CAXTONIAN

JOURNAL OF THE CAXTON CLUB OF CHICAGO VOLUME XIII, NO. 6 JUNE 2005

Temptations

David Meyer

As collectors we know that yielding to the urge to buy a book is not as bad as resisting it. We may later tell ourselves that we should not have bought the book for whatever reason, but we still have it and can always let it go to someone else. But resist the temptation to buy, and we can be almost certain that we'll regret having done so.

There is another kind of temptation that concerns the inclination to acquire a book without having the freedom to do so honestly. I have had experiences of this kind. Some details relating to these occasions have slipped out of memory, but the circumstances have not.

I attended Cornell College in Iowa in the 1960s, a small liberal arts college a long way from the famous university in Ithaca, New York, and unconnected except for their identical names. "My" Cornell was, from the 1930s through the 1950s, visited by many famous people in the arts during that period. Frank Lloyd Wright and Carl Sandburg were just two of the names that kept coming up in conversations decades after their visits. Wright apparently had a few unkind words to say about the Gothic chapel on the campus, probably while he was inside it talking about his achievements.

Sandburg was a friend of Clyde C. "Toppy" Tull, an English teacher who was in his eighties, retired, and widowed when I met him during my freshman year.* Often after class I would spend a few hours at his house listening to him talk about times past; Toppy had been a powerhouse in his day. He and his wife had traveled around Iowa in the summers staging Shakespeare; they had brought noted writers to the campus again and again; they had nurtured student writers and published their work in chapbooks and the college literary magazine, The Husk. Type was set and printing and binding done by students in the basement beneath the English Department. I became familiar with their names when helping Toppy clear his attic of the accumulated publications from those exciting times. I could tell by the way he talked about his students that he had expected a few to emerge as the next generation's Thomas Wolfe or Ernest Hemingway. But for most, their only appearance in print was due to Toppy.

Many of the books in his living room were by writers who had come to Cornell to read from their work. Sandburg, Edna St. Vincent Millay, John Crowe Ransom and others had been house guests of the Tulls. Toppy had recollections of all these people, but few of their books in his library were signed or inscribed to him. He simply did not care about books in this way. It was the moment that counted: Sandburg sitting in Toppy's favorite chair strumming his guitar,

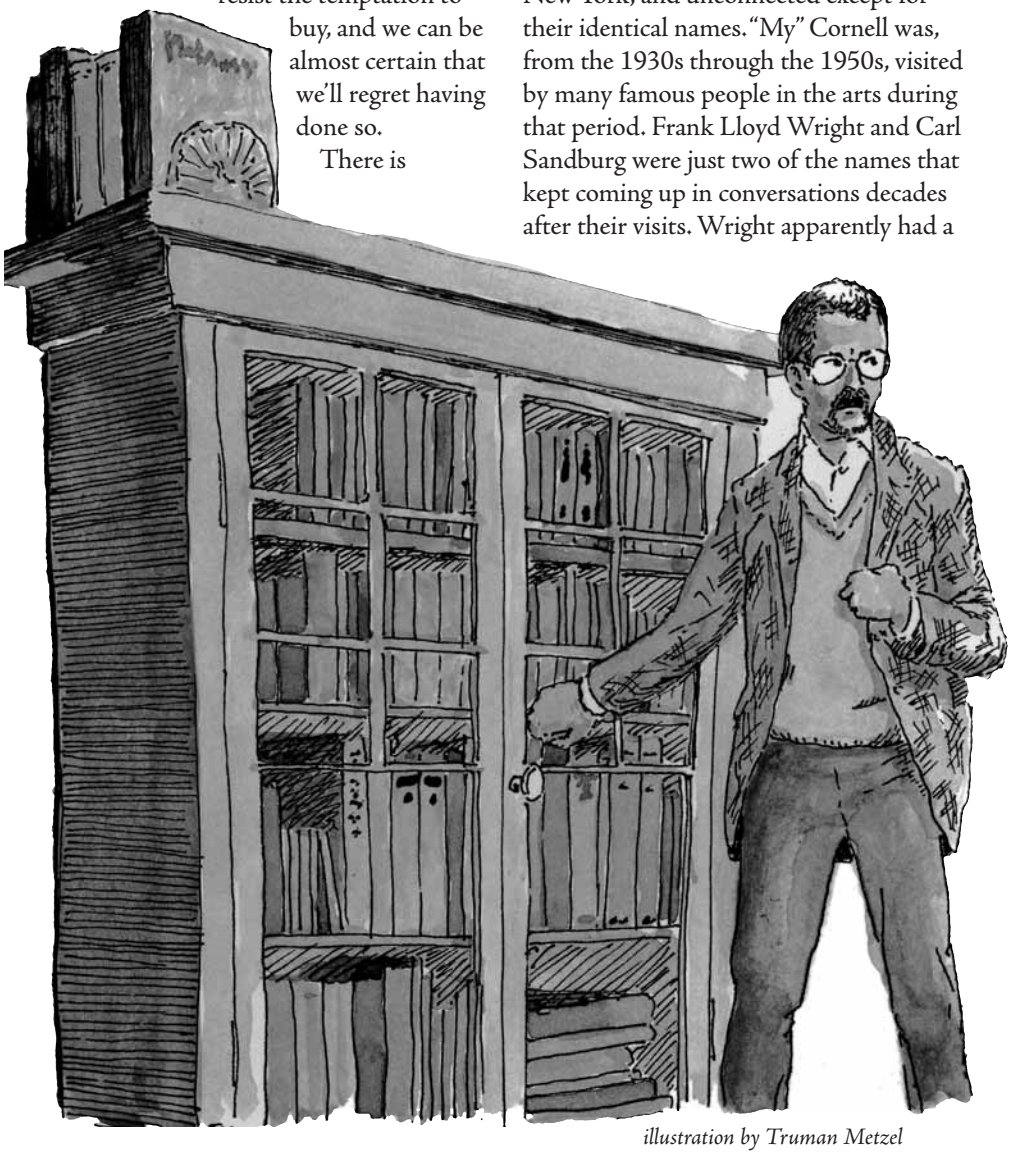

illustration by Truman Metzel

*The English Department was, among other buildings, on top of a hill and Toppy was the top man in the department.

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CAXTONIAN

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The *Caxtonian* is published monthly by The Caxton Club whose office is in The Newberry Library. Permission to reprint material from the Caxtonian is not necessary if copy of reprint is mailed to The Caxton Club office and the *Caxtonian* is given credit. Printing: River Street Press, Aurora, IL

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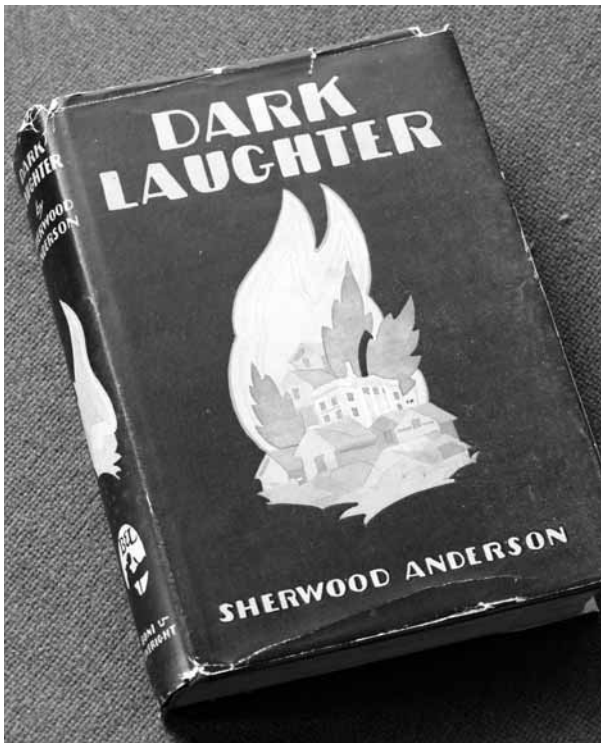
singing and reciting poems while students sat on the floor around him—that was what mattered.

Toppy was intrigued by my interest in first edition books by his author-friends. For helping him clean out his attic he gave me a copy of Sherwood Anderson's 1925 novel, *Dark Laughter*, in a bright but frayed dust jacket. Anderson had signed the half-title page and Toppy or his wife, Jewel, had noted in pencil in the top corner that it was "No. 9" in their library; but the book was not otherwise inscribed. Although I had the urge to search his bookshelves for other first editions, I never asked to do so. When he decided to leave and move to a retirement home in another town about the time I was a sophomore, he gave most of his books to the college library.



One evening in the spring of my senior year, while browsing through the stacks looking for something to read, I came across several volumes of Robert Frost's poetry. Opening one book after another, I was astonished to find that Frost had transcribed some of his most famous poems on their flyleafs and signed his name. I immediately took the books to the checkout desk, thinking as I went that although there was no evidence to support my belief, they had most likely belonged to Toppy.

The books sat on the shelf above the study desk in my dorm room for the length of the library's lending period as I tried to decide what to do. I dearly wanted to rescue them from the open shelves and was surprised they had survived for as long as they had, still in good condition decades after Frost had inscribed them. If I didn't keep them, someone else would discover and take them, or just remove the flyleafs, as I had also considered doing. One thing was certain: kept in circulation, the books were destined for the usual wear and tear and eventual falling apart.

What I wished to do was declare that I had lost the books and pay for replacement copies; but I knew that instant restitution would never release me from the guilt of being a liar and a thief, even if in the service of safeguarding books worth preserving. Also, I doubted I had the courage to face the librarian, a stern-faced, unsentimental man whose view of the world had been toughened by his experiences in World War II. (He had survived the Bataan Death March in the Philippines.) He knew of my love of old books and of my buying them from thrift shops in the area and reselling them to help finance my college social life. He would see right through me and all the way back to my dorm room bookshelf.

When I brought him the books he seemed a little surprised that he had not known of the inscriptions but he was obviously not as thrilled at their existence as I was. A few days later the books were back on the open shelves.

Three years later I was in the army in Vietnam. During the interval I had attended graduate school and signed up for the Peace Corps, both to honorably avoid the draft. But I

DEATHS

We are sorry to report the deaths of Greer Allen on April 21 and Jay Marshall on May 10. Remembrances will appear in future *Caxtonians*.

CORRECTION

On page 10 of the May, 2005 *Caxtonian*, the potato illustration is correctly identified as being from a 1601 publication. However, the first description of the potato was *Caroli Clusii Atrebat*, published in 1576 by Christopher Plantin. An excellent copy of the latter work can be seen at the Chicago Botanic Garden.

was also in love and my girlfriend did not want me to leave her to go to Africa to teach English as a second language, so I didn't. My draft notice arrived and my girlfriend went on with her life without me.

I reluctantly embraced the inevitable, entered and survived Officer Candidate School and went to Vietnam as a second lieutenant in the infantry—but a lucky one. Someone on my arrival read in my paperwork that I was a writer. (I had published stories and a short novel in magazines.) I was assigned to the Combined Intelligence Center for the U.S. Military Assistance Command and the South Vietnamese Army, called "CICV." The windowless and heavily fortified compound was hidden behind the Presidential Palace in Saigon. A circular corridor ran inside the building connecting the different branches of its operations. They included "Targets," "Order of Battle (OB)," and "Order of Battle Studies(OBS)," the branch I was assigned to. One of our duties was to write detailed histories of engagements that would give field commanders an overview of what the enemy had accomplished and what our troops might have failed to do.

The Bible of our branch was a publication on the Tet Offensive of 1968. This event, which involved battles with Viet Cong guerrillas and the North Vietnamese Army throughout South Vietnam, brought the full force of the war into the consciousness of the American people. The OBS history of this event was researched, written, published and distributed among military units in Vietnam while I was still in college. Only one copy remained in the branch when I arrived in the fall of 1970 and it was kept by the senior officer.

Our office was crowded with desks and busy with personnel trained in military intelligence. (Some regarded me as out of place, but I believed my training and a year spent leading a mechanized infantry unit in the States, manned by recently returned combat veterans, gave me an insight into tactics that they did not possess.) But as the months passed, our operations slowed. Those who had come before me returned home; their desks were stacked in corners of the room. President Nixon's vow to wind down U.S. involvement in the war was taking effect and replacements dwindled. The interdiction of supply lines along the Ho Chi Minh Trail and the incursion into Laos to destroy enemy base camps brought a lull in the fighting in South Vietnam. Consequently, the scope of our studies and the urgency for them were significantly reduced.

Although events in war move swiftly and the next incident quickly replaces the importance of the previous one, Tet was stuck in the memory of everyone I encountered in Vietnam. Accounts passed from those who had lived through it to those who came later. Halfway through my tour of duty I was relating to those newly arrived in Vietnam what had been told to me. During Tet even the Five Oceans Hotel where I lived had played its part in the battle for Saigon. Viet Cong fighters took over the lower floors of the building without realizing that many unarmed U.S. military personnel had fled up the stairs to the rooftop restaurant.

The compound where our CICV enlisted men lived had been on the route of one of the attacks, but not the target. The residents at the time watched as the VC raced past their compound on the way to the objective.

Much of what I was told could also be found in the OB history of this great engagement of the war.

By the following fall I had become the officer in charge and the Tet Offensive history had come to me. It resembled a large-format army manual: paperbound, printed on dull white paper, consisting of 200 to 300 pages. Photographs showed prominent areas which had been attacked; schematics illustrated the routes the attackers had taken. I found the narrative describing the action in Saigon as fascinating as what had been told to me, for I had grown familiar with many of the locations which had been targeted.

In the military there is a sense that everything issued to you is for temporary use, but if you find a way to keep it no one really cares. It is just a part of a massive amalgamation that is outside everyone's personal concern. My sense was that OB Studies would soon be shut down and its copy of the history of Tet would be taken by the last man in the office or left behind to be incinerated with all the other documents no longer of use. I kept the book in my desk, determined to take it with me when I left. What I should have done was mail it home. After all, I knew men who were mailing out captured enemy equipment and, supposedly, rifles that were disassembled and sent piece by piece to avoid detection and confiscation by the postal authorities.

But when the day came, I left without the history. I hadn't convinced myself that our studies branch and all the work I, and others before me, had done would come to nothing. Someone might need the book. And by the time of my leaving, all I really wanted was to get out of there and go home.

John Mulholland (1889-1970) was a professional magician who amassed one of the largest collections of magic books and memorabilia in the world. He was a tall, homely, somber man who looked more likely to give a lecture than perform tricks. Yet in his youth he was doted on by the

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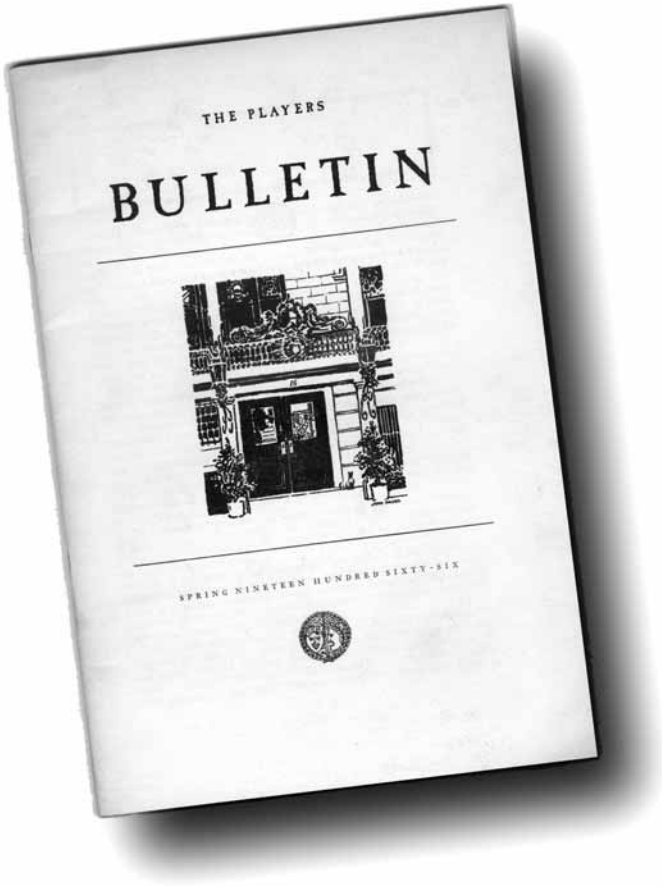
greatest magicians of the day; he came to edit the longest running periodical in magic's history, authored seven books on magic for the general public, and was sought out by encyclopedia and dictionary publishers as the premier expert on his profession.

He was also one of only three magicians who were members of the famous Players Club in New York City during the first seventy-five years of its existence. When the club was founded in 1888 by the actor Edwin Booth, the intention was for actors to mingle with those in other fields. The names of architects, ambassadors, bankers, dramatists, lawyers and manufacturers who were members may be forgotten, but among the writers were Ernest Hemingway, James Thurber and Mark Twain.



Mulholland was a member of the Players for over thirty years and his magic collection became a part of the Walter Hampden Memorial Library, which occupies two rooms in the club and contains Booth's costumes and personal library, over 100,000 programs and playbills and 10,000 books on stage history. When Mulholland gave his collection to the Players in 1966, a gala dinner and entertainment celebrated the occasion. Among the magicians performing that evening was Caxtonian Jay Marshall.

In the fall of 1974 Jay had the idea of publishing a book about the day-by-day performances of the escape artist Harry Houdini. I was living with Jay and his wife Frances at the time, after having wandered about somewhat aimlessly since my return from Vietnam. I became Jay's researcher for the Houdini project and he decided to send me on a whirlwind tour of eastern states to visit magic collections in the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, and the Players Club.

Located at the foot of Lexington Avenue, between Third and Park Avenues, the Players at 16 Gramercy Square occupies Edwin Booth's former home, a Gothic Revival brownstone built in 1845 and remodeled for use as a club by Stanford White. The club and the surrounding area exude exclusivity. Even the park on the square supports this feeling, for it is completely fenced in and only adjacent residents have keys for the gate to gain admittance.

My entrance to the Players library had been arranged in advance but my reception by the librarian gave me the feeling that I was intruding. I was shown into a room, sat down at a large table and, after making my request for materials on Houdini, was left to wait. Disappointment followed my initial discomfort as I realized I was not going to get a glimpse of the famous Mulholland collection en bloc, wherever it might be housed in the building. The librarian eventually returned with two large scrapbooks for me to look through, filled with letters, photographs and advertising ephemera relating to many famous magicians, but not to Houdini.

I was left alone and enjoyed the hour or more spent off the subject of my search, but finally decided that I probably wasn't going to get close to what I wanted at the Players. The librarian never returned to the room to check on what I was up to and I began to feel that he didn't care. So when a loose, colorful, 3- by 5-inch, 19th-century trade card popped out of one of the scrapbooks as I turned a page, thoughts popped into my head.

"How can I make this wasted visit worth my time?"

"Who cares what happens to a loose trade card?"

Another, nearly identical card, depicting the magician Herrmann the Great riding in a carriage accompanied by devils, was pasted to a leaf in the scrapbook.

I was correct in my suspicion that the Players did not care about the Mulholland collection. In 1984 it was sent to Swann Auction Galleries in the city. Ricky Jay, a noted magician and author, was hired to write the sale catalog. Ricky, I believe, helped bring in the buyer who purchased the entire collection prior to the auction, for Ricky became the curator of the Mulholland Library of Conjuring & the Allied Arts when it was moved to a bank building in Los Angeles. The subsequent collapse of numerous financial institutions in the early 1990s included the bank owned by the buyer of the Mulholland collection.

Magician David Copperfield bought the collection in 1992 and took it to Las Vegas where it now resides—that loose trade card and all—in a warehouse.

I have been to Key West, Florida, numerous times in my life. The southernmost city in the U.S. has a seedy charm that appeals to me. My first visit unaccompanied by my family occurred the summer after my graduation from high school when two friends and I drove down looking for Tennessee Williams. After seeking directions from the owner of an art gallery and a patron drinking away the afternoon in a bar (he said Williams had the personality of a barracuda), we found our way to the playwright's house. A small sign on the gate posted a warning not to intrude any further. We did, and a bulldog came after us

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Single Leaves

Christopher de Hamel's remarks at the gala opening of "Disbound and Dispersed: The Leaf Book Considered"

[Both the editors and Dr. de Hamel are aware of the problem of publishing a talk. The onstage gesture cannot be captured; references are not always pursued. Even though this was the best-attended meeting in recent Caxton Club history, more than half of the membership was unable to be present. So, with Dr. de Hamel's permission we publish this transcript in the hope that if the reader was not present, he or she can imagine what it was like; or if the reader was present, that the moment can be relived.]

Christopher de Hamel

This is, in fact, the second time I have spoken to the Caxton Club. The first was in March 1983 when I had brought to Chicago for exhibition a group of manuscript fragments on behalf of Sotheby's, and which were selections from a vast group of over 500 mutilated cuttings from illuminated manuscripts and early printed books to be sold in London the following month. Most of the pieces had been systematically hacked from their books by a dealer in Paris who had sold them individually in 1796. It is not actually very difficult to cut up an old book. Here is a leaf I own from the second edition of Caxton's edition of the *Canterbury Tales*, printed in Westminster in 1484. Now watch. [Here de Hamel rips up the paper.] In fact, please don't worry. That was actually only a photocopy, which I had made myself last week onto old paper. The fact that the apparent destruction of an original Caxton leaf has a certain reaction in a room full of bibliophiles is itself interesting and will become the principal theme in what I am about to relate, for it is the all-important belief that the fragment is authentic that gives all of us the *frisson* of pleasure or horror in seeing it transformed into fragments.

Celia Hilliard, Susan Rossen

It wasn't always so. From the beginning of the history of books, people have cut them up for other purposes. Many important fragments of ancient Egyptian papyri have survived only because they were re-used in making layers of a kind of *papier-mâché* or cartonage inside the tomb wrappings of Egyptian mummies. From the very beginnings of the codex in the early Christian period, bookbinders were cutting up discarded vellum manuscripts to make flyleaves or to strengthen the sewing folds. This wasn't necessarily barbarism. Very occasionally, spectacular or very early manuscripts were dismembered, but for the most part the waste leaves re-used in medieval book-bindings are even now quite disappointing. There is an album of 26 medieval binding-fragments from German bindings on exhibition in the Newberry Library tonight, for example, including magnificent 8th-century insular leaves from the sermons of Saint Boniface and from the works of Bede, but the 24 other medieval scraps in the album are of disappointingly slight value, even now. The invention of printing and the Reformation threw huge numbers of obsolete manuscripts onto the market, and we are all familiar with sixteenth-century bindings with pastedowns or endleaves from discarded manuscripts on vellum.

Kim Coventry, Michael Thompson

The pasteboards of bindings were sometimes made up from multiple layers of paper manuscripts or from what appear to be proof-sheets of early printed books, and these can be fascinating because identifiable printing types might provide evidence of early publishers' bindings. Graham Pollard posited that printers' waste will be used only in the place where the printer had his shop. This is not always true. The honour of speaking to the Caxton Club allows me the opportunity of a slight aside, which is to record my only addition to the canon of Caxton's printing, an otherwise unknown indulgence printed in 1480 of which I once found over a hundred pieces scattered in the sewing-folds of half-a-dozen Oxford bindings of a year or two later. The indulgences were printed by Caxton in Westminster, of course, but the papal licence for the pardoner who sold them still survives, and it was valid only for one year until Easter Day 1481. By another piece of good luck, we know that the pardoner himself spent that Easter in Oxford; he must have been there when his stock of unsold Caxton indulgences became obsolete and unsalable to pilgrims or penitents. He therefore gave or sold them *en bloc* to Nicholas Bokebinder, of Catte Street in Oxford, who cut them up for use in the bindings of printed books. By a slight stretch of interpretation, then, those were really the first Caxton leaf-books, predating the Caxton Club's *Canterbury Tales* by 424 years, and showing that tonight's The Caxton Leaf Book Exhibit centennial dinner should really have taken place in 1581.

By the sixteenth century, antiquarian books were being cut up for numerous reasons. We know of other leaves in Oxford being used as wallpaper in New College and for mending fences in a deer park; and for use by treacle-sellers in Gouda in Holland. In 1713 Thomas Hearne owned an apparently unique incunable fragment (now in the Bodleian Library) which a Mr. Kimber of Holywell Street had acquired wrapped around tobacco. John Leland, in a famous appeal to Thomas Cromwell in 1536, bewails that leaves of books were being used by iconoclasts to clean their boots and candlesticks, and for sale (he says) "to the grosser and sope sellers." A similar reference to soap sellers recurs in a letter from John Bale to Matthew Parker in 1560. I don't know enough about Elizabethan washing practices to know if you

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could buy blocks of soap wrapped in pages of old books (and, if so, there's a class of leaf-book I would like to own) or whether the manufacturers somehow boiled down parchment to make tallow.

Leaves of early books were repackaged to make gun wadding…drum skins…slipper linings…seal-bags (I have a nice seventeenth-century example myself which is a great improvement on the thirteenth-century book it is made from)…blotter covers…battledore feathers in the eighteenth century…lampshades…pot-holders (Bishop Warburton, who died in 1765, recorded that his house-keeper cut up many literary manuscripts for this useful purpose)… and even shaving paper (there is a good example from Derby around 1800). If I have one point to make at this stage, it is that there is nothing new about cutting up books, and sometimes the re-use of the pieces ensures the survival of what might otherwise have been lost altogether. The Arni Magnússon Institute in Copenhagen has a portion of the unique manuscript of the Icelandic *Sturlunga Saga* that in the seventeenth century was cut into sewing-patterns for the parts of a gentleman's waistcoat; Professor R.B. Blake of Harvard describes an expedition to Asia Minor where one of his native servants proudly exhibited his pair of parchment trousers on which there were still traces of medieval writing. There is the famous story that used to be told by the late Tim Munby, librarian of King's College, Cambridge. He was interested in books and motor cars. As a young man he bought half-shares in an ancient and temperamental Bugatti. One day, miles from anywhere, it blew a gasket. He needed to improvise a washer and happened to have on the back seat some pieces from a dismembered medieval choirbook. He said he was ashamed to recall but he cut out little discs from the old parchment and fitted them into the engine; and the car worked beautifully thereafter. He said this gave an opportunity to indulge in a little one-upsmanship. When enthusiasts asked the age of the car, he would murmur nonchalantly that "parts of it date back to the fifteenth century."

Russell Maylone, Christopher de Hamel

For various reasons, I am interested in religious relics in the Middle Ages. Most churches of medieval Europe owned collections of bones or other pious trinkets associated with saints—pieces of clothes, bits of stone where the saint had stood, instruments of martyrdom, and of course parts of the saints themselves. (Many places, for example, claimed to possess the head of Saint John the Baptist: the medieval inventory of Cologne Cathedral lists an exceptional rarity, which was the head of Saint John the Baptist as a young man.) The important thing about relics is that they were, or were believed to be, authentic. They often came with magnificently documented provenances and certificates from popes or cardinals proclaiming their authenticity. It is easy to mock at relics, but many were undoubtedly genuine. I myself own one of uncertain provenance. I bought it from an antiquities dealer in Bournemouth. It is a piece of a bone of Saint Eldradus, whom you won't have heard of, but who was in charge of the library of his monastery in the Alps in the ninth century. Many people possess ninth-century manuscripts, but I think I am the only book collector to own a ninth-century librarian.

Hayward Blake, Barbara Metz

From a bibliographic point of view, what is interesting about medieval relic lists is that they never included books. I cannot think why not. To us, as bibliophiles, a book is the most intimate of possessions. You would have thought—and this is the link back to leaf-books—that a manuscript that had belonged to a saint would be an ideal source of relics, for you could cut thousands of pages or fragments from a saint's prayerbook (for example) and every one would be recognisable and authentic. For some reason, they didn't, at least not in the Middle Ages themselves. For example, the greatest pilgrim shrine in northern Europe was that of Saint Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral, the destination of Chaucer's pilgrims. The monks there ran an enormous business selling relics, including trinkets such as little phials of water that had been washed over the ground where Becket had walked. But the monks also possessed 71 books that had been owned by Becket, and these were kept not in the shrine or even in the sacristy, but mixed up with other books in the cathedral library. In the fifteenth century many of Becket's own manuscripts were weeded out as duplicate texts and discarded. One of them, in fact, is now in the Parker Library in Cambridge. It has 240 leaves. If we take this as a reasonable average for 71 books, the monks could have broken Becket's volumes up into just over 17,000 leaves; and if each leaf had 40 lines of text, as the Parker volume does, these could have been cut further into 680,000 authentic relics of reasonable and recognisable size. They didn't, for the books seemed to have no relic value at all. I personally would pay quite a good sum now for even a few words of a manuscript once owned and read by Saint Thomas Becket himself.

The first example known to me in England of a book probably being partially broken up for its relic value is one of the six books at St. Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury believed to have been sent from Rome by Saint Gregory in the mission of Saint Augustine in 597. The book is actually English and a hundred years too late, but that is beside the point; by the late fifteenth century it was kept as a relic of the founder

on the high altar of St. Augustine's Abbey. In the early sixteenth century, before the Reformation, the volume was divided into at least three parts, and two leaves were given as a present to Cardinal Wolsey, who died in 1530. He had many faults but I forgive him all of them because he was a book collector, and I like to think that he gained a certain thrill of delight in taking home even two leaves of a 700-year-old book with a distinguished provenance. He inscribed them, and bound them into another manuscript. He is our earliest leaf-book collector.

It is a curious fact that the admiration of books which had belonged to saints or kings is mainly a Protestant phenomenon. Many of the famous manuscripts associated with great names of the Catholic Middle Ages, like the Gospels of Aethelstan or the Classbook of Saint Dunstan, only received these evocative titles after the Reformation. Matthew Parker, Elizabethan archbishop and relentless abolisher of medieval superstition, gladly inscribed books he owned as having belonged originally to Saint Theodore of Tarsus or Saint Wulfstan, both over-optimistically, in fact. It is as if the Reformation, in eliminating the relics of ancient Catholicism, left a hole in the human need to touch hands with the past. Books came in to fill this vacuum. Samuel Pepys, no lover of the Catholic Church, assembled albums of single leaves cut from manuscripts and printed books, including a small piece (really a relic) of one page of the so-called Hours of Henry VIII. Another, just as small, was owned by John Bagford, who died in 1716. Bibliophiles both, they doubtless rejoiced in what were in effect Protestant relics of the king who had in fact eliminated English Catholicism.

Marilyn Sward, Norma Rubovitz, Robert Williams

It is very striking that the collecting of secular relics reached its absolute height in the age of rationalism. At the moment when it really looked as though religion might disappear completely from western Europe, the trade in contemporary relics flourished as never before or since. This is the period from about 1780 to about 1830. Think of those countless pieces of Shakespeare's mulberry tree cut down in 1759, George Washington's chair, Nelson's *Victory*, Robert Burns's teaspoons, scraps of Beethoven's handwriting, locks of Mozart's hair, and so on, even (or especially) relics of people who turned their backs on religion, such as Keats, Shelley, Byron, Robespierre, and Napoleon. Little pieces of Napoleonic or Byron memorabilia were divided up, collected, and venerated quite as avidly by the public as by any medieval cardinal gathering crumbs of the True Cross or bones of Saint Peter.

Joel Silver leads a gallery walk

This is the period, too, of the first systematic cutting-up of medieval manuscripts for the specific purpose of selling them to collectors. The early trade in fragments is elegantly documented by fellow-Caxtonian Sandra Hindman in her exhibition catalogue of 2001, *Manuscript Illumination in the Modern Age*. The first great sale of book cuttings in England was held at Christie's on 26 May 1825. It was described on the title-page as "A highly valuable and extremely curious collection of Illuminated Miniature Paintings…taken from the Choral Books of the Papal Chapel in the Vatican, during the French Revolution, and subsequently brought to this Country by the ABATE CELOTTI" (his name in capitals). There are various things to note about this. First of all, they are passing the blame—the cuttings were taken from their volumes during the French Revolution. Every modern publisher of leaf-books adopts this convenient position, that the book was already dismembered when it was acquired, preferably in another country.

Secondly, note the religious overtones. Celotti was simply a dealer. I have often suspected that he was not an "Abate," or priest, at all. It suited him to masquerade as a Catholic priest in the very Anglican England of the time, and the exaggerated claim that the leaves all came from the Vatican must have been to convey a certain shiver of illicit excitement to potential buyers. Think of all those meticulous nineteenth-century pictures of red cardinals in opulent and decadent surroundings, with kittens, chess-games, and glasses of claret. The market for such paintings was not among devout Catholics but with northern Protestants, who luxuriated in the shock value of high Church wantonness and indolence. Even this morning's papers, on the election of Benedict XVI, are not innocent of a certain fascinated voyeurism. Although the buyers of manuscript fragments from the Celotti sale in 1825 were not at all Catholic, we are not very far from the heavy velvet world of medieval relics. Finally, note the papal provenances. The customers, no doubt, would claim that they admired the artistic merit of their mutilated purchases; the sale catalogue is arranged by provenance, with groups of cuttings once owned respectively by Cardinal Pallavicini, Leo X, Clement VII, Paul III, and so on. The fragments were prepared into collages of what are in effect two-dimensional leaf-books, with the appropriate pope's arms and names and mottoes surrounding often quite small souvenirs of the dismembered manuscripts. They are, in short, trading in relics of the luciferian Borgia and Medici popes.

At the same period we begin to find the first printed books being cut up as relics of the printers. Certainly collectors like John Bagford had owned printed fragments, including a Gutenberg Bible leaf on vellum, which he sold in 1707 to Hans Sloane. It had been recovered from a binding, and there is no evidence that Bagford realised what it came from. The first time that

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leaves were detached from a Gutenberg Bible as deliberate relics of their printer was probably in 1812. In that year, Johann Wyttenbach, municipal librarian of Trier, removed several leaves from the Gutenberg Bible volume now in Mons and gave them to the bibliographer Guillaume Ferdinand Tessier. The sample leaves were set into a folder with a hand-written note in Latin describing them as being a specimen of the first Bible, printed in Mainz in 1450 by Gutenberg and Faustus, as it calls him. (There may even be a slight whiff of religion in the second name here, for this is the Catholic Vulgate, and Goethe's *Faust* was published in 1808.) Sample leaves from the Fust and Schoefer Bible of 1462 could be bought in France in the nineteenth century for 25 francs each. Other printers too received early attention from admirers. There is in the Rylands Library in Manchester a block-book Bible and *Biblia Pauperum*, once owned by the Jesuits in Würzburg. When it was bought by Lord Spencer in the early 1800s, the volume also included an imperfect copy of the exceedingly rare *Ackermann von Bohmen*, printed by Albrecht Pfister in about 1463 in the type of the 36-line Bible. It is the earliest European printing in the vernacular. In the Dibden period, Pfister was regarded as almost on a level of sanctity with Gutenberg, as perhaps he should be. Either Lord Spencer himself or his London bookseller, James Edwards, seem to have removed the Pfister fragment from the volume. Its leaves were trimmed and carefully inset separately into sheets of old paper. They were then sold or given away individually as specimens of printing for collectors for whom the possession of any complete book by Pfister was inconceivable. One, now in the University of Texas at Austin, was found in the Shuckburgh copy of the 1516 Mainz Psalter, enclosed in a folder dated 1816. Other leaves similarly mounted and doubtless from the same source are now in Canterbury Cathedral, the Lilly Library in Bloomington, the Scheide Library at Princeton, and elsewhere, all dispersed as relics of Pfister, the mysterious prototypographer of Bamberg.

Matt Doherty, Susan Jackson Keig

The nineteenth century was proud of its technology, and the history of printing was probably far more widely known to the public than it is now. The greatest book collecting club in the world—I am referring of course to the Caxton Club of Chicago—was named not after some transitory duke like the Roxburghe Club or a small-time French accountant like the Grolier Club, but after a printer, William Caxton. The name was unanimously adopted at the first meeting of the Club in 1895, at the proposal of George Payson, a Chicago lawyer. William Caxton was a huge hero of the Victorians. Even now, probably most reasonably well-informed people in England have heard of him; whereas I imagine that not one in a million Americans in the street could name the first printer in North America, and probably no-one the first printer in Chicago.

Caxton was virtually canonised in the nineteenth century. His tomb was imaginatively created in St. Margaret's Church in Westminster in 1820 to make what became in effect a pilgrim site. The medieval Guildhall in the city of London shows Caxton in its Victorian stained-glass, like a saint in a church window. The great Caxton exhibition in South Kensington in 1877 was certainly the best-attended book exhibition ever held, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors. While relics or autographs of other national heroes, like Wellington or Nelson or Browning, were at least obtainable in Victorian England, all that one could hope to own in order to touch hands with Caxton would be examples of his printing, and these were prohibitively expensive. Even a *Polychronicon*, the least rare of all Caxton's books, made just under £480 in the Charlemont sale of 1865. That was a lot of money. At the time, the sum would have bought you most of the early Impressionist paintings, or all of Los Angeles. The bookseller Henry Stevens, who died in 1886, once broke up a fragment of eight leaves from Caxton's edition of the *Receyell of the Hystoryes of Troye*, printed in Bruges around 1475, the first printed book in the English language. He then divided the leaves into four sets ingeniously bound as double openings in volumes of blank paper so that his buyers could enjoy them as if they were whole copies, without the expense. All it takes is a little suspension of disbelief, a technique known to all medieval curators of relics, and you can imagine you are holding the whole book. The first single leaves of Caxton printing to go through Sotheby's as separate lots appear to have been in 1867, and these are from consciously dismembered copies, not freak survivals from book-bindings or other sources of the late Middle Ages. William Blades, author of *The Enemies of Books* in 1888, which castigates all those who destroy volumes of any kind, was himself a collector of single leaves of Caxton's printing, and he bequeathed them to the St. Bride's Printing Library in London, and it is perfectly clear that they had been cut from their volumes before framing. In one of those many guides to book collecting, published in 1905 (the year of the Caxton Club leaf-book), the author, Herbert Slater, gives the familiar advice to would-be collectors never to buy an imperfect book, except that (he said, and I quote), "A single leaf from any book printed by Caxton is not an undesirable possession."

Malcolm and Adele Hast, Junie Sinson

We are really here to celebrate the anniversary of that ground-breaking (and Caxton-breaking) volume of 1905. I hope that all of you have bought, or will buy, and take home to read tonight, Joel Silver's magnificent exhibition catalogue, *Disbound and Dispersed*, edited and inspired by Kim Coventry and Susan Rossen, with its mar-

vellous account by Daniel Mosser of the Caxton Club's original leaf-book, and the astonishing check-list by John Chalmers of over 230 different editions of leaf-books, most of them American. I had originally proposed that we should buy an odd copy of Gordon Duff's original essay, 118 pages, and then break it up to enclose one leaf in each copy of a special bibliophilic edition of the catalogue. I regret that your colleagues in the Club felt that this was a very bad idea. One of the most unexpected and bravest parts of the catalogue, for which you are all to be congratulated, is Michael Thompson's essay on the legal and (more importantly) the moral implications of cutting up and disseminating books in single leaves. This is completely new material. Leaf-book essayists usually simply avoid discussing the ethics of breaking books, and sometimes they even extol it as a patriotic duty, as Dearden and Watson did when they described in 1930 the Aitken Bible of 1782. They quoted and compared the Declaration of Independence: "And within the covers of this book," they wrote, breathlessly, "reposes another sacred American relic…it is priceless…a precious possession…a heritage to pass to one's children."

Note the word "relic," used there. I too have used it many times. The important thing about any relics is that they have to be genuine. The moment you begin to doubt the authenticity of what you are looking at or holding in your hand, the magic entirely vanishes. It was a technique of the Reformers of the sixteenth century to make fun of the religious relics of the Catholics, for once you begin to have doubts about the authenticity of one item, then the whole panoply comes tumbling down. Doubtless many pieces of absolutely authentic memorabilia of historical saints were destroyed at the Reformation. Those of us who buy old books would never expect a certificate of authenticity or a guarantee of age from the bookseller. If you were showing a guest the antiquarian books in your library, you would not expect to pepper your conversation with words like "genuine" and "authentic." With leaf-books, however, it is the unexpected presence of an actual and authentic relic that gives the publication its life. The half-title of the Caxton Club leaf-book of 1905 reads, "*With an original leaf from the first edition of the Canterbury Tales printed by Caxton in 1478*." You might argue that the word "original" is tautology, for if it was printed in 1478 (and actually it was probably 1476), then by definition it is genuine. To have the authenticity emphasised, however, is part of the pleasure of ownership. The words "original leaf" or "original leaves" occur explicitly in the titles of upward of 60 leaf-books, and many other leaf-book titles include phrases such as "original page," "an original illuminated initial," "a genuine leaf," "a genuine specimen," "a genuine Caxton leaf" (that's another, in 1934), and so on. Limitation statements and signed authentications are very common. Lionel Robinson, perhaps the least popularist of London booksellers, signed individual certificates of authenticity in each copy of his own Caxton leaf-book of 1933, something inconceivable with any complete book sold by his distinguished firm for infinitely larger sums. All this is part of the mystique of approaching the sacred relic, usually not immediately visible when you open the leaf-book but concealed between inside pages or under a fold-over flap. The most extreme example of building up the tension before the precious original is revealed occurs in the stirring introduction by the high priest of American book collecting, A. Edward Newton, in what is probably the most famous of all leaf-books, *A Noble Fragment, being a Leaf of the Gutenberg Bible*, issued in 1921. Newton begins, "Reader: pause awhile, for you look—and it may be for the first time—upon an actual page of a Gutenberg Bible, the most precious piece of printing in the world…." He ends by quoting a letter of 1870, "Pray, Sir, ponder for a moment and appreciate the rarity and importance of this precious consignment from the old world to the new. Not only is this the first Bible, but it is the first book ever printed…Let no Custom House Official, or other man in or out of authority, see it without first reverently raising his hat. It is not possible for many men ever to touch or even look upon a page of a Gutenberg Bible". This is splendid stuff, and is almost liturgical in its rolling prose. It is, in fact, true that it is the absolute authenticity and the immediate tangibility of the leaves in leaf-books which gives them their appeal.

Harry Stern, Carolyn Quattrocchi, Wendy Husser

Dorothy Anderson, Truman Metzel, Ed Quattrocchi

Notice, incidentally, how often Bibles have been broken up for making leaf-books. There are many dozens of examples throughout the whole history of leaf-books, from Francis Fry's *Description of the Great Bible*, published in 1865, right through to a third copy of Aitken Bible which was broken and issued as a leaf-book in 1998. Two Gutenberg Bibles have been dispersed as leaf-books, in 1921 and 1953. There are multiple reasons why Bibles lend themselves to use in leaf-books. As a class of antiquarian books, they are not rare, they have (conveniently) a very large number of leaves in each copy, and they are often defective, which may ease the conscience of anyone reluctant to take the scissors to a virginal volume. More than that, however, Bibles are religious books. I am not going to get too theological, especially after dinner, but there is certainly a sense that a Bible is a holy artefact, and (if so) it is not less sacred in one leaf than it is in several hundred. The Gutenberg leaf-book of 1953 was priced at $200 for a normal leaf but with an added premium for leaves with special text, such as the 23rd Psalm or the Sermon on the Mount. The spiritual dimension in leaf-books would not apply if you were disseminating leaves of (say) John Johnson's

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Typographia, dispersed in 1982, but each fragment is nevertheless authentic. If this scrap had been from a real Caxton, it would still be as original in a 2-inch square as in a one-pound volume. It is my belief that the experience of confronting a great leaf is not very different from that of our ancestors gazing with awe and emotion at the relics in a holy shrine.

In conclusion, let us return to what it is that really motivates any of us into wanting to own a leaf-book or a fragment of a major book or manuscript. I cannot think how to express this except by lowering it to the level of a personal statement. I have myself collected single leaves and cuttings from medieval books for almost 40 years. I now have very large numbers of manuscript leaves and quite a few boxes of incunable fragments, including leaves of the Caxton Chaucer (from which I took my photocopy used at the beginning) and of the Gutenberg Bible, on vellum, no less. I report this, not to show off, for 90% of my fragments are of negligible value (which is how I could afford them in the first place), but as evidence that I do passionately believe in the thrill of confronting and holding in one's hand even a tiny relic of a very great book. I sit with them at night, when I should have gone to bed, leafing through the boxes and touching the pages. Every one of my fragments was cut up at least once, some up to a thousand years ago. I once bought, in Chicago, in fact, a nineteenth-century volume called *The Leaf Collector's Handbook*. It is actually about botany but I couldn't resist the title, and I have long given up any pretence of reading my books. My friend, the late Alan Thomas, had a house filled with bookshelves. "Mr. Thomas," his neighbours would say suspiciously, surveying the room, "have you read all your books?" and Alan Thomas would reply, "Have you drunk all the wine in your wine-cellar?" In fact, when you take the momentous decision that books are not necessarily or only for reading, you are crossing the magic barrier from mere student into bibliophile. Books are for admiring, stroking, owning, touching, turning, coveting, chasing, buying, enjoying, contemplating, shelving, exhibiting, sharing, teaching, comparing, patting, smelling, investigating, upgrading, and generally luxuriating in, and you can do that as well in a leaf as in a whole book, especially if (like most of us) you could never have owned or touched that whole book in the first place. A great advantage with fragments in leaf-books is that it is impossible to get distracted into reading them for too long. If the entire history of leaf-books has introduced even one new bibliophile across that holy divide into the delight of enjoying books instead of merely reading them, then it was all worthwhile. The Caxton Club is to be congratulated on launching this phenomenon, and I salute you all on its leaf book centennial exhibit.

Muriel Underwood, Evelyn Lampe, Dan Crawford

TEMPTATIONS, *from page 4*

from somewhere in the yard. A man appeared behind the screened front door and said, "Baby Doll, you come on back here!" We could only hope it was Tennessee Williams for that was as close as we came to him.

In 1975 another friend and I went to Key West for steamed shrimp and a tour of Ernest Hemingway's home, which had opened to the public a decade before. Along with countless other readers, I had become enchanted with Hemingway's novels and stories—and his life. I had read most of his early books in their first editions. Published in the 1920s and 1930s by Charles Scribner's Sons, they were bound in uniform black cloth and with a gold label on the spine. These were not collectors' copies; I had bought them used, without dust jackets, and for only a few dollars each. Darkened and stained and worn about their edges, they were battered by life like Hemingway himself.

We were not disappointed with the shrimp. But the house Hemingway had kept during the 1930s, and where he had written some of his most admired books, seemed absent of any sense of his having lived there. A large family of cats roamed the grounds, as cats were famously known to do at his home in Cuba. They were touted by the elderly ladies who showed the property as evidence of Hemingway's long-time presence. But the house held nothing that seemed unmistakably to have been his. The furniture and books were noticeably worn, obviously from the climate and insect damage; but my friend was dismayed to see plastic flowers as we passed through the rooms. Hemingway kept plastic flowers on a semi-tropical island? How likely was that? Where was something truly personal—touched and used and having belonged to Hemingway?

We found it a few miles away, near the Key West Airport and the Atlantic Ocean side of the island, in the East Martello Museum. This Civil War fort, with its eight-foot thick walls and rusted cannons, was never completed and must have fallen to many different uses over the past century and a half. The year we stopped there it was a poorly maintained, not-much-visited tourist spot. You could walk the topside battlements and through the damp and gloomy quarters below, without encountering anyone along the way. Although there was not much to see or learn, the museum provided a tranquil atmosphere.

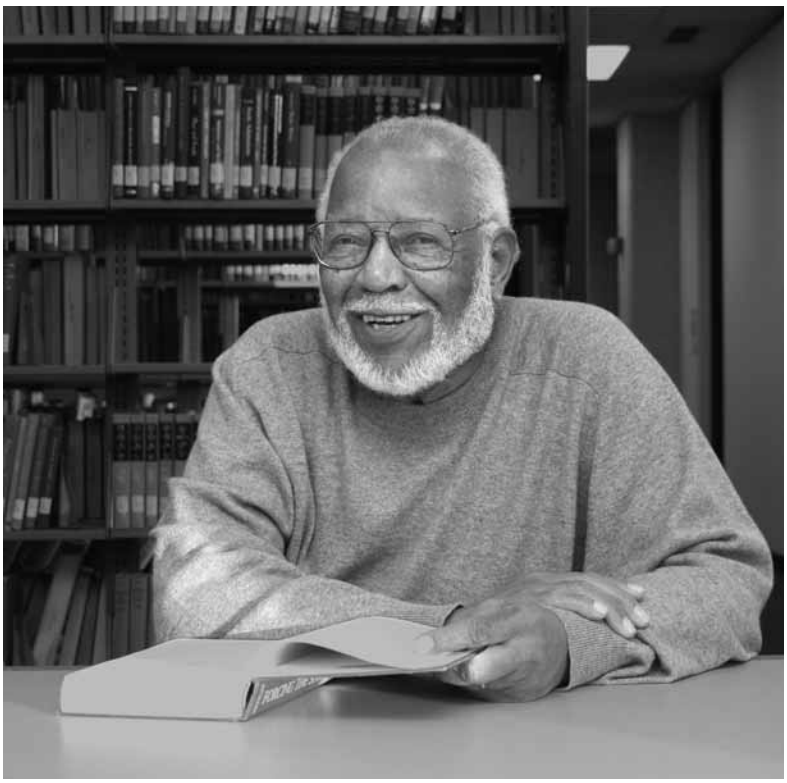
And it held an unlikely attraction in a breezeway just inside the entrance. In a display case on a table containing miscellaneous artifacts associated with Key West's history was an inscribed manuscript of one of Ernest Hemingway's novels. There it lay, unprotected from the climate or anyone who cared to open the unlocked case and carry it away.

What was the title of the manuscript? As with the titles of Toppy Tull's books inscribed by Frost, I don't remember. I would if I had taken them.

Caxtonians Collect: Sherman Beverly

Seventh in a series of interviews with memebers.

Interviewd by Kathryn R. J.Tutkus



I met Sherman Beverly after a large snowstorm had passed. We planned to meet at Northeastern University Library, but it was closed. Thanks to cell phones we were able to find each other at a Starbucks; a cold night paid off with pleasant conversation about his collection, poetry from the Bible through Beat and Rap, how everything sells on ebay, and life in general. Beverly likes thought-provoking writing that goes off on tangents, "novels that reveal something about society, the world, and myself."

Beverly jokingly said that got started because he didn't throw anything away.

Beverly became a Caxtonian through Tom Drewes. Both lived in Deerfield and had been involved in starting a book club there. Beverly joined the Club in 1996.

The things that Beverly collects are all his favorite things to read. Let's start with Harlem Renaissance, generally defined as having occurred between 1919, when World War I ended, and 1929 when the Great Depression began. Black intellectual and artistic life flourished in many northern U.S. cities, reaching its peak in New York City, particularly in Harlem, the place to be in the 1920s. The NAACP, the National Urban League, and the Universal Negro Improvement Association were all headquartered in Harlem, as well as the magazines *Crisis*, *Opportunity*, the *Messenger*, and *Negro World*. Poets and fiction writers such as Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Countee Cullen, Claude McCay, Nella Larsen, Georgia Douglas Johnson, and Jessie Fauset were published in these magazines. They were acquainted with each other and each others' writings, so a creative climate existed that propelled the development of new ways of approaching African-American poetry and prose.

Then there is Charles Chestnutt who died in 1932 leaving a rich legacy of 20th century African American literature. "The Wife of His Youth," a short story considered one of Chestnutt's best, first appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, in 1898. Though his first short story was published when he was fourteen, he went on to be a teacher; principal; contributor to a daily gossip column for the Wall Street News Agency called "Mail and Express;" and stenographer in the accounting department of the New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad Co. He was admitted to the Ohio bar in 1887, though he never practiced law very actively, his principal occupation that of a court and convention shorthand reporter.

In fact Beverly's "one book that got away," was a $4000 volume by Charles Chestnutt.

And there is Chester Himes who created a violent and cynical picture of the black urban experience in America. He wrote *Cotton Comes to Harlem*. "You laugh throughout the book and then feel sad," says Beverly. He started writing while in Ohio State Penitentiary where he was imprisoned from 1928-36 for armed robbery. He learned to write in prison, and eventually produced stories for black newspapers, *Esquire*, and *Coronet*. He worked for the WPA Writing Project (1938-41) and he wrote briefly for Cleveland Daily News. Even with the sponsorship of Pulitzer Prize-winner Louis Bromfield, Himes was unable to find a publisher for his novel *Black Sheep*. Himes moved to Paris in 1953 and later to the south of Spain.

Beverly also collects Frank Yerby, an African-American author of popular historical fiction. His "Health Card" won the O. Henry Memorial Award for best first published short story in 1944. In 1946 his first novel, *The Foxes of Harrow*, was an immediate success. His novels are action-packed, feature a strong hero from an earlier period, and unfold colorfully to include characters of all ethnic backgrounds. He was the first African American to write a best-selling novel and to have a book purchased by a Hollywood studio for a film adaptation. During his prolific career, Yerby wrote 33 novels and sold more than 55 million books worldwide.

Among Beverly's great finds are a bunch of FrankYerby novels in a bookstore in St. Petersburg, Florida. He found about eight volumes for $14 each. If he were stranded on a dessert island he says he would take an anthology; he also likes essays and mentions "The Best American Essays of the Century" that Joyce Carol Oates co-edited with Robert Atwan.

Since Beverly has retired he has consulted for the Chicago Public Schools. He tries to help teachers organize their curriculum, how to be creative teachers. In one classroom he visited, the teacher was showing the movie *The Wizard of Oz*. "It is about life, about religion, it's a whole lot of things." Beverly started asking the class what words would they use to describe life. They "came up with some great words: a mountain, a struggle…so I read them Langston Hughes' *Mother to Son*."

Bookmarks...

Luncheon Program
June 10, 2005
Malcolm Hast
"Six Centuries of Influence: Translating a Monumental Medical Text"

1543 saw the publication of two extremely momentous books: *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, by Copernicus, which revealed the sun to be the center of the universe, and *De humani corporis fabrica (Fabrica)*, a medical atlas by Andreas Vesalius (age 28), that revolutionized human anatomy and forever changed medical education in the West. *Fabrica* includes 272 sumptuous woodcut illustrations, created in Titian's studio, that continue today to influence how we look at the human body.

Malcolm Hast, Professor Emeritus of Head and Neck Surgery and former Professor of Anatomy at Northwestern, is presently translating and annotating (with D. Garrison) both the 1543 and 1555 editions of *Fabrica*, with the eventual goal of creating both electronic and printed editions of this FIRST EVER complete translation. Malcolm will describe to us the process of producing an annotated translation from Latin into English. Employing illustrations from the *Fabrica*, he will consider Vesalius' method of anatomy.

Collectors and Their Collections
Sunday, June 12, 2005, 2-4 pm
Bruce Barnett: "The Dance of Death"

Trained as a lawyer and active in business and finance for many years, Bruce now concentrates on book selling and collecting. He collects "The Dance of Death," a literary, artistic, and musical genre originating in the 13th Century based on the theme that life is short, and nobody is spared regardless of social position, sex, age, or income. Skeletons and depictions of death abound, linked to the plague and other gruesome ends. "DOD," as fans call it, is known in other languages as Danse Macabre and Totentanz. Among those who have used the DOD theme in their work are Breughel, Holbein, and Liszt. Bruce's collecting interests also include Art Deco and Arts and Crafts.

Bruce and David Block operate The Book Block, antiquarian booksellers based in Greenwich, Connecticut, and Lake Forest, Illinois. As often happens, he started as a customer and was hooked so deeply he became a partner. He will share with us some of his insights into collecting and developing a collection.

Bruce is located at 671 Balmoral Court in Lake Forest. As always, attendance must be limited, and advance reservations are requested. Please call the Club at (312) 255-3710 to hold your spot. The attendance fee of $25 will be collected at the door. Refreshments will be served.

Dinner Program
June 15, 2005
David Schoonover
"Much More Than Recipes"

David Schoonover, the Curator of Rare Books at the University of Iowa Libraries, will present "Much More Than Recipes," an illustrated overview of the 22,000-item Szathmary Collection of Culinary Arts at the University of Iowa.

Chef Louis Szathmary, a Caxtonian until his death in 1996, was the owner of a renowned Chicago restaurant, The Bakery, and a celebrity, author, and lecturer. The menu of David's presentation will demonstrate how the chef formed his collection and his secret reason for placing his treasures at the University of Iowa. The courses will commence with appetizers from five centuries of culinary books, sips of beverages, a spicy sampling of aphrodisiacal recipes, a cook's tour of international dishes from Afghanistan to the former Yugoslavia, a selection of culinary mysteries, and will conclude with a dessert of other Szathmary tidbits.

David Schoonover was born in Texas and has received degrees from the University of Texas, the University of Michigan, and Princeton University. He has held his post at Iowa since 1986. In 1991, the University inaugurated the Iowa Szathmary Culinary Arts series of publications for which he has edited nine volumes. Prior to becoming the Curator, David had library appointments at Yale and Northwestern and taught at Northwestern. David was a member of the Caxton Club when he lived in the Chicago area.

David's presentation promises to be a delicious and satisfying conclusion to our own dinner. We hope to be joined at the meeting by Mrs. Sadako Szathmary, the widow of Chef Louis and also a Caxtonian.

The club does not meet in July or August.

All luncheon and dinner meetings, unless otherwise noted, are held in the Mid-Day Club, 56th floor of BankOne, Madison & Clark, Chicago. Luncheon: buffet opens at 11:30; program 12:30-1:30. Dinner meetings: spirits at 5 pm, dinner at 6 pm, lecture at 7:30 pm.

For reservations call 312-255-3710 or email caxtonclub@newberry.org. Members and guests: Lunch $25, Dinner $45. Discount parking available for evening meetings, with a stamped ticket, at Standard Self-Park, 172 W. Madison.