter Matthew Hill, a Caxtonian since 1898, a member of the Council, chair of the Publication Committee, and listed as one of the 100 important book people of Chicago in Frank Piehl's Caxton history, is quoted, "I had no less than 300 items which are for the Newberry Library of Chicago, but not one could I obtain."

In Chapter 8, "Mirror Images," Basbanes pursues the theme, a quote from French collector Maurice Robert: "your library is

the mirror of your personality." In this context, T. Kimball Brooker, a Caxtonian since 1979 and, Basbanes states, a "noted collector of 17th



Author Nicholas Basbanes

Century books," is mentioned as a winner of the Adrian Van Sinderen Award for book collecting and as the "sponsor of a similar competition at the University of Chicago."

In Chapter 10, "Obsessed Amateurs," Basbanes presents his longest feature on any Caxtonian, a six-page discussion of Louis I. Szathmary II — Chef Louie — whose collection of several hundred thousand volumes on culinary arts and Hungarology are now being donated to institutions across the country. Basbanes has — as all of us who know him have — a very special place in the heart for this remarkable man and collector. A Caxtonian since 1968, Szathmary has spoken to the club and hosted several Holiday Revels at his Restaurant in Lincoln Park. One of the illustrious "Caxton 100" in the Piehl history, he currently busily gives his collections away, Basbanes tells us, while he continues to collect. Chef Louie confesses to Basbanes: "It is like getting pregnant after the menopause; it's not supposed to happen."

In Chapter 12, "Continental Drift," Basbanes focuses on the movement of book collecting westward. A central figure in this chapter is Louise Taper, who began early in the 1980s "to document the life and times of Abraham Lincoln" through collections. Three Caxtonians are mentioned in this discussion. Oliver Rogers Barrett, a member beginning in 1921, president of the club (1945), and, according to Carl Sandburg, the leading collector of Lincolnia before Barrett's death in 1950, is the standard against which Taper measures her progress in becoming history's leading Lincoln collector. Barrett's son Roger W., a Caxtonian since 1941, Council member, 1955-59 and 1963-65, past president, 1962, and one of the "Caxton 100," continues his father's illustrious tradition in the club.

Paul F. Gehl, Caxtonian since 1988, is quoted, saying that, upon his death, Barrett's Lincoln collection was "scattered to the four winds." And Ralph G. Newman, Caxtonian since 1942, "widely known as the world's leading dealer in Lincoln materials," according to Basbanes, is quoted extensively regarding both the Barrett and Taper collections. "What I like is that even though Louise can make up her mind in a hurry," Newman is quoted, "everything she buys fits in with everything else she has."

In this same chapter, Non-Resident Caxtonian Robert Liska, owner of Colophone Books in Exeter, NH, is cited for his involvement with collectors Kenyon Starling and Bill and Peggy Self. Starling bought Liska's complete John Steinbeck collection, "in perfect condition," in the late 1970s for \$17,000. (He has, as well, according to a recent phone conversation with his wife and business partner Christine, provided Basbanes with many books for Basbanes' own collection.)

(Continued on Next Page)

Basbanes' *A Gentle Madness* Links Caxtonians

(Continued from Previous Page)

Basbanes' "Epilogue," written to capture in three pages the very soul of his book and of the "gentle madness" about which he so convincingly writes, features Raymond Epstein, Caxtonian since 1963 and Council member, 1973-75. The culminating story Basbanes tells is essentially the story told by Epstein himself when he spoke to a dinner meeting of the club, April 21, 1993, in a talk called, "From Tarzan to Ulysses — The Story of the Epstein Family Library and Its Sale."

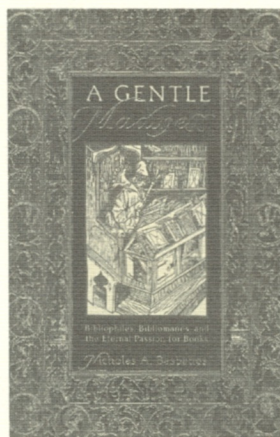
The healthiest example this phenomenon known as a gentle madness involves the compulsion to acquire collections of integrity, the holding in trust for a limited time certain treasures, some appropriate plan for the disposition of the collections, and the collector's own quiescent concession in letting go at the appropriate time and in suitable fashion.

Basbanes sees Epstein's sale in April 1992 at the Swann Galleries in Lower Manhattan — the first sale in the 50-year history of the gallery to break \$1 million — as the culmination of a healthy cycle of bibliophilia. Driven for 40 years to acquire the finest collection possible, Epstein remembered how he used to lie in bed at night reading book catalogues. Basbanes reports this conversation on the day of the sale: "I would say to my wife, 'Look at this, here's a book I paid \$50 for, a dealer wants \$3,500 for it.' And my wife would say, 'So sell it.' Well today she got her wish."

Nicholas Basbanes does so extraordinarily well what he sets forth to accomplish. Any weaknesses, and one hesitates to venture *any* negative on such a monumentally splendid effort, lie in the stories he does *not* tell and the associations he does *not* make. I am certain these will come in a subsequent book now in progress.

While it may be, as Basbanes notes, the Grolier Club is the "oldest and most

prestigious society of book collectors in the United States," The Caxton Club, though unmentioned by him, merits a high place in American bibliophilia by virtue of the people who have sufficiently distinguished themselves to be included in Basbanes' fine book, by virtue of a host of other Caxton collectors *not* mentioned by Basbanes, and by virtue of its own remarkable centennial in 1995, "Celebrating a Century of the Book in Chicago."



Nick Basbanes: Journalist, Historian of Bibliophilia

Nicholas A. Basbanes has been a professional journalist for more than 30 years. A graduate of Bates College, Lewiston, ME, with a degree in English, Basbanes received the MA degree in journalism from Pennsylvania State University. He has been a Graduate Fellow at the Washington Journalism Center, Washington, DC. From 1968 to 1971, he served as public affairs officer aboard the aircraft carrier *Oriskany*, made two combat cruises to Vietnam, and received the Navy Achievement Medal for superior performance of his duties.

The former book review editor of the *Sunday Telegram*, Worcester, MA, Basbanes now writes a literary column that appears in 25 newspapers throughout the country. He and his wife Constance formed Literary Features Syndicate, which distributes book reviews, literary columns, and author

Caxton Club Lists Honorary Members

Amsbury, Wallace Bruce	1942
Armour, George Allison	1934
Bay, Jens Christian	1951
Beck, Bruce	1993
Berland, Abel Edward	1993
Brewster, Walter S.	1934
Brooks, Gwendolyn	1995
Browne, Francis Fisher	1896
Butler, Pierce	1946
Cheney, John Vance	1898
Donnelley, Thomas Elliott	1945
Garnett, Richard	1906
Goodman, William O.	1934
Gookin, Frederick William	1933
Gustav VI, Adolph	1952
Hayes, James F.	1968
Howes, Wright	1960
Knopf, Alfred A.	1965
Legler, Henry Eduard	1913
McCutcheon, John T.	1944
Meine, Franklin Julius	1961
Merryweather, George	1924
Middleton, Robert Hunter	1984
Morley, Christopher	1950
Norton, Charles Eliot	1901
Owens, Harry J.	1962
Ricketts, Coella Lindsay	1933
Roden, Carl B.	1949
Rogers, Bruce	1926
Rosenheim, Edward W.	1995
Seymour, Ralph Fletcher	1951
Starrett, Vincent	1942
Stevens, Frank Everett	1909
Strouse, Norman H.	1977
Thompson, James Westfall	1918
Tibolet, Harold W.	1974
Wells, James M.	1984
Whiting, Robert B.	1936

profiles to various newspapers. They live in North Grafton, MA, with their daughters Barbara and Nicole.

Basbanes' *A Gentle Madness* is in its seventh printing and has received unanimous praise from the country's news media. *The New York Times* called it "compulsory reading for anyone seriously interested in books."

Basbanes will speak at the dinner meeting of The Caxton Club, May 15.

Gwendolyn Brooks Honored at Caxton Club Dinner Meeting

Eighty Caxtonians and guests were privileged to share an evening with Gwendolyn Brooks when she was inducted as an honorary member of the club, April 17, at the Mid-Day Club. The Illinois Poet Laureate became the first woman and the first Black to be so honored.

President Tom Joyce gave background on the guest of honor and her nomination to honorary membership. He then turned the rostrum over to Past President Robert Cotner, who told how he had first met Brooks in 1978 in his Indiana home. He also related personal anecdotes about her humanity, concluding "She captures the spirit of the age in which we live."

The Poet Laureate began her readings with a poem by her husband, who had been hospitalized with a heart attack the day before the dinner. The poem from *Windy Place*, eulogized his father, who had died at age 67. Miss Brooks then spoke for an hour, reading from her own poetry. The audience was touched by the humanity of her poems, by the emotion in her voice, and by the aura of a truly remarkable woman.



Illinois Poet Laureate and Honorary Caxtonian Gwendolyn Brooks speaks to The Caxton Club. (Photo by Kenneth Paterson.)

After a brief period of questions and answers, President Joyce presented the new honorary member with a Caxton Club scarf and a copy of the centennial history, signed by those present. Past President Cotner concluded the festivities by reading his original poem, "Beside the River," dedicated to his beloved friend. Many Caxtonians then stood in line until 10:30 p.m. to meet the Poet Laureate and to receive her inscription in one of her books of poems. This meeting will forever be recalled by those present as a memorable occasion, matching those remarkable evenings of the centennial year.

Frank J. Piehl

Beside the River

*For Gwendolyn Brooks
Upon her Induction into
The Caxton Club
of Chicago*

*She writes indelibly upon our conscience
in bold and open cursive,
from springs that shape a river
beside which we sit, as others before
lingered by ancient, dusky streams.*

*The river flows veraciously —
muddy here, clear there —
sustaining always the mind
through generous and
ever-changing scenes.*

*Wheatley, Whitman, Dunbar, Lindsay;
Hurston, Hughes, Sandburg, Brooks:*

*It forward flows,
and we speak of it
in pride and wonder
never wholly comprehending
its beauty and depth —
nor its power
to carry all
toward destinies
of intended possibility.*

Robert Cotner

April 17, 1996



President Tom Joyce (r) presents the Honorary Member plaque to Gwendolyn Brooks as Past President Robert Cotner looks on. (Photo by Caxtonian Kenneth Paterson.)

Abel Berland Library: A Renaissance Habitation in Our Time

(Continued from Page One)

There is a holograph copy of Keats' "To Hope," written in February 1815. There is an signed copy of Shelley's *Adonais* of 1821. There is a first edition of John Milton's *Poems* of 1645, in contemporary binding and signed and inscribed by Milton, and there is a first edition of Shakespeare's *Poems* of 1640 in contemporary binding and in very fine condition.

Berland considers his 1789 edition of William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* to be his most valuable book "next to the First Folio of Shakespeare." The Blake book was written, illustrated, printed, and hand-painted by Blake himself.

Among the landmark books of early science, philosophy, and economics are St. Augustine's *Civitate Dei*, printed by Nicholas Jenson in 1475; Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, 1478; *Poeticon Astronomicon*, 1485 (with woodcuts on science); a 1492 edition of Plato's writings, and a 1495 edition of Aristotle. There are, as well, three first editions by Francis Bacon: *Advancement of Learning*, 1605; *Novam Organum Instauratio Magna*, 1620, and *Essays*, 1625.

The library contains a first edition of Isaac Newton's monumental *Principia Mathematica*, 1687, and his *Opticks*, 1704. It also contains the most important medical book of the 17th Century, William Harvey's *Anatomical Exercises*, 1653, and a complete run of Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler*, including the 1653 first edition (a Holford-Rosenbach copy), as well as the second, third, fourth, and fifth editions, all printed during Walton's lifetime.

There are, as well, first editions of William Gilbert's *De Magnete*, 1600; Galileo Galilei's *Dialogo*, 1632; Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, 1776; Thomas Malthus' *On Population*, 1798; Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, 1859, and many others.

The heart of the Berland library is William Shakespeare for whom he has had a life-long passion. He owns what Shakespeare used for background study for his dramas, including a 1550 edition of Halle's *Chronicles*, and both the first (1577) and second (1587) editions of Holingshed's *Chronicles*. There are a 1591 *Florio* dictionary and thesaurus and a two-volume edition of *Plutarch's Lives* beautifully illuminated and printed in



1478 by Nicholas Jenson — a "typographic monument," Berland calls it. And there are a 1481 Landini edition of Dante, the first illustrated Dante; a 1603 English edition of Montaigne's *Essays*, and a 1525, two-volume *Biblia Hebraica*.

The Berland library contains the Four Folios of Shakespeare, some of the most remarkable books in existence anywhere in the world. The Fourth Folio, published in 1685, is the finest in existence because of its condition and its provenance. This volume is one of three Fourth Folios bound in the original blue morocco. It came from the George Daniel collection, auctioned in 1864. Berland has owned it since 1971.

The Third Folio is the rarest of the Four Folios owned by Berland. Printed in 1663 and 1664, it contains a title page from each year. From the collection of Frank Brewer Bemis, this Folio was owned by Richard Farmer, Shakespearean scholar at Oxford. Berland elaborated on the provenance of this volume: "Samuel Johnson consulted the Farmer copy when doing his eight-volume edition of Shakespeare, and it may well be that Johnson himself used this particular volume in his research."

The Second Folio, 1632, in contemporary binding, marks John Milton's first

appearance in print, with his epitaph "What Neede my Shakespeare."

The First Folio is the finest in private hands. This 1623 edition is one of three complete Folios in the United States. Its first owner was Allen Puleston. In 1744 the Folio passed by marriage into the John Dryden family and remained there until 1913, when it was sold to Bernard Quaritch. Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach of Philadelphia, called by Nicholas Basbanes the "20th Century's best-known bookseller," became repeatedly involved with this Folio, being the agent for its passing into the hands of Commodore Mortimore Plant, Frank Bemis, and Morris Wolf, father of Edwin Wolf II and Manager of Rosenbach's Philadelphia shop. In 1961 it was auctioned at Sotheby's in London and bought by dealer John Fleming of New York City for Marjorie Newton, who acquired it to give as a gift to her *alma mater*. A dispute, however, interfered with the donation, and it was returned to Fleming. Berland bought it in 1970. This Folio is the heart — the soul — of Berland's library, as Shakespeare, Harold Bloom writes, is the center of the Western canon.

"This room," Berland observes, "is my library of the mind, the habitation of books literary, scientific, and historical that I consider important. I often read into the night and am stimulated by the great ideas of these remarkable people."

The range of the Abel Berland library is extensive; the quality, remarkable; the collection, awesome. More than 500 uncommon titles brought together by the passion and genius of one person through an absolute devotion to books, ideas, and learning is an achievement worthy of reflection in an age enthralled by the chimeras of contemporaneity.

William Caxton, a Bookman, Commodity Trader, and Pioneer Printer

Second of a Three-Part Series

William Caxton, coming from the jeweler's trade, a trade directed primarily at the wealthy, understood what a printer such as Johann Gutenberg failed to see or at least did not adjust to: the ineluctable reality of his time — that reproduction by hand and not by press had by far the greater appeal to the wealthy who constituted the higher end of the book-trade, as it would continue to do well into the 16th and to some extent into the 17th Century.

Thus, a printer who wanted to publish anything even approaching the expense of the wonderful Gutenberg Bible had better do what Caxton did with the first two books off his first press — find patrons and subscribers to insure him from loss, so that additional copies of a press run could be sold at a profit. Because he was both bookish and a merchant all his life, Caxton must have been quite familiar with the relative cost of books and the prospects for selling them well before he learned to print (at least once he traded in a shipload of iron, so he might at least have thought of engaging the two-way trade of books between England and the Lowlands, where he traded for 30 years).

To be successful, a printer either had to find patrons for the high-risk, low-volume books targeted toward the few, or he had to print low-risk, high-volume books that would appeal to the many at a time of increasing literacy. Astute businessman that he was, Caxton practiced both strategies after he learned to print in Cologne, first in Bruges and then later in England.

In Cologne on business in 1471 and still mindful of the command of the Duchess of Burgundy, the former Margaret of York, to finish his translation into English of the *Recueil des histoires de Troie*, Caxton shrank from the aftermath of that completion. Not only the Duchess but numerous others of the “English Nation” in Burgundy would want copies. He was being slyly Chaucerian, of

course, in describing his horror of having to copy out by hand that 210,000-word translation for those many, but the great slowness and expense of such reproduction by professional scribes were serious considerations indeed.

So Caxton extended his stay in Cologne and turned to Johann Veldener, one of three printers of Cologne, who, for a large fee, allowed him to learn the new craft by taking part in printing the Latin edition of Bartholomaeus Anglicus' *De proprietatibus rerum*, a very expensive edition because it was “a tall folio of 248 leaves and about 300,000 words” (Painter, p. 57); it was completed in December 1472. Veldener's financial problems soon after strongly suggest that Caxton was the only “patron” of this very expensive edition, and that Veldener did not find many customers for it and for such other of his Cologne editions, including *Flores sancti Augustini*. After Christmas Caxton returned to Bruges and by mid-1473, Veldener himself was forced to leave Cologne and to set up a press in Louvain.

Besides his merchant's acumen and his early access to important patronage, Caxton had another advantage over most of the earliest printers — his lifelong bookishness. Most printers came to printing from outside the book trade and seem to have been guided at first by the simple belief that the primary market for books was among the learned. This belief meant that they should print primarily works in Latin. Such works were by far the most prestigious in any case. In this belief, however, printers were failing to take into account both the potential market for printed books and their own need to deal with the many rather than the few.

While the number of the middle class who were schooled in Latin was growing during the late Middle Ages, that rise was small in comparison with the growing numbers who could read and write their native languages. In the 14th and 15th centuries, the development in trade and the consequent growth of a

monetary economy that required many to keep records resulted in a very large increase in what has been called “practical literacy,” the ability to read and write in the vernacular. M.B. Parkes cites a case of a typical reeve who was required to keep the records of a farm for its owner “in his own hand”; yet the typical reeve was a workman on an estate who had been put in charge by its owner (e.g., Chaucer's Reeve had been a carpenter in his youth). This thus is impressive testimony of just how widespread “practical literacy” was getting to be.

While the teaching of Latin did grow in the later Middle Ages, learning to read and write in the student's own language grew far faster; therefore another complication for a 15th-Century printer was the decision whether to print a work in Latin, the prestigious language of the day for the slowly increasing number of those who could read Latin well enough to be potential buyers, or whether to print a work in the vernacular for the more rapidly growing numbers of readers at a time when such writings were widely treated with scorn.

The man who taught Caxton to print pretty clearly understood the craft better than he understood the market for printed books, because even after being forced to leave Cologne due to his lack of success in the printing and selling of such books as the *Bartholomaeus* and *Flores sancti Augustini*, Veldener chose to print the first *Lis Belial* (soon after August 7, 1474) and then Boccaccio's *Genealogia deorum*. While Caxton and other international traders and statesmen did correspond in Latin and thus were at home in it, Caxton could hardly miss the fact that increasing numbers of the middle class in his time were far more at home in their own languages — how much more at home is shown by the great rise in translations from Latin during the 15th Century. Thus, while Caxton learned to print on a large and scholarly work in Latin, the six books which he printed in Bruges were in the vernacular.

Roy Vance Ramsey

Book Marks

Luncheon Programs

All luncheon 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.

May 10

Caxtonian and Council member Jane Rosenthal will discuss the exhibition "1900: Books from the Collection of Robert Rosenthal," currently on display at the Regenstein Library, University of Chicago. **This luncheon meeting will be held at the Quadrangle Club, 57th St. and University Ave.**

June 14

Caxtonian and historian Peder Dahlberg will discuss his recent work, "Women Soldiers in the Civil War." More than 400 women served in the Civil War; this program will explore who they were and why they fought.

*Ed Quattrocchi
Leonard Freedman*

Important Note: Members planning to attend luncheons must make advance reservations by calling either the Caxton number, 312/255-3710, or Quattrocchi's number, 708/475-4653. Luncheon for members and guests, \$20.

Council Approves Slate for 1996-97

Under the chairship of Robert L. Brooks, the Nominating Committee, composed also of Frank J. Piehl and Karen Skubish, nominated the following Caxtonians to the Council for 1996-97: Abel Berland, John P. Chalmers, Kim Coventry, Eugene Hotchkiss III, and Christopher D. Oakes.

At a special meeting of the Council, April 17, 1996, the Council approved the slate, which will be presented to the full membership at the Annual Meeting, May 15.

Columbia College Offers Summer Program Series

Caxtonian Barbara Lazarus Metz, Director of Summer Programs at the Center for Book and Paper Arts of Columbia College, has designed a complete series of courses, classes, and seminars in book and paper arts for the summer of 1996.

These programs include courses in bookbinding, papermaking, painted miniatures, letterpress, boxmaking, among others. They run June 3 through July 29, and are scheduled nearly every day of the week. For information, telephone Metz at 312/431-8612.

Dinner Programs

All dinner meetings, unless otherwise noted are held in the Mid-Day Club, 56th Floor of the First National Bank, Madison and Clark streets, Chicago. Spirits, 5 p.m., dinner, 6 p.m., lecture, 7 p.m.

May 15

Nicholas A. Basbanes, author of the acclaimed *A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books*, will share from his vast experience in the world of American books and book collecting. He is calling his talk, "Among the Gently Mad" — a most suitable title, perhaps, for Caxtonians.

June 19

James Park Sloan, professor of English, University of Illinois at Chicago, will talk on his latest book, a biography of Jerzy Kosinski. His talk, "The Writing of a Biography," will include biography, methodology, and contextual issues.

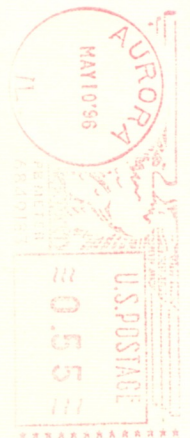
Karen Skubish

Advance reservations, which are absolutely necessary, may be made by calling the Caxton office, 312/255-3710. Any special meal requirements (such as vegetarian) need to be made in advance. Members and guests, \$35.

The First National Bank of Chicago's parking garage, 40 S. Clark Street, offers a special parking rate after 5 p.m. to guests of the Mid-Day Club. When you leave, please tell the parking attendant you were at the Mid-Day Club, and your parking fee will be \$5.25



The Caxton Club
60 West Walton Street
Chicago, IL 60610



The Caxton Club ... Celebrating the diversity and beauty of the Book Arts