

CAXTONIAN

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Looking backward at 50 years of bookselling in Chicago

Carlos Martinez

Part I of II



Harry Busck in his Chicago bookshop, approximately 70 years ago.

Seven-ten Humphrey is a two-story frame house in the suburb of Oak Park, which parallels Chicago's western border. Situated a block from Austin Avenue, the red-shingled structure is rather unimposing despite a well-pruned garden gracing the front and an adjoining lot. It is a typical house in a typical suburban middle class community. Within, however, there lives one of Chicago's historic personalities, a man who rubbed shoulders with the great bookmen of the century and who, in a career spanning more than 50 years, became one of Chicago's most loved and respected booksellers — a real elder statesman of his profession.

To be sure, if I had not heard of Harry Busck from my bookseller friend Tom Joyce, it is unlikely that I would have heard of him at all. Except among themselves and their customers, the best booksellers do not seem to be as well known, even in their home towns, as the third string players on the Mighty Ducks hockey team. But I had to do an article about one of

them, and Tom told me that Harry was my man because, one, he was retired (and we know that working booksellers have no time they can call their own), and, two, he was a *raconteur* who had known many great Chicago bookmen.

I parked my car and approached the house with some apprehension, which intensified when I saw a conical yellow object emerge from the bushes next to the house. Are old booksellers as highbrowed as that, I thought? With relief I saw that the object was a straw hat worn by a broadly-smiling, white-haired woman brandishing a garden tool and introducing herself as Mrs. Busck. Learning the reason for my visit, she graciously led me to the very door of the house, where she rang the bell.

The door was opened by a medium-sized, bespectacled gentleman who appeared to be in his 80s and who wore a light blue cardigan sweater. He radiated such warmth that I lost any scruples I may have had in accepting the chair he offered me.

"The most unusual sale I ever made was to someone who got off the 20th Century Limited at LaSalle Street Station in 1934."

Harry Busck paused to assume a more comfortable position in his 50s-style spindle-leg armchair.

"He had a five-hour wait before he took the Santa Fe train," Busck continued, "so he stopped off at my store on Wabash and Van Buren. He kept piling books that he wanted on the floor. About four hours later, he said 'I want these mailed to me in Oklahoma.' I could hardly believe it! Then he handed me a thousand dollar bill." Busck's eyes brightened boyishly. "A one-thousand-dollar bill! I had never seen one before, or since."

"The total bill came to \$982. Astounded, I went to the First National Bank to see if the bill was any good." He laughed heartily. "They deposited it in the bank, I don't know what else I can say!"



Musings...

CAXTONIAN

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The Caxton Club
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ph 312 255 3710
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I watched with immense pleasure and an excitement greater than most, I believe, as Marion Jones and Maurice Greene won their respective races in the 2000 Summer Games. I was, you see, a dash-man in my early days. Although I ran the 100 in 10-flat, the 100-yard-dash was not my race. The 120-yard high hurdles was my race. In 1952, as a high school sophomore, I ran the highs at a conference meet in 15.6 seconds, the speed with which Jim Thorpe had won them in the 1912 Olympics. In 1954, I ran them in 15-flat.

It was, in fact, my devotion to athletics and my discipline to the sprint that brought about one of the highlights of my life. On May 19, 1954, I had dinner with Jesse Owens. Here's how it came about: as president of the K-Club of Kendallville, IN, High School, I had approached our gruff but much-loved elder statesman of athletics, O.O. "Pop" Guymon, and told him I'd like to bring Jesse Owens as the keynote speaker for our spring athletic banquet. "We can't afford him!" "Pop" declared. But I knew how much we had in the club treasury. "Would you mind if I wrote him, just to see what it could cost?" I asked.

So I wrote Mr. Owens in Chicago, and he replied that it would cost us \$125 to bring him the 150 miles from Chicago to speak — and he was free the evening we wanted him. "We can't afford \$125 — and we've never paid that much before!" "Pop" argued. "But we have almost a \$1,000 in the treasury — and we are talking about Jesse Owens!" I countered. It helped, of course, that I was on my way that spring to the Indiana State Finals in track and field. I would win both the Sectional high hurdles in Elkhart and the Regional highs in Ft. Wayne. The gruff, old teddy-bear gave in, and on the evening of May 19, I shook hands with Jesse Owens outside the Publix Restaurant as he arrived.

He was a delightful human being, gracious, kind, and interested in my own athletic pursuits. I sat beside him and visited throughout the banquet, but "Pop" insisted on introducing him to my friends and their fathers — and gruff, young teddy-bear that I was, I gave in. Mr. Owens' talk was brief and inspiring, as I remember it, and the audience was in awe of this great figure among us.

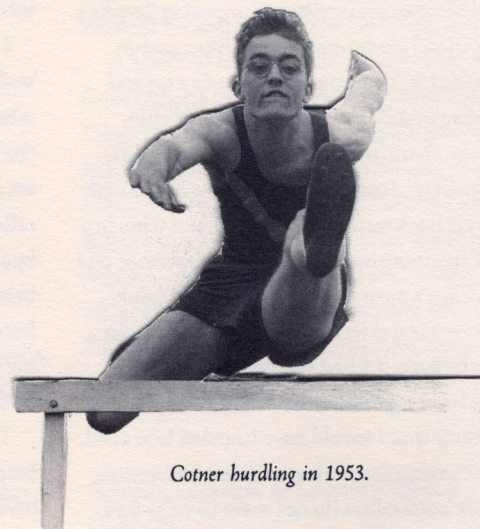
To a much lesser degree than Mr. Owens, of course, I had found athletics as the means of shaping a life toward more important ends. A disciplined athlete, I would spend Saturdays alone on the track refining form and improving technique over the hurdles. I placed

dominoes on edge on the top of the hurdles and skimmed the hurdles so closely that I knocked the dominoes off as I cleared the "timbers."

I would often skip the final study hall of the day and go to the track to get an extra hour's practice before the rest of the team arrived. No one knew it, but I always carried with me on the half-mile walk from school to the track some small edition of John Keats, Walter Scott, or another of my favorite poets, reading as I walked. A stream flowed beside the track, and often before working out, I would sit on the small footbridge over the stream and read poetry, surrounded by lush Midwestern spring — the sounds of marsh birds, the smell of the blossoming fields, and the lovely, billowing clouds in an azure sky. I did not know it at the time, but it was literature more than athletics that would shape my life, although the dedication I learned in the one became a model for the other.

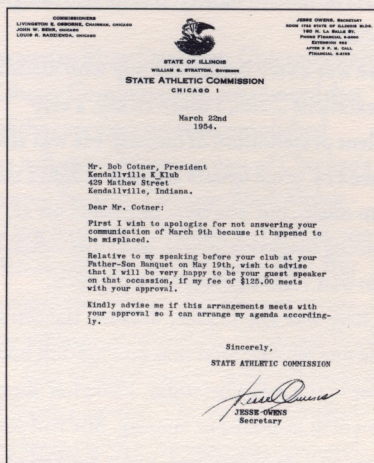
It was the devotion to discipline and the satisfaction with solitude, learned in those early years, more than the bronze medal won in a photo-finish at the '54 State Finals or the many first-place finishes and record-breaking runs that came later in college. It was rare friendships — including a kinship with the immortal Jesse Owens, the greatest athlete of the 20th Century, whom I knew as fellow athlete, fellow American, fellow human being — that has enriched my life in the long run.

Robert Cotner
Editor

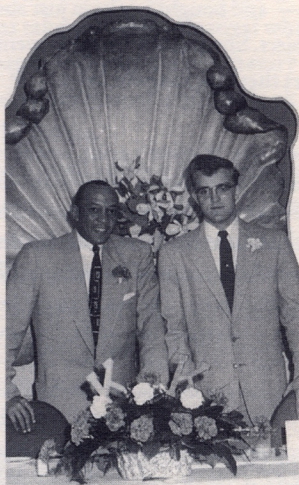


Cotner hurdling in 1953.

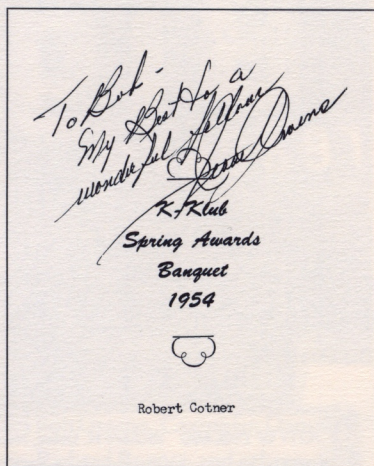
Looking backward at America's greatest athlete



Letter from Jesse Owens



Jesse Owens and Cotner, May 19, 1954



Signed program cover (All items above, from the collection of Robert Cotner.)

Looking backward on a pioneer utopian

Pierre Ferrand

I was born in 1924 and never thought I would make it to the year 2000. Edward Bellamy, the American journalist and fiction writer who was born in 1850, never made it even to the 20th Century, since he died of tuberculosis in 1898. His *Looking Backward, 2000-1887*, was published in 1888, and was an instant international bestseller, with millions of copies sold in some 20 languages. It inspired the American Populist movement and many socialists throughout the world. It started a vogue for many other more or less utopian novels including at least 46 in the U.S. during the following decade. In Great Britain, H.G. Wells imitated its main plot in his dystopia, *When the Sleeper Awakes*, and William Morris answered it from a more Libertarian and anti-technological point of view in his *News From Nowhere*.

For many years, my most vivid memory of the book I first read some 60 years ago was the mention of continuous waterproof sidewalk coverings forming dry and well-lit corridors during rainy days for everyone, replacing the individualistic umbrellas of the 19th Century. I found its naivete amusing and engaging. Upon reflection, his solution for a rainy day makes a certain amount of sense, though its large-scale use is unlikely in our day and age.

Sounding more prophetic is Bellamy's statement to the effect that "an American credit card...is just as good in Europe as American gold used to be..." though the credit card Bellamy was imagining has little to do with the modern VISA or MasterCard, or American Express, though it was just as convenient.

Unlike William Morris, Bellamy loved gadgets and machines, but it does require good will to equate his predictions of scientific developments with what actually has happened. One example is the following: Bellamy clearly cared for music. His book did not specifically predict the phonograph, radio or TV. Still, he used the contemporary invention of the telephone to imagine a system for piping music into private homes.

As a prophet, his record regarding social and political developments is even worse. His vision of a benevolent and strictly equalitarian state

capitalism as of the year 2000, however well-meaning, has proved wrong on almost every count. The same, of course, is true for the predictions of the cottage-industry of so-called "futurists" of a third of a century ago who also mostly focused on forecasts for the year 2000, a nice round figure. I collected a number of their books at the time, hoping to find out, eventually, how wrong they would prove to be. One of my favorite examples is the prediction, by Herman Kahn, of the *Emerging Japanese Superstate* as economically much more powerful than the U.S. by the end of the past millenium. It somehow didn't happen that way.

Bellamy's vision of the year 2000 was that of a world at peace and on the verge of abolishing individual nations. His utopia was achieved without class war, revolutions or bloodshed, and he did not foresee the two world wars. He was an optimistic, benevolent and kindly American.

A Baptist minister's son, a native New Englander, and no Marxist, many of his ideas definitely had a communist flavor, though he would undoubtedly have been horrified by the realities of 20th Century communism. His society guaranteed "the nurture, education and maintenance of every citizen from the cradle to the grave," and absolute equality in incomes. It involved the wholesale abolition of many professions as unnecessary and wasteful, from advertising men and bankers to customs officials, prison guards, tax collectors, salesmen or soldiers, and the enlistment of everyone in a disciplined "industrial army" from the age of 21 to 45, incidentally without any voting rights. All production and distribution in his society were centrally directed by benevolent Washington bureaucrats.

Bellamy talks a great deal about freedom and voluntarism, but his system, while not intended to be oppressive, would have proved a regimented nightmare. It is noted that in his collectivist paradise, those who did not conform are considered atavisms and treated in mental hospitals — an approach which was not unknown in Soviet Russia.

See BELLAMY, page 6

Busck paused while I scribbled in my notebook and thought of things I could ask him. At 87 a person's memory may not be very reliable, and it amazed me how he could spin off such a delightful anecdote.

"That story was wonderful," I said. "Wonderful! Was this man a dealer or what? Can you remember how he looked?"

"He was, ah, reasonably young—I would say, not over 40-years-old, and he was a wealthy oil man. I read about him later in *Life* magazine. That's when I found out who he really was. He had just built a home in Oklahoma, I think, for over a million dollars. This was in 1934, mind you."

"Do you recall his name?"

"No. I don't."

Busck reddened a little, stared at the plain cream pile rug in his modestly-furnished living room, then reached for an envelope on the coffee table and took out several photographs. He pointed to a large one showing a man in his 20s standing in the middle of a long bookroom, under a row of spherical lamps.

"Who's that?" I asked.

"That's me," Busck said, "in Jerry Nedwick's bookstore, around 1934."

The man in the picture was of medium height (to judge from a nearby table), had a thin mustache, wore a three-piece suit and an Oxford collar, and held a cigarette in his right hand. He stood beside the last of a row of book tables and carts upon which were hand-lettered signs, one of which said, "All books on this table: Special 19 cents each." The walls around him were lined with ceiling-high bookcases, and the room was well lit and immaculately clean, with polished tile floors.

There was an older sepia-toned, mounted photo of the same room as in the earlier picture. It showed a larger area of the store, with English library ladders lined intermittently along the bookcases. The interior looked much more cluttered, with dozens of large prints suspended from the wall above the bookcases. The spherical hanging lamp covers were not there: bare bulbs shone from every fixture. Underneath them there was the same young man as in the latter picture, only this time he wore a light-colored shirt without tie, open at the neck and with the sleeves rolled up.



Exterior of Busck and O'Gara bookshop at 326 South Wabash Street, Chicago, in 1934.

Sitting beside me now was a man who had apparently aged gracefully. He wore the same thin mustache — only now it was white, as was the hair that receded two or three inches above a smooth and serene forehead. He had a kindly, grandfatherly look, which seemed natural, with culture written all over a face, which looked at things with care. It was the face of a man who was in the habit of thinking before acting, of giving you the same time and attention that an art critic might give a newly-discovered Rembrandt. I was flattered by his cordial attentiveness from the moment he consented to let me interview him in his quiet home.

"I don't recall the oil man that well, but I do remember some famous people who came to my stores. Like Vincent Starrett, who was a good customer of mine." He reflected for a moment, then laughed. "Of course he was also a good customer of everybody else."

"Oh, I'm sure his friendship with booksellers was genuine," I demurred. "The title of his autobiography says as much: *Born in a Bookshop*."

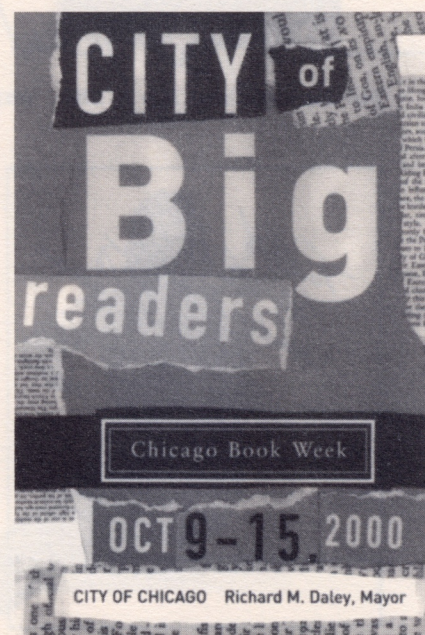
"He was an avid collector who frequented Nedwick's, the Central, the Antiquarian Bookstore, and of course, Busck and O'Gara. I think the reason he bought so many books from these stores was that all had bins outside, 10- and 15-cent bins. In these bins were many early juveniles he used to collect. His collecting went

on for years until he sold the entire collection because he needed money. But he also bought literature.

"He was a very handsome guy who made a very excellentum, I mean to say, a very excellent presentation of himself. He was always followed by some female admirer. I didn't talk to him much, but one time he mailed me an upcoming magazine article, and I was valuable to him in that I found many mistakes in it.

"There was also Colleen Moore, the actress — the one who created that famous doll house you see in the museum today. I sold her about \$800 worth of books in one day. She had just married this guy Hargrave, and moved to a two-story house in Chicago that had a large library. She came to my store on Wabash — Busck and O'Gara — and bought books in just about every subject. She and her husband spent hours and hours there, picking out books." ♦

Editor's note: Mr. Martinez's article, written in 1994, was intended for publication in Bookhunter, the quarterly journal of the Midwest Bookhunters. It was never published. Since then Harry Busck has died, but the story is a remarkable account of bookselling in Chicago early in the 20th Century. The second part of the article will appear in a subsequent issue of the Caxtonian. Carlos Martinez is a high school teacher of Advance Placement English and also runs his own bookshop.



"City of Big Readers," promotional poster for Chicago's first annual citywide literary festival, October 9-15, 2000.

Authors, tours, and book signings pace Chicago's literary festival

Special to the *Caxtonian*

Caxtonian Mary Dempsey, Chicago Public Library Commissioner, announced that some of the country's most accomplished authors will visit Chicago as part of Chicago's first literary festival, "Chicago Book Week - City of Big Readers," October 9 -15. Chicago Book Week will also feature more than 100 book-related events in neighborhoods across Chicago throughout the week. "Chicago Book Week - City of Big Readers" is the City's first annual literary festival. The week will include author events, children's programs, tours and more in libraries, bookstores, museums and community centers in every corner of Chicago," said Mayor Richard M. Daley. "I hope all Chicagoans take part in this festival which offers a chance to recognize our literary history and achievements while we look ahead to the future."

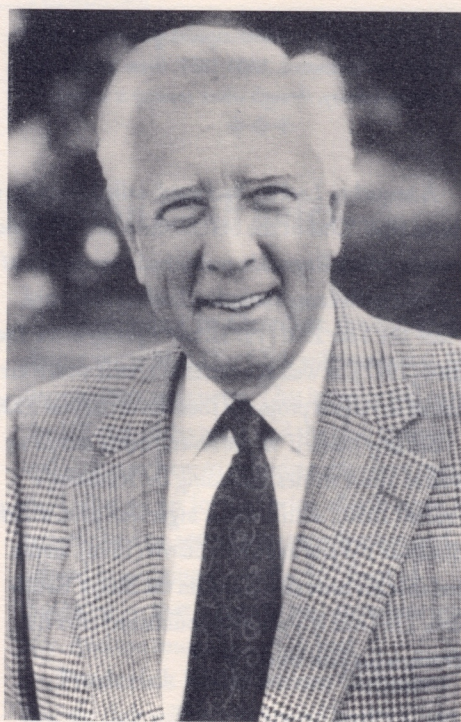
The events listed below are only some of what is being planned for the week. A complete listing of events will be available on the Chicago Public Library's website at www.chipublib.org. Brochures, including all event information, will also be distributed through all 78 Chicago Public Library locations.

Highlights of "Chicago Book Week- City Of Big Readers" will include:

Author Talks and Book Signings

- *Beatriz Badikian, Roosevelt University Professor of Creative Writing, performs her acclaimed poetry, Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State, Oct. 11, 5:30 p.m.
- *Candace Bushnell, *Sex and the City, Four Blondes*, Barbara's Book Store, 1350 N. Wells, Oct. 10, 7:30 -8:30 p.m.
- *Lucille Clifton and Maxine Kumin, poets, sponsored by the Guild Complex Woman Writer's Conference VI, Chicago Cultural Center, 77 E. Randolph, Oct. 13, 7:00 p.m.
- *Luis Gabriel Aguilera, *Gabriel's Fire: A Memoir*, Harold Washington Library Center, Oct. 14, 3:00 p.m.
- *Authors Bob Greene, Caxtonian Dempsey Travis, Richard Roeper, and others, sponsored by Marshall Fields, 111 N. State, throughout week at 12:30 p.m.

- *Aleksandar Hemon, *The Question of Bruno*, Hemon will be interviewed by journalist Mara Tapp, Harold Washington Library Center, Oct. 10, 6:00 p.m.
- *Kazuo Ishiguro, *Remains of the Day, When We Were Orphans*, Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton, Oct. 12, 6:30 p.m.
- *David McCullough, *Truman*. McCullough will be interviewed by journalist Steve Neal, Harold Washington Library Center, Oct. 13, 12:15 p.m.



David McCullough, American historian

- *Michael Patrick MacDonald, *All Souls: A Family Story from Southie*, 57th Street Books, 1301 E, 57th St., time TBA.
 - *Liz Smith, *Natural Blonde*, Borders Books & Music, 830 N. Michigan, Oct. 11, 7:00 p.m.
- ### Special Programs
- *Afrocentric Bookstore, 10-year Anniversary Celebration, 333 S. State, Oct. 12, all day.
 - *Chicago Writers: A Literary Tour of Chicago, sponsored by Chicago Neighborhood Tours; bus departs from Chicago Cultural Center, Oct. 14, 10:30 a.m.

- *Borders Book Drive 2000, to benefit Literacy Chicago; all Chicago-area Borders Books & Music, throughout week.
- *The World's Largest Writing Workshop, presented by Barnes & Noble Booksellers; all Chicago-area stores, Oct. 14, 2:00 p.m.
- *Sara Paretsky and the screening of a new documentary, *Women of Mystery*, presented by the Illinois Humanities Council, Northwestern University Law School Thorne Auditorium, 750 N. Lakeshore Drive, Oct. 11, 5:30 p.m.
- *Sweet Home or City on the Make: Chicago's 20th Century Literary Tradition; lecture by Bill Savage of Northwestern University, Sulzer Regional Library, 4455 N. Lincoln, Oct. 9, 7:00 p.m.
- *Finding A Publisher; panel discussion sponsored by the Center for Book Culture and the Chicago Public Library, Harold Washington Library Center, Oct. 9, 4:00 p.m.

Workshops and Demonstrations

- *Bookmaking, City of Chicago Department on Aging, Northwest Regional Center, 3160 N. Milwaukee Ave., Oct. 10, 9:30 a.m. and Oct. 13, 12:30 p.m.
- *E-book Demo, Harold Washington Library Center, Oct 10, 12:00 p.m.
- *"Improving Your Book Discussion," sponsored by the Great Books Foundation, Borders Books & Music, 830 N. Michigan Ave., Oct. 15, 1:00 p.m.

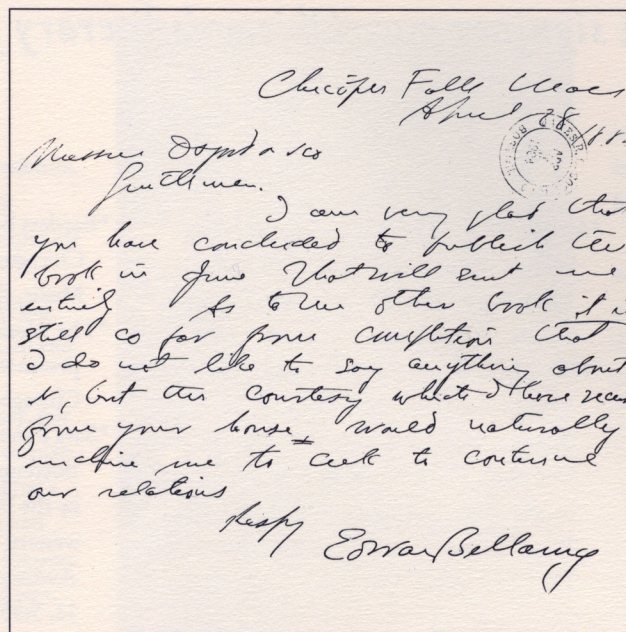
Family Activities

- **Little Red Riding in the Hood*; theater performance, Harold Washington Library Center, Oct. 12, 10:15 a.m.
 - **The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*; theater performance, Chicago Park District's Mayfair Park, Oct. 12, 7:30 p.m.
 - **Reading in the Field*; sponsored by the Field Museum and the Golden Apple Foundation, 1400 S. Lakeshore Drive, Oct. 9, 9:00 a.m.
- For more detailed information about these and other events during "Chicago Book Week - City of Big Readers," log onto the website or telephone 312/747-4999. ♦

Bellamy's book was basically a pamphlet in a light fictional dress. It was earnest, sometimes eloquent, and with some period charm. Also, not all of the suggestions for social change in Bellamy's book are without merit. Even President Richard M. Nixon flirted with the idea of a guaranteed annual wage for all Americans, a safety net as a partial solution for the welfare problem.

Looking Backward remains readable and intriguing even where he was mistaken. Like the literature of the mostly failed prophecies of the "futurists" of more recent date, Bellamy's output and that of his imitators is, of course, eminently collectible.

Bibliographical Note: About 15 years before writing *Looking Backward*, still available in numerous current editions, Bellamy had written an essay, "The Religion of Solidarity" (1940), which is reprinted in Edward Bellamy, *Selected Writings on Religion And Society* (1954), edited by Joseph Schiffman. A number of his lectures, *Talks on Nationalism*, were issued in 1895. (Bellamy did not call himself a socialist, but described his doctrine as "nationalism." Some of his followers called the movement he started "national socialism" — which of course had no relationship to the Nazi movement of Germany, started a generation later.)



Letter from Edward Bellamy to his publisher expressing appreciation for agreeing to publish *Looking Backward*. 2000-1887. From the Bellamy Collection of the Newberry Library, through whose courtesy it is used.

A sequel to *Looking Backward*, called *Equality*, is dated 1897. One of the best modern science fiction writers, Mack Reynolds, published two sequels of his own to Bellamy's utopias (*Looking Backward, From The Year 2000* (1973), and *Equality in the Year 2000* (1977), as well as a series of novels which are placed in various projected societies of the year 2000.

Bellamy himself wrote several other novels as well as short stories, including *Dr. Heidenhof's Process* (1880), with a rather ingenious plot, and *the Blindman's World and Other Stories* (1898). Some feel that his historical novel on the Shays' Rebellion, *The Duke of Stockbridge*, published after his death, is his best work. ❖

Shakespeare on film — an update

Samuel Crowl

Since I spoke to the Caxtonians in May of 1999 about the history of Shakespeare on film and the remarkable recent explosion of new films based on Shakespearean material, the trend has continued. In the past six months alone, we have had three new Shakespeare films, which are among the most interesting in the long and distinguished history of the genre.

Julie Taymor, the *avant-garde* stage director, who made her fame by directing the stage version of Disney's *The Lion King* and became

the first female ever to win the Tony award for best direction of a musical, released her film of *Titus* based on Shakespeare's earliest tragedy *Titus Andronicus*. *Titus Andronicus* is brutal going even for the most committed of Shakespearians — a bloody revenge play with cruelty piled upon cruelty in an almost Grand Guignol manner.

Taymor's film takes the play very seriously as an emblem for the violence of our own age and manages to find imaginative visual equivalents for many of the play's surreal qualities. The film also

features a stunning performance of Titus by Anthony Hopkins, and there is a rumor that Taymor is trying to convince him to join her in making a film, of *The Tempest*.

In a lighter vein, Kenneth Branagh just released his version of Shakespeare's early comedy, *Love's Labour Lost*, in which he reimagines the play as an American movie musical from the 1930s. The film features Shakespeare's quartet of lovers singing such Cole Porter and Irving Berlin classics as "I Get a Kick Out of You," "They Can't Take That Away From Me," "I Won't Dance, Don't Ask Me," and "There's No Business Like Show Business." Branagh sees that Shakespeare's lovers break into sonnet as easily as Fred and Ginger break into song and dance and he tries to capture some of that giddy American spirit in his film. If you find Taymor's *Titus* too gruesome for your taste, Branagh's film should be the right Shakespearean antidote.

The most recent film to be released is Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* with Ethan Hawke in the title role. Almereyda's film is something of a homage to Orson Welles. He sets his *Hamlet* in modern Manhattan with Claudius as the CEO of the Denmark Corporation, a multi-media giant. His stepson, by contrast, spends much of his time capturing the events of the play on a video recorder. Chicago's Bill Murray turns in a fine performance as Polonius, without a trace of Murray's usual self-mockery. The film makes imaginative use of Manhattan and the many technological, gadgets which have become such an integral part of modern life. In one of the film's few witty moments, Almereyda shoots Hamlet reciting the "To be or not to be" soliloquy as he wanders the "Action" aisle of a Blockbuster video store. Almereyda's film is less than two hours long and makes an interesting contrast with Branagh's four hour epic version of the play.

The past decade have brought us fourteen major feature films based on Shakespeare's plays and has revitalized the genre. If you missed these films at the local multiplex they all should be out on video sometime in the next six months. ❖

Readers respond to Thomas Wolfe issues

Editor's note: The Thomas Wolfe Society ordered 150 copies of the August and September issues of the Caxtonian for inclusion in members' packets at the society's meeting in October, when they will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Wolfe's birth. The letter below is in reference to the recent shipments.

Dear Bob,

Because the September [Caxtonian] mentions the commemorative stamp and the work of the Thomas Wolfe Society, I am doubly glad to have requisitioned these publications for our conference attendees. In fact it's fortuitous that the issue of *The Thomas Wolfe Review* chosen for illustration is what we call our "Gorseline issue." A social function at our conference is an exhibition of Douglas Gorseline's drawings for the illustrated *Look Homeward, Angel* and his widow is attending the conference and ought to be pleased in seeing the Caxtonian for September....

Thank you very kindly for your efforts and encouragement.

J. Todd Bailey
The Thomas Wolfe Review

Robert!

I had no idea you were preparing such a piece of beauty! You really lifted my spirits & put a smile on my face today. Thank you. I look forward to the next issue & if possible, send me 6 copies again so I can send copies to my best friends.

Ted Mitchell
Thomas Wolfe Museum

Dear Bob,

Thanks for your note. I never thought that I would appear in a letter to Thomas Wolfe, whose books I devoured in high school. If he writes back, please let me know. I will be giving a talk at the Harvard Club in Chicago on the evening of Saturday, March 3. If you would like to come, please let me know and I can probably get you an invitation.

Howard Gardner
Harvard University

Dear Robert,

Every Wolfean in the world is in debt to you and your EXCELLENT recent issue of the Caxtonian. I couldn't imagine Dennis C. Marnon surpassing the first installment of his Wolfe piece, but he far exceeded my expectations. This installment truly was perfect in every way and I was especially delighted by the layout and the photos! Great job! You have every reason to be proud of your efforts...

Thank you again for everything.

All my best

Ted Mitchell
Thomas Wolfe Museum



Caxton Club notes . . .

Beginning in October, the cost of the dinner at the Mid-Day Club will increase to \$40 for members and guests. This increase will cover the full cost of the meal, and the club treasury will no longer have to subsidize attendees' meals. And what we get for that price, all will agree, is top-of-the-line, served with superb grace, and offered in a setting — on the 56th floor of BankOne — that is hard to beat anywhere in the city. And the company — Oh, my!

Frederick Kittle informs Caxtonians that the club will have its annual book auction during the dinner meeting in November. This is an opportunity to donate a book worth at least \$50 to the club for auctioning on that evening. The proceeds from the auction will go toward the Second Century Fund of the club.

You may get your book to Dan Crawford, Robert Cotner, Fred Kittle, or any Councillor — as soon as possible, so it can be appraised — and plan to be a part of the fun on November 15, when Susan Hanes will entertain us with a talk on her recent extensive research into the life and work of Wilke Collins. ♦

Saints & Sinners Corner



On September 3, 2000, the Eugene Field House Foundation celebrated the 150th anniversary of the birth of Eugene Field, the renowned columnist for the morning edition of the *Chicago Daily News*. This Caxtonian column is named after the "Saints and Sinners Corner," featured in his daily column, "Sharps and Flats."

The celebration began with an open house at the museum at which copies of *Lena and the Old Witch* were distributed to subscribers. This limited edition of a previously unpublished fairy tale by Field was issued in the best tradition of fine printing in an edition of only 150 copies. Purchasers of the book also received as a keepsake a copy of a privately printed 12-page booklet, "Eugene Field – A Biographical Essay," by our historian, Frank Piehl. Contact him for information about obtaining one of the few unsold copies of the book, or a copy of the essay, and watch for his article "Eugene Field and the Gutenberg Bible" in a coming issue of the Caxtonian.

Caxtonians Peter Stanlis and Robert Cotner were participants in the Midwestern Robert Frost Symposium at the University of Michigan, September 23. The event, organized by Robert Frost's granddaughter, Lesley Lee Francis, was begun by remarks by Stanlis on "Robert Frost at the University of Michigan."

Caxtonian Eugene Hotchkiss, retired president of Lake Forest College, has been named Interim President of Eckert College, St. Petersburg, FL. The Hotchkiss family will be in Florida for the next nine months or so, returning briefly each month to their North Shore home.

Caxtonian Mary Dempsey, Commissioner of the Chicago Public Library, is featured regularly with her column, "Book Beat," on "Network Chicago," over WFMT-FM, Chicago's fine arts station.

Bookmarks...

Dinner Program

October 18, 2000

Ed Quattrocchi

Thomas More's "Utopia"

The Caxton dinner meeting on October 18 will feature Caxtonian Ed Quattrocchi and an illustrated lecture on "Thomas More's *Utopia*." Utilizing his own collection and the Special Collections of the Newberry Library, he will share many of the books related to the first three editions of the classic, *Utopia*, printed in 1516-18.

In the last half of the 20th Century, the computer has had a revolutionary influence on the humanities, which is analogous to the influence of printing in the last half of the 15th Century. Today the computer has been decried by some modern academics; in the 15th Century, conservative Europeans resisted the new technology of printing. No scholar/printer was more effective in overcoming this resistance than Aldus Manutius.

Aldus had an incurable influence on most humanists of his day, including Thomas More. Although the Aldine Press printed none of More's works, More had the highest regard for Aldus. In the second book of the *Utopia*, the narrator, Raphael Hythlodæus, describes how he took aboard Vespucci's ship on his fourth voyage the works of 15 Greek and two Latin Classical writers. He mentions that some, if not all, of the books were printed in the Aldine type, and he explains how he taught Utopians about printing and paper-making by showing them examples of Aldine printing.

All luncheon and dinner meetings, unless otherwise noted, are held in the Mid-Day Club, 56th floor of BankOne, BankOne Plaza, Madison & Clark, Chicago. Luncheon and discussion, 12:30pm. Dinner meetings begin with spirits at 5pm, dinner at 6pm, lecture at 7pm. BankOne's parking garage, 40 S. Clark Street, offers a special parking rate after 5pm 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 \$8. Members planning to attend luncheons or dinners must make advance reservations by phoning the Caxton number, 312 255 3710. Luncheon for members and guests, \$20. Dinner, for members and guests, \$40.

Scholars have largely ignored the influence of Aldus Manutius on Thomas More. Even less well known is the fact that all but two of the books mentioned by Hythlodæus, printed between 1481 and 1513, can be viewed in the Special Collections of the Newberry Library.

In his presentation, Ed will talk about the general impact of Aldus Manutius on learning at the turn of the 15th Century. He will discuss the influence of Aldus on the Renaissance humanists in general and Thomas More in particular. And he will show slides of the works that the fictive narrator of the *Utopia*, Hythlodæus, claims to have taken to Utopia and interpret their significance in the history of learning and printing.

This promises to be one of those delightful encounters with books led by one who has devoted a lifetime to a unique understanding of an historical period and a literary work so important to Western Civilization. Join your friends and fellow Caxtonians for this dinner meeting.

Jim Tomes

Vice President and Program Chair

Luncheon Program

October 13, 2000

John W. Berry

Thoughts on the Digital Revolution

John W. Berry, President-elect of the American Library Association will talk on "Thoughts on the Digital Revolution: A World Transformed." A recent National Academy of Sciences report on digital strategy for the Library of Congress notes the following: "No stereotype of libraries as quiet, uneventful places could survive the 1990s. Whatever stability and predictability libraries once had as ordered storehouses of the treasures of the printed word were shattered by the digital revolution. The intellectual function of libraries 'to acquire, arrange, and make accessible the creative work of humankind' is being transformed by the explosion in the production and dissemination of information in digital form, especially over global networks."

In his presentation, Mr. Berry will address various aspects of this explosive transformation, including the trend toward building digital resources, and the globalization of information and knowledge. In short, he will help us understand *e-books* and *p-books* — "electronic books" and "printed books" — as we come to grasp the digital revolution, which is impacting dramatically libraries — and every phase of American life.

A native of Indianapolis, he has three degrees from Indiana University. He served as Executive Director of the Library Administration and Management Association (LAMA) from 1985-1989. He was Director of Advancement and Research Associate Professor, the University Library, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1990-1996. He is currently the Executive Director of NILRC: A Consortium of Illinois Community Colleges, Colleges, and Universities.

Edward Quattrocchi & Leonard Freedman
Co-Chairs