

# Caxtonian

Journal of The Caxton Club of Chicago

Volume V, No. 4

April 1997

## Caxtonian Frank Piehl Accorded High Honor



Frank J. Piehl at the Centennial Gala.

Nature or nurture? Are collectors born that way or made that way? Are readers natural or nurtured? Growing up, reading was something done in school, and school was something you had to do in between doing chores and trying to follow the Cubs. At least that is how young Frank Piehl felt about reading. You might say that it did not prepare him for the man he later became.

Young Frank was young enough that he got into the Navy too late for much exposure to World War II. Postwar freedom brought opportunity to go to college on the GI Bill, so Frank used his natural talents and blazed through the chemistry curriculum at the University of Chicago. As a new Ph.D., Frank was courted until snatched up by the only employer he ever had as an adult, Standard Oil of Indiana. Meanwhile Frank courted Janet Loy until she caught him, and they settled in north-west Indiana and started a family.

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## Collecting Hopkins' Life's Work: the Work of a Lifetime

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1849-1889) has been considered by some to be a Victorian, and by others a modern poet. Although he wrote in the last half of the 19th Century, most of his poems were published at the end of World War I. He influenced such diverse 20th Century poets as W.H. Auden, T.S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, John Berryman, and Seamus Heaney.

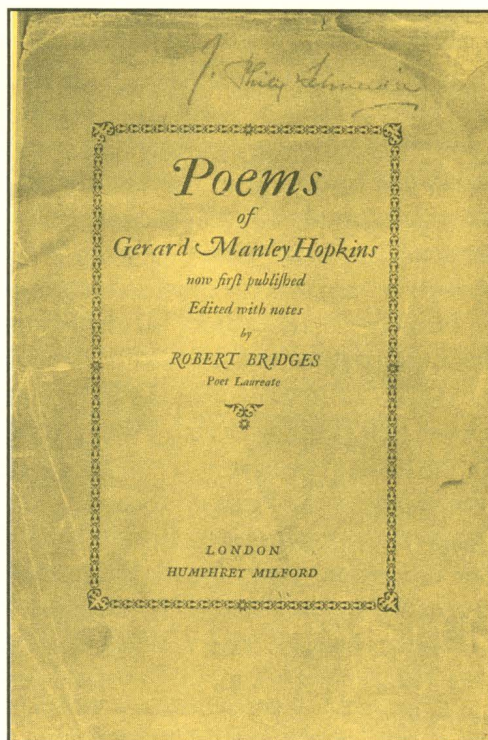
Hopkins' poetry was little known in his lifetime, and when he died in 1889, only

My introduction to Hopkins came in a college course in Victorian poetry. Finding great appeal in the images of nature in the small sample of his poems included in our textbooks, I bought a copy of *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, then in its third edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1948). For years, that was my reading copy, as the worn binding now attests. I thought it would be worthwhile to find earlier editions.

Because only 750 copies of the first edition were printed, finding one took some time. But I did find it — at Richard Leekley's rare book shop in Winthrop Harbor, IL. Although one seldom sees this edition, only last month one appeared at the Winnetka Antiques Show in the exhibit of Bauman Rare Books of Philadelphia and New York. [This book was advertised by Bauman in *The New York Times Book Review*, March 16, 1997, p. 19, as "Very scarce first edition, one of 750 copies....\$3,200.]

Surprisingly, it took me longer to locate a second edition than a first, but one day there it was in Tom O'Brien's Oak Park, IL book shop. It was published by Oxford University Press in 1930, and my copy is a fourth printing.

The third edition has been mentioned above. In 1967 it was succeeded by the fourth, also from Oxford. Whereas the 1918 edition contained only 74 poems, this new edition listed 178 items, including very early poems, unfinished poems, fragments, light verse, and Latin and Welsh translations. My copy is a second printing of 1973.



The dust jacket of Ballinger's first edition copy of Hopkins' poetry (1918).

five of his original poems had appeared in print. Over the next three decades, Robert Bridges, to whom Hopkins had entrusted his verses, placed some of them in anthologies. But it was not until 1918 that a collection was published as *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Edited with notes by Bridges, it was published by Humphrey Milford, London.

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# Caxtonian

The Caxton Club  
Founded 1895



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# Musings...

Caxtonian and book dealer Florence Shay of Highland Park phoned me some time back and asked, "Do you have a photograph of Robert Frost in your collection?" "Yes," I replied, "one that I took in 1962." "Is it signed?" she asked. "No, but I wish it were," I said. "Would you *like* to have a signed photograph of Frost?" she then asked. "Certainly," I answered.

"I have a fine, signed and framed photo that you might like," she said. "How much?" I asked. I coughed when she told me, but she hastened to add that I could get it for somewhat less than the asking price. We agreed that I should see the photograph, taken, she told me, by Charles E. Siffrell when Frost visited Chicago in 1955. It is inscribed, "To R.V. Thornton, in heartiest western friendship/Chicago, Nov. 1955/Robert Frost."

"I'd like it," I told her, "but I've some in-house negotiations to do before we finalize the arrangement. Such matters as this are analogous to a Democratic President trying to get his budget through a Republican Congress in an election year: it has to be done at just the right time and in a most precise manner, or the government (and other important functions of the "house") may shut down for a time.

We had not yet finalized the arrangement when Florence and I met at the next Caxton meeting. We stood talking about the photo when, seeing my wife Norma approaching, I whispered, "Don't say *anything* about the photo to Norma yet!" As Norma came into our small circle, all talking stopped — the way it does when you've just made an unflattering comment about the person who's just walked up, and no one knows quite what to say next. I said something perfunctory, and we went to sit for dinner. On the way home, Norma said to me, "What were you and Florence talking about when I came up before dinner — I felt like an intruder." "Oh," I said with a wink, "we were just talking books."

I finally got the budget through Congress, and I brought home the remarkably beautiful, signed, matted, and framed black-and-white photograph of Robert Frost. I was about to hang it in the library on the second floor when Norma asked, "Where are you going with that Frost photo?" I said, "To the library — why?" "That's the most expensive piece of art we own," she countered — "hang it in the living room above the Frost collection!" We both laughed, and I hung the photograph of our old friend above the oak bookcase that holds our Frost collection. It provides the perfect accent beside the bust of Frost by Leo Cherne, which Norma had bought for me in 1964.

This is, I tell all who will listen, our "shrine" to a poet who would scoff at his being the focus of such attention. Should he return and question me, I would quote a poem to him:

*The wave sucks back and with the last of water  
It wraps a wisp of seaweed around my legs,  
And with the swift rush of its sandy dregs  
So undermines my barefoot stand I totter,  
And did I not take steps would be tipped over  
Like the ideal of some mistaken lover.*

Frost would smile, nod, and gruffly accede: tottering a bit, he would not, it seems to me, be tipped over on being idolized so immodestly by the Cotners.

Robert Cotner  
Editor

## Honorary Caxtonian

*Continued From Page One*

Photography was a hobby which, when added with his chemical knowledge, illuminated the talks he gave to community groups about environmental issues affecting the Calumet region in Indiana and Illinois. Taking photos of Lake Calumet and the Little Calumet River, Frank noticed a lot of bridges in his viewfinder. The varieties of the bridges prompted Frank to wonder why there was so much diversity among them.

His questions sent him to the library, but he found such limited literature on the subject that he was forced to investigate used book-shops for material. And books on bridges in Chicago lead him to ask broader questions about how water had profoundly influenced the entire history of the city. Suddenly a 40-year-old man who did not consider himself a reader found himself looking for space in his home to keep his expanding library.

Amoco Oil moved Frank and his family to the wilds of Naperville when it opened new research facilities along the East-West Tollway. The new home was spacious enough that Frank could enjoy the luxury of housing his library in a fully-shelved "spare bedroom." Now a bibliophile, a man who did not enjoy history in school had several articles accepted by *Chicago History*. The bookworm had turned!

Exposure to bookdealers and other book collectors was a contrast to the society of chemists and bean-counters at Amoco, and Frank found that he enjoyed it. This was fed by reading about the Saints and Sinners corner at McClurg's Book Store that was hailed by Eugene Field in his *Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac*. Then Frank was invited to meet the saints and sinners at The Caxton Club. He was admitted to membership in 1985.

Ten years ago the bean-counters at Amoco offered Frank early retirement. He leaped at the opportunity to be reasonably provided for while having the opportunity to pursue the pages of

projects he had on his personal to-do list; foremost among them was the family history and genealogy which he produced on the descendants of Johann Piehl in America.

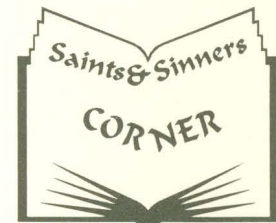
All Caxtonians, past, present, and future, should buy a tank of Amoco Super Premium in appreciation of the favor the company did to us by setting Frank free to step in to write the much-acclaimed centennial history of The Caxton Club. Working from the club archives (which had been partially re-organized by members Jim Fitzsimmons and Stanton Friedberg), Frank made our history out of very raw data, and finished his copy in advance of his deadlines, which enabled the editors and printers to deliver the beautiful finished product two days before the official centenary celebration, January 27, 1995.

In addition to his extensive research and writing, Frank has presented some of the best dinner lectures in recent memory. At the January 1988 meeting he spoke on "The Truth about Father Marquette," and at the September 1992 meet he delighted the Caxton audience with "Eugene Field — Bard, Bibliophile, and *Bon Vivant*." He has, as well, given four luncheon talks.

No other person has known our club the way Frank does, and the Council recognized this by creating a post of Club Historian, and was delighted that Frank agreed to be our first Historian. It was in recognition of the many, many hours of devotion to the cause of The Caxton Club that the Council also voted to make Frank Piehl the latest in a long line of distinguished Honorary Members. We could do no less, and we are honored by his presence. To paraphrase the words spoken to Julius Caesar, Frank, the Council and members of The Caxton Club salute you!

Piehl will be publically recognized as an Honorary Member at the April dinner meeting.

*Thomas J. Joyce*  
President



Caxtonian David Meyer's fine essay, "Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* Proves to Be Sound Investment," which appeared in the September 1996 issue of the *Caxtonian*, was reprinted in *Biblio*, February 1997.

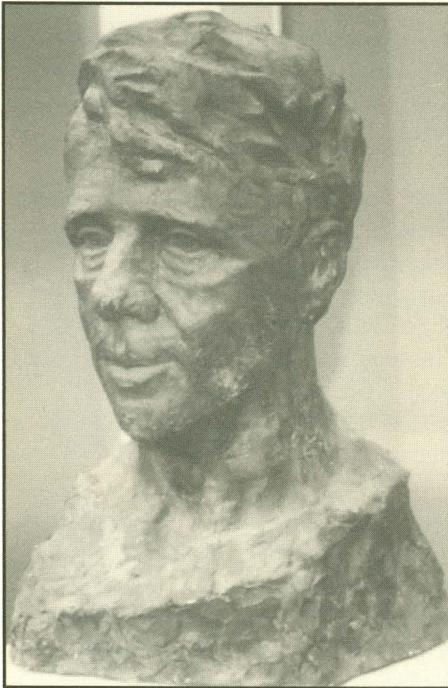
The late Chef Louis Szathmary, famed Caxtonian, is memorialized by Nicholas Basebanes in an essay, "The Matter of the Books," published in the same issue of *Biblio*.

Caxton Bookkeeper Dan Crawford reported at the January Council meeting that the club's stock of some unsold publications is dwindling rapidly. Less than 10 copies of *Iron Face*, of *The Crockett Almanacks*, and of *Printer's Marks and Devices* remain for purchase. These books are already appearing in the antiquarian market at much higher prices than current Caxton publication prices. Members interested in acquiring copies of these or other Caxton publications are advised to contact Crawford soon.

The local TV station in Naperville has an active program of training producers and airing their productions. One such program, "The Love of Books," featured three Caxtonians, JoAnn Baumgartner, Frank Piehl, and Alice Schreyer. Schreyer was interviewed about librarianship in general and the unique history of the special collections at the Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago. Piehl spoke as a bibliophile, focusing on his Eugene Field collection that was exhibited at the Regenstein among The Caxton Club's centennial exhibitions. The show, filmed on June 17, 1995, was aired in Naperville on March 23, 1996. A tape of the program is in The Caxton Club archives.

## Early Bust of Robert Frost on Display on Jekyll Is.

When Florence Reeve was a student at Mount Holyoke College in 1928, her professor of art history, Florence Foss, recognized Reeve's special sculpting gifts of and encouraged her to work on live as well as models from antiquity.



*Bust of Robert Frost (1928) by Florence Reeve Fiore. (Photo provided, courtesy, the Jekyll Island (GA) Museum.)*

At that time, David Morton, professor of English at nearby Amherst College, was teaching on the Mount Holyoke campus. He told Reeve that poet Robert Frost was coming to Amherst to rest and teach a

class, and he would require whether she could sculpt him. Morton made the arrangements — against the wishes of Elinor Frost, who wanted her husband to have complete rest while there — and a first-floor room in a building she can no longer remember the number of was arranged.

“I had only three days,” the sculptor told *Caxtonian* Editor Robert Cotner from her home on Jekyll Island, GA. “He soliloquized the whole time we were together,” she recalled — “that was his nature, and it was great!” When she finished, the bust of Frost was taken to Boston for casting in plaster (it was never cast in bronze). After exhibitions on the campuses of Amherst and Smith College during Reeve's time at Mount Holyoke, it then became a part of her personal collection.

Reeve later married Rosario Fiore, a sculptor famous for his work on the U.S. Supreme Court building and other significant monuments in Washington, DC. The couple retired to Jekyll Island in 1969. A year ago, she donated her work and that of her late husband to the Jekyll Island Art Association.

The bust of Robert Frost by Florence Reeve Fiore, now 91-years-old, is on permanent exhibition in the Mistletoe Cottage on the island.

RC

## Hopkins Celebration Set for Oak Park

A Gerard Manley Hopkins celebration is scheduled for 3 p.m., April 13, at the 1890 bed and breakfast home, “Under the Ginkgo Tree,” 300 N. Kenilworth Ave., Oak Park, IL.

G.E. Murray, a local poet, artistic director of the Gerard Manley Hopkins Society (USA), and chair of PEN Midwest, will lead the celebration. He invites guests to bring Hopkins poetry

to read or recite, and he promises a delightful experience for all who attend.

Murray has attended and present papers at the International Hopkins Conference in Ireland the last several years.

The event is sponsored by River Oaks Arts. Admission is free.

For details, telephone 708/524-8725

## Dr. Stan Friedberg Mourned

The announcement of the recent death of Past President Stanton A. Friedberg caused a murmur among his many friends at the March dinner meeting. Many knew of his failing health. Even so, the news of his death shocked everyone and initiated a moment of silent reflection.

Dr. Friedberg graduated from Rush Medical College in 1934 and took a residency in otolaryngology at Cook County Hospital. He was associated with Rush-Presbyterian-St.Luke's Hospital throughout his career. A colleague reflected that he “was a nationally recognized figure as a teacher and innovator.”

Dr. Friedberg was an avid researcher in the medical field and, following in his father's footsteps, he collected and studied books about medical history. He donated portions of his extensive library to Rush Medical College and to the Newberry Library.

He joined The Caxton Club in 1956, beginning a long and distinguished career of service to the club. He served on the Council for three terms (1970-1986), and was chair of the Library Committee (1989-1993). He was elected vice president in 1985 and president in 1987.

His good friend, Ned Rosenheim, who succeeded him as president of the club, reflected that “he left big shoes to fill. Stanton had given the club a marvelous impetus in his originality in selecting speakers. He always conducted the affairs of the club with warmth and charm. He brought a revival of interest in publications. Stanton worked quietly, efficiently, and carefully. We will miss him.” Caxtonians extend their sympathy Dr. Friedberg's family. He was a man of honor and a leader, dedicated to a life of service to his family, his profession, and to The Caxton Club.

## Work of a Lifetime

(Continued from Page One)

The most recent and most comprehensive collection of Hopkins' poetry is *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by Norman H. Mackenzie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990). In 545 pages Mackenzie compares all available manuscripts, providing extensive notes and a lengthy bibliography. *Choice* in a 1991 review called it essentially a fifth edition and the "definitive text for years to come."

The five editions of poetry form just the beginning of a Hopkins' collection. My next search will be for late 19th Century anthologies in which some of the poems were first published.



Gerard Manley Hopkins in 1879.

There are, as well, letters, notebooks, journals, and sermons, and an ever growing number of bibliographies and critical works. An important recent biography is *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Very Private Life*, by Robert Bernard Martin (New York: Putnam, 1991). A noteworthy critical edition is Helen Vendler's *The Breaking of Style* (Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 1995), with an essay on Hopkins and sprung rhythm.

An invaluable guide for collectors is Tom Dunne's *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Comprehensive Bibliography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976). I have relied on this work for information about early publications, such as poems in print before 1889. One source of more recent information is *International Bibliography* published by the Modern Language Association.

Hopkins literature is not limited to English, and the Dunne bibliography also lists translations and criticisms in Dutch and Flemish, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Spanish. Hopkins himself referred to the oddness of his poetry, and considering the difficulty of reading much of it in English, one cannot help but be awed by the thought of reading it in Japanese. Even more surprising to me was, a few years ago, reading about Japanese enthusiasts on a Hopkins pilgrimage to Wales, presumably dealing with Japanese, English, and Welsh.

The study of Hopkins in intriguing and collecting his works can only make it more so. As Caxtonians are well aware, luck plays an important part. Two summers ago, at an Oak Park, IL book fair, I browsed in Thomas Zimmerman's Plain Tales Books display, hoping to find an issue of *Poetry* containing a poem by Ernest Hemingway. I failed in that, but I found an article by Joyce Kilmer, "The Poetry of Gerard Hopkins" (*Poetry*, September 1914).

Kilmer wrote the article four years before the first edition of Hopkins' poems was published. He quoted "God's Grandeur," included "The Habit of Perfection" in its entirety, and called Hopkins a "genuinely inspired poet, the most scrupulous word artist of the 19th Century."

Barbara Ballinger

your affectionate friend  
Gerard M. Hopkins S.  
May 29 1885.

## Bibliophiles to Visit Chicago in May

Approximately 40 members of the Rowfant Club of Cleveland and 10 members of the Book Club of Detroit will journey by bus to Chicago May 22-24 for tours of the city's fine libraries, a noontime visit with Caxtonians, and attendance at Chicago's International Antiquarian Book Fair at the Palmer House.

Their stay will begin with a tour of the University of Chicago and the Regenstein Library, hosted by Caxtonian Alice D. Schreyer, Curator of Special Collections at the university. The tour will include major exhibitions now in progress, as well as choice rarities from the Special Collections Department.

On May 23 the group will tour Northwestern University Library in Evanston, where Caxtonian R. Russell Maylone, Curator of Special Collections, will serve as host. Here they will see highlights from the Special Collections, view current exhibits, and participate in computer demonstrations in a new multimedia center. At noon, they will attend the noon luncheon of The Caxton Club, to be held in the East Room of the Newberry. *Caxtonian* editor Robert Cotner will speak on "Robert Frost — Poet for All Seasons," a program of poetry and slides from Cotner's Frost collection.

The guests will then tour the Newberry Library under the direction of Caxtonian Paul F. Gehl, Curator of the Wing Collection on Printing History, and view current exhibits, including "The Hebrew Renaissance." They will, as well, dine at the Cliff Dwellers, stay at the Union League, and be given the opportunity to spend a few dollars at the Antiquarian Book Fair during their stay. Caxtonians one and all will want to meet and greet fellow bibliophiles from Cleveland and Detroit.

# 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.

April 11.

New Caxtonian Howard Will, a trainer for 35 years in the Great Books Foundation, will talk about his new role working with Chicago public school children, grades 1 through 12, in teaching them literature and music.

May 23.

This noon luncheon will be at the Newberry Library. *Caxtonian* editor Robert Cotner will present "Robert Frost — Poet for All Seasons," a program of poetry and slides.

*Ed Quattrocchi  
Leonard Freedman*

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

### Caxton Club on the Web

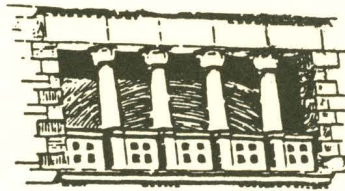
Internet users may communicate with The Caxton Club at the following address:

<http://www.caxtonclub.org/>  
Webmaster of the Caxton website is Caxtonian Paul Baker.

## FABS Membership Grows

Membership in the Fellowship of Bibliophilic Societies, of which The Caxton Club is a founding member, increased in 1997, thanks to Larry Siegler of Cleveland's Rowfant Club and his tireless efforts on behalf of FABS.

The membership roster includes: The Baltimore Bibliophiles (Baltimore); The Baxter Society (Portland, ME); The Book Club of California (San Francisco); Book Club of Detroit (Detroit); Book Club of Washington (Seattle); The Caxton Club; Delaware Bibliophiles (Wilmington); Florida Bibliophile Society (St. Petersburg); The Grolier Club (New York City); The John Russell Bartlett Society (Providence, RI); The Philobiblion Club (Philadelphia); Pittsburgh Bibliophiles (Pittsburgh); The Rowfant Club (Cleveland); The Roxburghe Club of San Francisco, and Sacramento Book Collectors Club (Sacramento). Hayward Blake is the Caxton liaison with FABS. Questions and suggestions may be directed to him.



## Dinner Programs

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

April 16.

Jean-Francois Vilain of Philadelphia will talk about the Roycroft Press, which was inspired by the Kelmscott Press of William Morris. It was founded by Elbert Hubbard, native of Bloomington, IL, who was lost aboard the *Lusitania*, in 1915.

May 21.

Robert Jackson of Cleveland's Rowfant Club will discuss his collection of Dickens and other Victorian treasures. Jackson's recent Victorian exhibition at the Grolier Club in New York City was the most visited exhibit in the club's history.

*Karen Skubish*

*Advance reservations, which are absolutely necessary, may be made by phoning the Caxton office at 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