

## Signed & Inscribed, Revisited

Sometimes, it's not so much the books or artifacts themselves as the memories they bring back

*Editor's note: a previous essay on signed and inscribed books in David Meyer's library appeared in the February 2006 issue of the Caxtonian.*

David Meyer

Sometimes the history associated with a particular copy of a book extends beyond the inscription found on the front flyleaf or title page. Notes or letters attached or laid in may provide further evidence of a book's "personal history." If the original owner still possesses the book, a portion of its history might remain in memory and not be recorded within the book's covers.

Two volumes in my library illustrate these attributes.

### 'TELL ME A RIDDLE'

Tillie Olsen's *Tell Me a Riddle* opens with the haunting line "I stand here ironing, and what you asked me moves tormented back and forth with the iron."

The book, a collection of four stories, was first published by Lipincott & Co., in Philadelphia, in 1961. Only 500 copies of the print run were reported to have been bound in hardcover; an unknown number of copies were issued as a trade paperback. Despite this inauspicious beginning, the importance of the book was immediately recognized. The title story won the O. Henry Prize that year and the collection received praise from Dorothy Parker ("She can spend no word that is not the right one") and Granville Hicks, a major critic of the time, noted, "...criticism [of the book] comes close to irrelevance." Since its first publication, *Tell Me a Riddle* has appeared



Cocktail hour at the Eaves, December 1968. Left to right: the author (scotch in hand), Tillie Olsen, and Deborah DeMoulpiéd.

in numerous U.S. editions and been translated into Finnish, Norwegian, German and French. The most recent appearance of the novella "Tell Me a Riddle" couples it with Leo Tolstoy's *Death of Ivan Ilych* in the Feminist Press "Two By Two" series.

"She is widely considered to be one of the most influential American female writers of the 20th century," the MacDowell Colony newsletter noted after Olsen's death on January 1, 2007, at the age of 94. "Speaking out through her work against the struggles of motherhood and poverty, she provided powerful inspiration for an entire generation of women.... Olsen had a total of 10 residencies at MacDowell from 1965 to 1992. While in residence, she pieced together the unfinished manuscript for her last major work, *Yonnonidio: From the Thirties*."

The MacDowell Colony, located in Peterborough, New Hampshire, is an artists' retreat. Founded in 1907 by the American composer Edward MacDowell and his wife

Marian, it currently has 32 studios, a main house and outbuildings located on 450 acres of fields and woodlands. The stated mission of the Colony is to "nurture the arts by offering creative individuals... an inspiring environment in which they can produce enduring works of imagination." Residencies typically run for several months, during which "the colonist" receives free room and board and use of a studio. Morning and evening meals are taken in the main house, Colony Hall; lunch is brought in baskets by a member of the staff and left on each studio doorstep.

I met Tillie Olsen at The MacDowell Colony in December 1968. I was 25 years old, recently drafted by the army out of graduate school, and rushing to finish

my first novel before beginning my service the following January. (The novel was published in *Redbook* magazine in October 1970. I received my first copy of the magazine at mail call as helicopters waited to take me and other infantry officers into the wilds of Panama for a week of jungle operations training.) The Colony had few winterized studios then and, consequently, few residents at that time of year. Of the dozen of us (or fewer), I came to know Tillie; Evelyn Eaton, a writer of historical novels; visual artists Deborah DeMoulpiéd, Aspasia Voulis and Blanche Dombek; and poet-critic Peter Viereck, who kept absent-mindedly calling me Daniel.

We worked in our studios through the days (and sometimes the nights), meeting in the main house in the morning (for those who woke early enough) and evening. The meals were prepared and served by a

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# CAXTONIAN

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lovably no-nonsense New England couple, Mr. and Mrs. Crockett, who owned an inn they ran during the summer on an island in Maine.

Tillie, Debby, Evelyn and I occasionally met in the common room of the Eaves, the women's residence, for drinks before dinner. I can't recall exactly why I was invited into their little circle, but there were two likely reasons. First, they felt sorry for me: my life and literary aspirations were soon to be set aside by my impending service in the infantry and it seemed certain that I was going to fight in Vietnam. Second, my favorite writer was Willa Cather – my own writing reflected her influence – and Tillie and Evelyn loved Cather's work. We had a lot to talk about.

A note and a map jotted down by Tillie on a torn scrap of blue paper reads: "David – Some late afternoon or night after dinner – if you feel like talking..."

Her handwriting was minuscule, but the map showed the way I should proceed along the otherwise unmarked path to her studio. Her depiction of the route from Colony Hall to where she was working in Mansfield Studio included paths marked "No! No!" that I should not follow.

She was using the winter months spent at MacDowell not only to work on her own writing but also to study the published journals of Henry David Thoreau.

"I still read Thoreau's journal with my breakfast,"

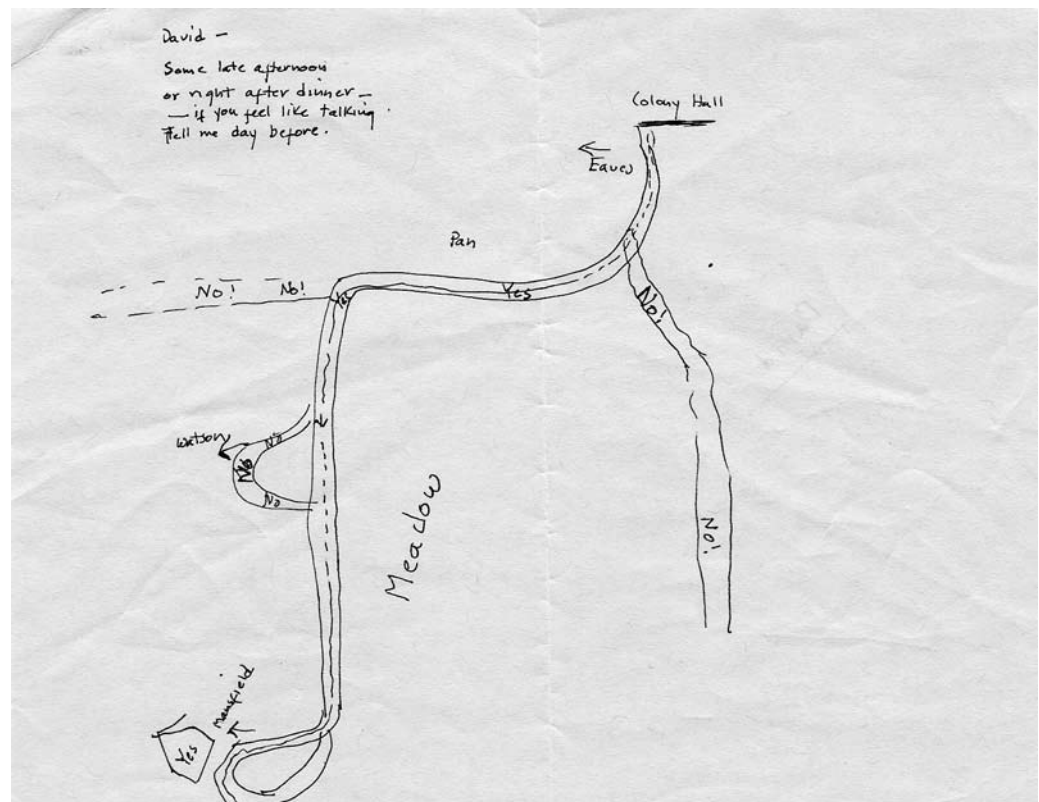
Note and map in Tillie Olsen's hand, actual size.

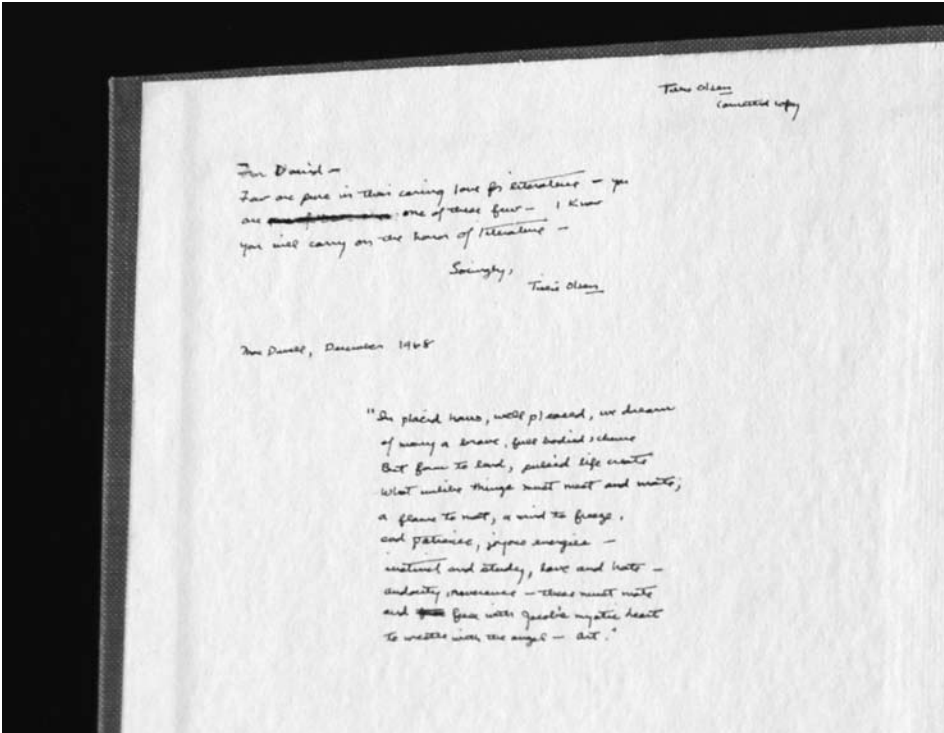
she wrote to me after I had left the Colony, "& last week copied this. It is not so distant from you as it sounds."

March 19, 1852. This afternoon I throw off my outside coat. A mild spring day. The air is full of bluebirds. The ground almost bare. The villagers are out in the sun, and every man is happy whose work takes him outdoors. I lean over a rail to hear what is in the air, liquid with the bluebird's warble. My life partakes of infinity. The air is as deep as our natures.

I go forth to make new demands on life. I wish to begin this summer well; to do something in it worthy of it and of me; to transcend my daily routine and that of my townsmen; to have my immortality now, that it be in the *quality* of my daily life; to pay the greatest price, the greatest tax of any man in Concord, and enjoy the most!! I will give all I am for my nobility. I will pay all my days for my success. I pray that the life of this spring and summer may ever lie fair in my memory. May I dare as I have never done! May I persevere as I have never done! May I purify myself anew as with fire and water, soul and body! May my melody not be wanting to the season! May I gird myself to be a hunter of the beautiful, that naught escape me! May I attain to a youth never attained! I am eager to report the glory of the universe; may I be worthy to do it.

It is reasonable that a man should be something





Tillie Olsen inscribed her corrected copy of *Tell Me a Riddle* to the author.

worthier at the end of the year than he was at the beginning. [*The Journal of Henry David Thoreau*, edited by Bradford Torrey and Francis Allen. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1906.]

Tillie's remark about this excerpt may have been right, but the unsettled years I spent in the army after leaving MacDowell that December seemed very distant from Thoreau's joyous day in Concord. I was

*Tillie Olsen*



physically stronger and mentally tougher by the end of my first year in the service, but these results were not intended to benefit my life beyond my role as a soldier.

Before I left the Colony, Tillie gave me a copy of the English edition of *Tell Me a Riddle*, published in London in 1964. An octavo (trimmed to 5-1/4" X 8") of 127 pages, it is bound in red cloth with a dust jacket printed in black and red on white paper. The text is set in a large 12-point Baskerville type and printed on heavy stock – all in an attempt to offset the book's slim profile.

Tillie's inscription, written in ink on the inside front cover in a handwriting so small that it helps to have a magnifying glass to read it, begins with the notation: "Tillie Olsen / Corrected copy." She made 16 changes in my copy of the book, inking out, inserting, and transposing words and correcting typographical errors. One sentence in the text was obliterated by erasing.

"For David –" her inscription begins, and continues:

For one pure in their caring love for literature – you are one of these few – I know you will carry on the honor of literature –

Lovingly,  
Tillie Olsen

MacDowell, December 1968

In placid hours well-pleased we dream  
Of many a brave unbodied scheme.  
But form to lend, pulsed life create,  
What unlike things must meet and mate:  
A flame to melt – a wind to freeze;  
Sad patience – joyous energies;  
Instinct and study; love and hate;  
Audacity – reverence. These must mate,  
And fuse with Jacob's mystic heart,  
To wrestle with the angel – Art.

The poem, titled "Art," was by Herman Melville and apparently transcribed by Tillie from memory. She left out the seventh line – "Humility – yet pride and scorn" – inadvertently, or possibly not.

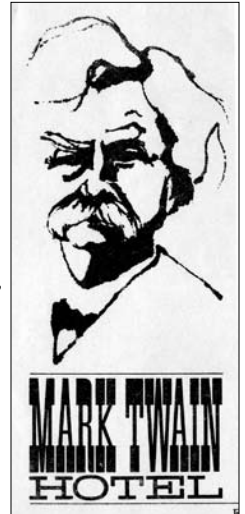
We intended keeping in touch. I remember writing her in May, after I had survived a

frigid two months of basic training in New Jersey and was then in combat engineers' school at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. It was my first weekend leave from the army and I stayed at the Mark Twain Hotel in St. Louis. The stationery – using an impressionistic pen-and-ink portrait of Twain's famous grumpy face and mop of hair as its letterhead – was the best aspect of the hotel, for the rooms were dreary and the hallways felt unsafe. I had anticipated enjoying myself in St. Louis – my first actual break from the army's exhausting routine – but spending the days alone and without direction brought little relief. Even the books I would have liked to buy in a used bookstore I browsed had to be passed over because the drill sergeant at Ft. Wood did not allow reading anything but military manuals during duty hours – and nearly every hour outside of sleep was a duty hour.

My mood was transferred to the letter I wrote to Tillie that weekend. I complained about not being able to write (although, in fact, I was keeping a journal) or to "live the life of a writer" (whatever that might have meant in my mind at the time). I am surprised she did not give me up for lost, but eventually a letter, undated, came from her.

It reads, in part,

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CAXTONIAN, DECEMBER 2008



Dear dear David:- forgive my not writing you. Letters seem almost impossible these last months – it is not that I forget you – you never recede.

Debby and I are all that is here of what was our “circle” – it feels circle, doesn't it?

I wonder how your life is – what you learn – what of it records itself in you – how you sustain.

It has been “the heaviest winter in living memory” – snows that piled 6 feet onto the earth – a week past spring now, & still is heaped a 40 inch snow cover. One of the great events of my life – day after day of such beauty – and one night: northern lights.

Let's us keep our touch – write me address changes. I go home (San Francisco) in May... If ever it is possible, will you come & visit with Jack and I? We will have room.

Dear David, be well.

Affectionately,  
Tillie

It was more my loss than hers that we did not keep in contact. The young man she met and knew for a mere two weeks in December 1968 had changed considerably by the time I returned from Vietnam in September 1971. I still aspired to be a writer, but the seemingly straight course of my former life had become unhinged by military service and I did not seek out many of those who had earlier expressed an interest in my work.

Tillie Olsen was going through her own tough times as a writer. She described the experience in her memoir *Silences*. The literary success of *Tell Me a Riddle* must have put great pressure on her to produce subsequent work equal to her first. She also seemed to have never been quite satisfied with her first book, for she continued revising it over the years. I can provide an example from the 1964 “corrected edition” she gave me. She removed several phrases in my copy of the book. In a 1989 edition of *Tell Me a Riddle* they had been reinstated.

“Literary history and the present are dark with silences,” she said when she gave a talk which was later published in *Harper's Magazine*. It became the opening line for her book *Silences*. “The silences I speak of here are unnatural: the unnatural thwarting

of what struggles to come into being, but cannot.”

This was a struggle that Tillie Olsen may have faced for the remainder of her life as a writer.

### ‘OKITO ON MAGIC’

“If you want to become immortal,” my friend Robert Parrish used to say, “write a magic book.”

A possible truth was embedded in Bob's jest. Examples abound in the literature of magic.

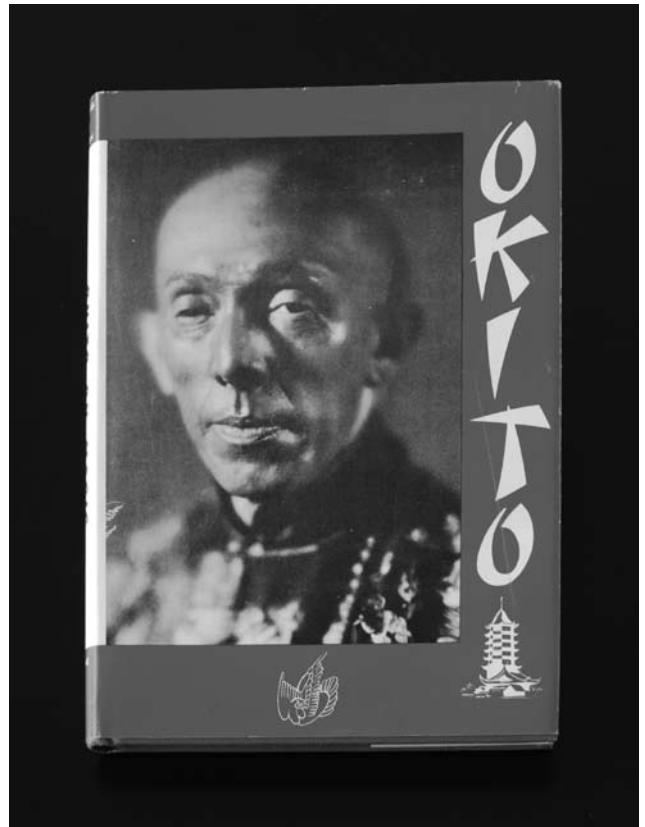
Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, first published in 1584, contains 12 chapters devoted to “the deceitfull art of juggling” (as legerdemain was then called) and is still in print more than 400 years later – admittedly because it is a primary source in the study of witchcraft and also contains information on astrology, alchemy, and related practices.

Although it is not so modern any more and is out of print, Professor Hoffmann's *Modern Magic*, published in 1876, appeared in so many editions in the ensuing decades that copies are still readily obtainable. (Look for the David McKay edition of 1930 which is wrapped in a lovely Art Deco dust jacket designed by Arthur Hawkins, a prominent cover artist of the 1930s to '50s.)

Bob Parrish (1918-1994), a longtime member of the Caxton Club, wrote, co-wrote and edited 15 books on magic. Four of these are still in print; seven are slated to be reissued as electronic books, and the one most likely to survive the longest, *Okito on Magic*, is soon to be published in an expanded edition.

In *Words About Wizards: Recollections of magicians and their magic 1930-1950*, which I published in 1994, Parrish tells the story of his association with the legendary magician “Okito”:

Theodore Bamberg [1875-1963] was the fifth or possibly sixth generation in a consecutive line of magicians to the crown of Holland. In the guise of an Oriental magician named Okito, he presented an act which headlined in virtually every great variety theatre in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. In addition



to his superb theatrical deportment and skill as a magician, he was a great craftsman and an originator of many fine magical illusions. I was delighted to work with him on a book called *Okito on Magic*, which was published in 1952....

The book is largely concerned with Okito's technical contributions to magic, but about 50 pages are devoted to his memoirs.

There are two versions of the first edition. I refer to them as the handsome one and the ugly one. Strangely enough, the ugly version is the “deluxe” edition.

The handsome trade edition is bound in sturdy red buckram and stamped in gold. Okito's seal, a rendering of his signature and of his profile in a Mandarin hat, is imprinted on the cover. The dust jacket reproduces an early portrait of Okito in costume and character as an Oriental conjuror. Head shaved, somber-faced, eyelids half lowered, he exudes mystery.

The deluxe edition was limited to 200 numbered copies, each signed by Okito on the front flyleaf. His signature in blue ink was noticeably artistic: always underlined and concluded with a two-dot flourish. Instead of the attractive red buckram of the trade edition, a dull blue-gray cloth was wrapped around the deluxe edition's spine

and a garish orange-gold foil overlaid the covers. Lacking a dust jacket, the book was encased in a red, pebble-textured paper slipcase with Okito's moody portrait pasted on one side.

Okito's own copy – "No. 2" – of the deluxe edition carries three presentations on the flyleaf:

To Theo. – who is magic – in deep appreciation for the honor of being associated with this book – and with most affectionate regards, always, Bob Parrish

To my good friend Okito, for whom I have considered it a privilege to publish this memento to his long and successful career.  
Edward O. Drane. Dec. 1952.

6/13/85 To David Meyer from Bob Parrish.

This was Okito's personal copy of his book, which Ed Drane and I autographed for him on the day of its publication.

Edward Drane, the publisher of the book, was a manufacturer and wholesaler of small magic tricks. His business was located at 1400 North Halsted Street when *Okito on Magic* appeared. He later moved north to 2453 where, for years after he had sold the company and retired, one could still read "Edward O. Drane Co." painted in large letters on the south side of the building.

Parrish chose Drane to handle the book because of his contacts



Robert Parrish on the back porch of his home at 830 West Bradley Place, circa 1980s. Theodore Bamberg in costume for his performance as the Oriental magician "Okito," circa 1960s.



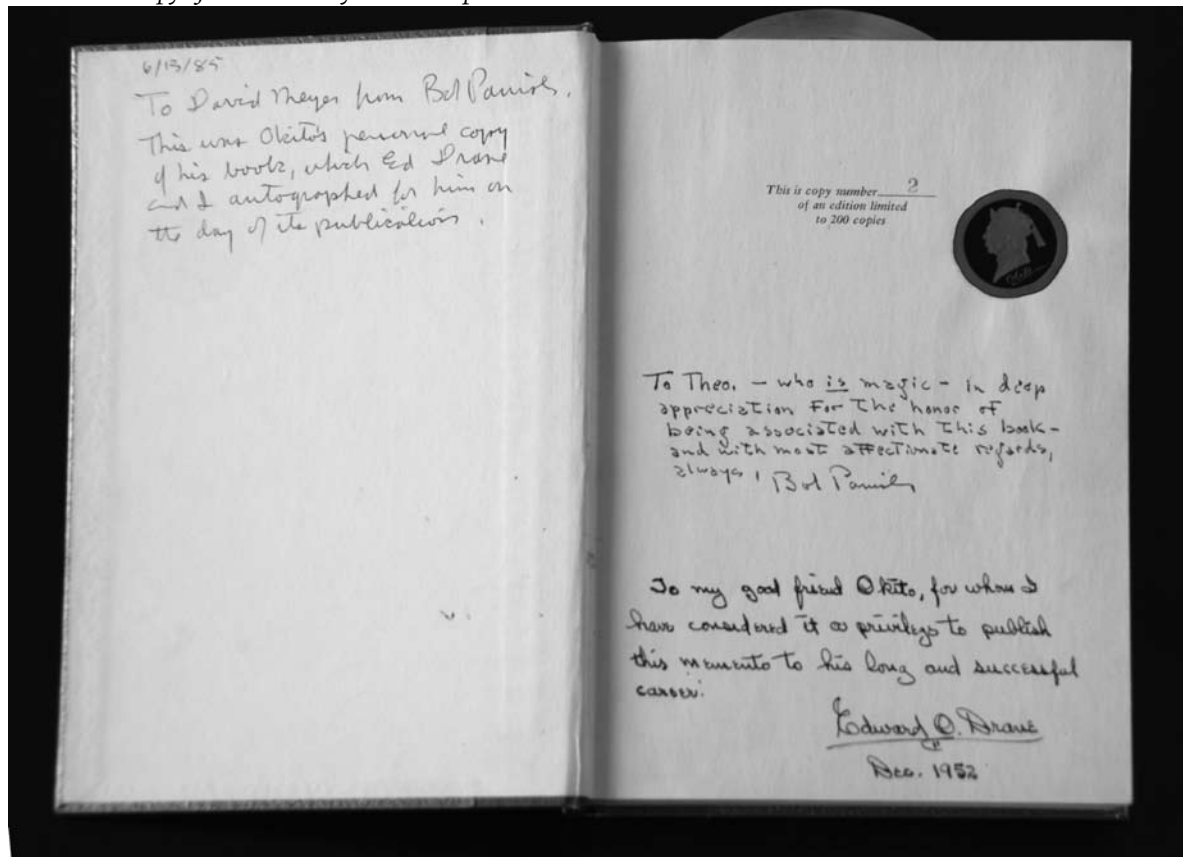
as a distributor to the magic trade. Neither of them had any previous experience publishing a book. Parrish told me that he had to design the book himself and find a printer. He did a good job with the text, setting the chapter titles in Bodoni and the

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ured magic tricks but also joke items in decidedly bad taste, but it could have been Parrish. I regret that I never asked.

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The author's copy of *Okito* is heavy with inscriptions.



# CAXTONIAN FOOTNOTES

Wynken de Worde

## WHAT POLITICIANS READ

I was several years late in getting onto the bandwagon as a viewer of the television series "The West Wing." It repeatedly struck me as an uncommonly well-written series. The characters and the actors who portrayed them were remarkably well-done. Martin Sheen, who played President Jed Bartlet, had a Presidential presence that showed what serious brain power, and humor, and real gravitas could apparently achieve, especially as contrasted to the bravado of the current occupant of that office in Washington, DC.

Buried in my psyche concurrent with watching the program was the paradox that while Martin Sheen was well-known for his political activism, motivated from a Roman Catholic perspective, he maintained that he was an actor playing a role, reciting the words and thought supplied to him by the writers, and that he was no more qualified



Photograph from the Internet Movie Database

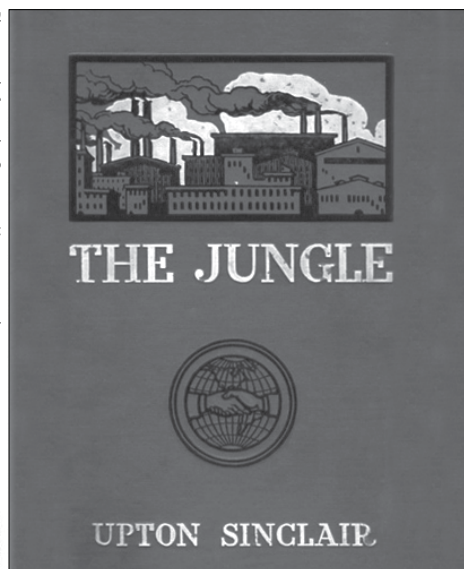
to actually be the President than, perhaps, his son Charlie Sheen. Nonetheless, I would have voted for Martin Sheen in a heartbeat. After all, he already had virtual on-the-job training!

My sentimentally favorite episode was a holiday episode in which President Bartlet "sneaked" out of the White House (if, in fact, one can sneak anywhere in a cordon

of limousines). His destination was a rare bookshop in DC, where he commenced to do his Christmas shopping for his family members and his close White House assistants. It was quite inspiring! Who does that anymore?

As a contrast, in the pre-election season I watched some of the political coverage on WTTW. Carol Marin interviewed two candidates for Jerry Weller's seat in

Photograph from the Syracuse University web site



Congress: she was a member of the Illinois State Senate, while he was a wealthy owner of a concrete company. Marin asked them what books they had read recently. She replied, *The Da Vinci Code*. The concrete man responded that he, too, had read *The Da Vinci Code*. I was appalled. I wanted to reach out and shake them. The clear suggestion was that neither had read a book in at least the three years since the film of that book appeared. (Oh, I read lotsa newspapers and magazines, she said – she who was elected, as it turned out). Such a situation is repellent and unthunkable, I trust, to Caxtonians.

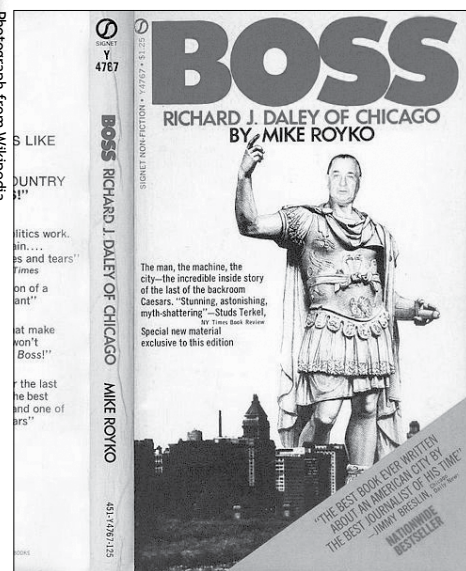
I had been thinking about this topic, too, in the context of what should our home-boy, the President-elect, be reading in this interim period before his inauguration, which would help to focus his attention and his thoughts on the "big picture," the macrocosm as well as the microcosm. In other words, what book or books would I like to put under his Christmas tree that I think

he should read or re-read before he plunges into the maelstrom that is Washington, DC?

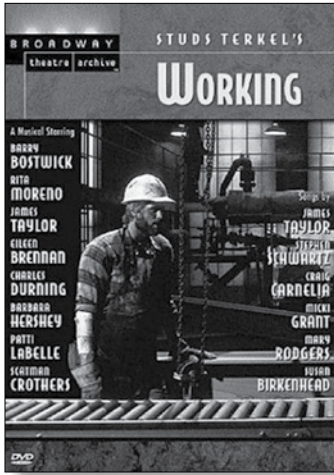
Curiously, in his first post-election press conference, a question about his reading was asked. He replied that he had been "reading Lincoln's writings." *Touché*. Obama and Lincoln have a lot in common beyond both being adopted sons of Illinois. Both are lawyers and Constitutional scholars, and both are renowned for their oratory, and both have split the South – though in different ways. I am sure that Sen. Obama has been reading up on Lincoln's inaugural addresses, and I expect to hear echoes of JFK and Lincoln in President Obama's inaugural address. (Book Note: Susan Levy ('92) and R. R. Donnelley Co. produced the third collection of Presidential Inaugural Addresses in *The Lakeside Classics*. Their 2005 annual volume covered Taft to the second of George W. Bush. This means that, at some distant future, the fourth collection will begin with Obama.)

But for now, the books I would like to get to put under the Obama Christmas tree

Photograph from Wikipedia



– he is still a Christian, isn't he? – would include, of course, *The Constitution* and *The Federalist Papers*. Yes, I know he has read them, but a very fresh re-read could be very salubrious. Another is Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1903). I read this in my youth, and re-read it ten years ago. It rings true and is equally memorable, but for some different



reasons than when I was younger. It is an essential Chicago book, and it instigated Theodore Roosevelt to create the Pure

Food & Drug laws and the Food & Drug Administration, for powerfully good and abiding reasons. Regulation can be good, very, very good.

Other provocative books, which happen to be by Chicago writers, are *Boss* by Mike Royko, and either *Working* or *Division Street America*, both by Studs Terkel.

For our contemporary challenges, I suggest any of the treat-

ments by tax specialist David Cay Johnston. He has made a career as a journalist parsing the ins and outs of the federal tax system, and its winners and losers. A similar current work is *Bad Money*, by Kevin Phillips. Phillips made his first mark as an analyst in the Nixon Administration when he calculated changes in the Sun Belt, and crafted the Southern Strategy which helped the Republican Party win seven of the next ten Presidential elections. Phillips left the Republican Party when the religious right became predominant, but he retained his acuity. I recommend highly his seminal *The Politics of Rich and Poor: Wealth and the American Electorate in the Reagan Aftermath*. It describes patterns of behavior by both

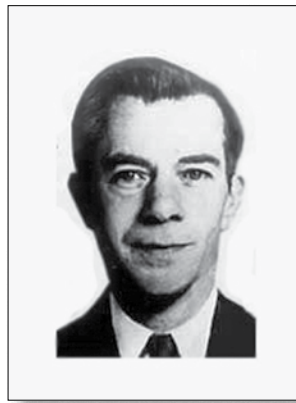
major political parties through the entire 20th century, not just the 1980s – policies which repeated during these past 16 years, and which have contributed to the economic fiasco of this young century. These are patterns which must be permanently altered for the good of our nation and its citizens.

On the subject of money, I strongly recommend Willie Sutton's memoir, *Where The Money Was*. Sutton robbed or attempted to rob nearly a hundred banks. More to the point, however, are its lessons in perseverance and focus. Sutton escaped from different escape-proof prisons three times. Where there is a will, there is a way. Perhaps it could be passed along to new Chief of Staff, Rahm Emmanuel.

Another good read is Antoine de St.-Exupery's *The Little Prince*. It is short, illustrated by the author, and would make good reading to share at bedtime with your two daughters. You will all enjoy it, and it will improve your view of life on this planet. It could be helpful before the pundits, critics and haters begin their assaults on the new Obama-Biden administration.

These are some of the books I think would both please and instruct, as Dr. Sam Johnson would say. Any one or all of them might be obtainable

Sutton's FBI portrait

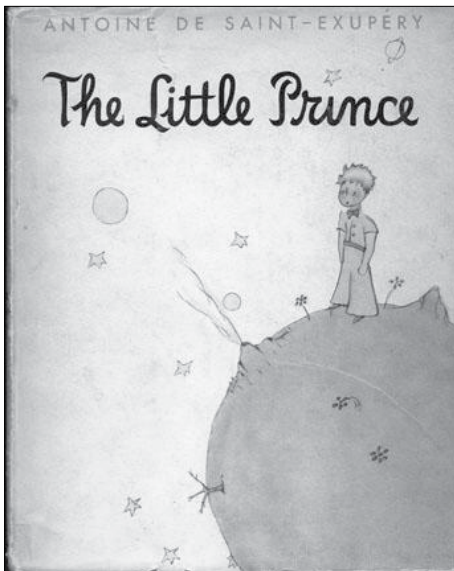


from The Caxton Club Auction in December. They might be bought there and sent to Obama's office in time for Chistmas. Or you could buy them for yourself, or under someone else's yule tree. Heck, you might even find them in a used and rare bookshop. Even President Jed Bartlet found time to go shopping at one.

In the meantime, if you think of some book or two which you think the President-elect ought to read in this interim period, why not share the title and why you recommend it. You can send it in an email to [wynkendeworde@comcast.net](mailto:wynkendeworde@comcast.net). Or you can send it in a letter to the editor of The Caxtonian at 60 W. Walton St., Chicago, IL 60610.

**Ron Offen** ('06) founded and has edited the semi-annual *Free Lunch*: *A Poetry Miscellany* since 1989. Its contributors have included several U.S. Poets Laureate, and a Pulitzer Prize winner, but features lesser-known poets and first-timers. The journal has just been honored with its fifth grant of \$1000 from the Illinois Arts Council. Perhaps an all-Obama inspired issue would pull in twice that grant funding. After all, if copies of the *Chicago Tribune* election issue were actually fetching \$50 apiece on ebay, then the prices on an all-Obama issue of *Free Lunch* may be the thing of dreams. Perhaps, too, Ron can recommend some poems for President-elect Obama and sidekick Obiden to read.

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Photograph from Wikipedia

Photograph from poetstreetlunch.org





Jim at the Leaf Book dinner in 2005

CAXTONIANS COLLECT, from page 11  
company named me CEO of its international group. So, in 1965 I became a businessman and I've never practiced as a lawyer since."

He left Bell and Howell in 1974, and did a variety of things, mostly in publishing, until his retirement in 1997 at age 70. For the final 15 years of his working life, he was the CEO of Federal Publications Inc., a law publisher in Washington, DC, commuting on weekends to see Josie, who stayed in Chicago.

With retirement, Jim has transcribed and published his ancestor's handwritten memoirs and journals and, after urging by Caxtonian Ed Quattrocchi, written three books, two of which he showed me the page proofs for. (Both were designed by fellow Caxtonian Hayward Blake.) One, called *Serendipity*, is the story of the family genealogy, both on the Tomes and Raymaley sides. "When I was a young man, genealogy didn't interest me. Why should a person care about his ancestors? Eventually, I discovered a lot of good reasons. We all hear about the lives of famous people. But our ancestors make an excellent sampling of the lives of ordinary and sometimes very heroic people. The Tomes and Raymaleys crossed oceans in small, dangerous disease-prone ships. They took great risks, worked hard, and mostly succeeded. Genealogy is also an instruction in mortality."

As Josie and Jim's youngest daughter said, looking at her ten-generation family chart, "Gee Dad, we come from a long line of people who have all died." Jim's reply was, "True, an excellent lesson in mortality. Genealogy is of course also an excellent lesson in how we are all members of the

brotherhood of mankind."

"Chicago is an excellent place to do genealogical research. The Newberry Library has great reference materials and a very helpful staff. But it takes more than libraries. Over and over I made breakthroughs by visiting places, searching records and cemeteries, and talking to people. 'Show me what you've learned, and I'll show you what I have' seems to be an almost universal point of view among people interested in genealogy," Jim concludes.

The second book I saw was *The Meanings of Genealogy for Science and Religion (Religion as Poetry and Science as Prose)* which combines Jim's 45-year interest in genealogy with his even longer interest in science and religion. "Most religions and cultures make important references to their genealogies; and science, too, since the advent of Darwin's Theory of Evolution and its subsequent development and culmination in DNA and brain science research, has its own genealogy, telling the story of the pre-history and history of man, our migrations, and the evolution of our behavior," is the precis of the book in a writeup that is quietly circulating among publishers who might be interested in a trade edition. The book, originally intended for Jim's children and grandchildren, is a rationale and a plea for a humanistic peace between science as prose and religion as poetry.

Much of the genealogical material Tomes collected in the process of writing these books has found its way to the special collections of the Newberry Library. The Newberry has an interest because Jim's great grandfather, Dr. Robert Tomes, was a medical doctor and prolific 19th century author who was a classmate and friend of Herman Melville, and his great-great grandfather, Francis Tomes's journals show that he was a frequent visitor to Chicago in its very early days of the 1830's. "Kept by the Newberry the original manuscripts and first edition copies of his ancestors books will be safe and available to others. If you divide up and pass the materials down to your offspring, there's no predicting what will become of them."

Jim has another longstanding interest: the Holocaust. He enlisted in the army at age 17 in 1944 and was overseas at age 18 as a soldier in the 82nd Airborne Division as the war ended. "When I was in the service I saw some Holocaust victims and

other awful things, but I was only 18, and it really didn't make any sense. Years later, I started to hear about and read books like Elie Wiesel's *Night*, and Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*. They made me realize the scope and importance of the topic and were the beginning of what became a large collection on the subject." But he didn't become actively involved in the subject until Ronald Reagan (in 1985) blundered into celebrating the German soldiers buried at Bitburg, Germany. What started as "both sides suffered in the war" turned much grimmer when it was learned that a number of the buried dead were from the Waffen SS, responsible for death squads and administering death camps. Jim ended up writing a polemical piece, titled "Where Are the Christians?" about the failure of the organized Christian churches to call out Reagan on the injustice he was creating with his visit. The essay was eventually published by Rabbi Polish in his "Sentinel," a Jewish monthly. A young Episcopal priest answered the call and Jim sponsored his trip to Dachau with a group of other Christian clerics and Jewish Rabbis where they protested Reagan's visit to Bitburg. One of the other clerics was Rev. Franklin Littell, a Methodist minister who had become a leading Holocaust scholar and who subsequently spoke at Josie and Jim's Wilmette church, on "The Meaning of The Holocaust for Christians" in November, 1988, the 50th anniversary of "Kristallnacht." Jim also published Littell's talk. The Holocaust books in Jim's collection eventually found their way to Northwestern University Library where they are part of the resources used to teach its course on the history of the Holocaust.

Jim has also given his extensive military history collection of Civil War, World War I, World War II and Vietnam War books, and other Holocaust books, to the Pritzker Military Library whose senior librarian is Caxtonian Teri Embrey.

Josie and Jim's eldest son, Rob, is also a published author. He has written a recently published book about fly fishing for muskies, *Muskie On The Fly*. It's a combination of handsome photographs and illustrations with well-written, detailed instructions for how and where to do it. "Your son is a legend," they've been told by fly-fishing enthusiasts. Not a bad achievement for parents.

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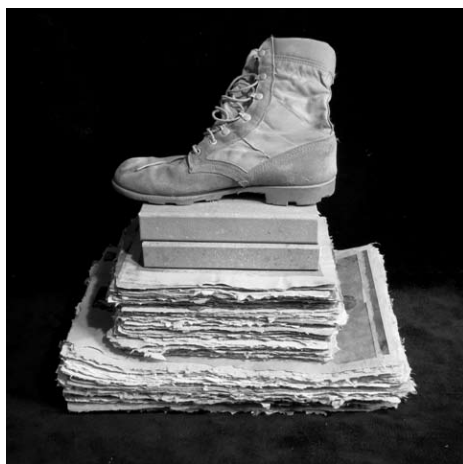
# Combat Paper, Fried Books, and Performance Art

Drew Matott, scholarship winner and December speaker, insists book art can be political

Robert McCamant

"The greatest challenge today is not the Iraq war, religious zealotry, global climate change, or believe it or not, our current president. No, the greatest threat is a cynical, disenfranchised public that is afraid to speak.... We must not forget that our voices exist free of the economic system."  
— Presentation on "Pulp Politics" by Drew Matott at Friends of Dard Hunter Convention at the Carnegie Institute, Washington, DC, 2007

Books and other paper objects have been important in political history ever since the invention of moveable type made possible the production of large numbers of polemical pieces for reasonable cost. But politics has figured much less prominently in the book arts, those rarefied productions

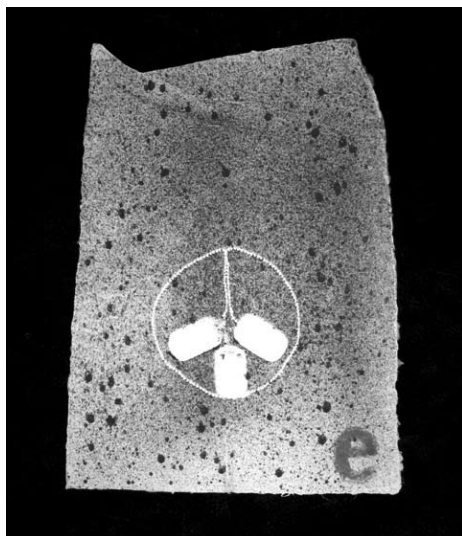


*Paper Stack, by Drew Cameron, from the Combat Paper project*

known as "artist books" (and still less frequently in their cousins, "fine press" books).

Drew Matott, who was a 2007-8 Caxton Club scholarship winner, and who will talk at the luncheon meeting on December 5, is intent on changing that.

The project he has been working on (in collaboration with Drew Cameron – who will also speak – and with Iraq Veterans Against the War) that has gained the most publicity is "Combat Paper." Let me quote from its own statement of purpose: "Through papermaking workshops veterans use their uniforms worn in combat to create cathartic works of art. The uniforms are cut



*Peace Tags, by Eli Wright, from the Combat Paper project*

up, beat and formed into sheets of paper. Veterans use the transformative process of papermaking to reclaim their uniform as art and begin to embrace their experiences as a soldier in war."

In case anyone mistakes their intentions, they say "Combat Paper is made in honor of all men and women involved in War. It is created as a means of dealing with the experiences; it offers hope and support to those who are currently involved in combat, in offering that when they return home there is a vehicle for them to express their experi-

*Drew Matott batter-dips a book prior to deep frying it*



ences and reclaim their lives." The project includes workshops at many locations around the country, and a core group of veterans in Vermont who have created works which are for sale at Booklyn, in New York.

Another project, "Deep Fried Books," could be construed as somewhat more negative. It is "a commentary on America's obsession with an unhealthy lifestyle, unstable foreign policy and blatant disregard for intellectualism." And they're not deep frying just any books. "The deep fried books range in topic from American foreign policy, American dietary recommendations and science encyclopedia." Because this is done publicly, on the street, the process becomes as important as the object created.

Two other such performance/paper art events Drew has organized were "People's Portraits of Jesus" and "People's Portraits of Bush," both done on the street in Chicago.

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*Broadside prints from Combat Paper Portfolio IV, a collaborative effort*



# Book and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by Bernice E. Gallagher

(Note: on occasion an exhibit may be delayed or extended; it is always wise to call in advance of a visit)

Three exhibitions are continuing at the Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago 312-443-3600: "Art through the Pages: Library Collections at the Art Institute of Chicago" (a broad and rich display of artists' books, ephemera from the archives, examples of fine printing, and much more) in the Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, through January 5, 2009; "Daniel Burnham's Plan of Chicago" (a preview of the citywide celebration of the Burnham Plan Centennial that begins in January, including maps, diagrams, perspective drawings and watercolors, historically significant and artistically exceptional, many of them in fragile condition and rarely displayed publicly) in Gallery 24, current rotation closing December 14 and the second opening December 20; "The Bill Peet Storybook Menagerie" (sketches, storyboards and thirty-four books by Bill Peet, creator of Dumbo and Cinderella and Walt Disney's principal animator for twenty-seven years) in Galleries 15 and 16, through May 24, 2009.

"Shanghai Transforming" (graphics, photographs and maps) in the John Buck Company Lecture Hall Gallery, Chicago Architecture Foundation, 224 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago 312-922-3432, through January 9, 2009.

Two related exhibitions are displayed in the Lenhardt Library, Chicago Botanic Garden, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe 847-835-8202: "A Child's Flora: All About Plants for Younger Readers" (selections from the Rare Book Collection, providing a glimpse into the important role that plants and gardens play in storytelling); "Storybook Felt Figurines: The Morrison Waud Collection" (more than sixty miniature felt figurines depicting characters from fairy tales, nursery rhymes and classic children's stories written by Lewis Carroll, Jean de Brunhoff, Beatrix Potter, Kenneth Grahame and others), through February 1, 2009. "Catholic Chicago" (books, historic documents, maps, architectural drawings, artifacts and film footage exploring ways that religious communities shaped the ever-changing urban landscape) at the Chicago History Museum, 1501 N. Clark Street, Chicago 312-642-4600, through January 4, 2009.

"Wisdom of Words: Lerone Bennett Jr., The People's Historian" (copies of Bennett's ten books documenting the historical forces shaping the Black experience in the United States, plus rarely seen vintage copies of JET and Ebony magazines) at the DuSable Museum of African American History, 740 East 56th Place, Chicago 773-947-0600, ongoing.

"Artifacts of Childhood: 700 Years of Children's Books" (works by and for children in more than 100 languages from the fifteenth century to the present, including the 1865 first edition of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and ABCs from 1544 to 1992) at the Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago

312-943-9090, through January 17, 2009.

Two exhibitions are currently displayed at the Northwestern University Library, 1970 Campus Drive, Evanston 847-491-7658: "Happy 75th Anniversary, Deering Library" (artifacts, ephemera, correspondence, etc., telling the story of the Deering Library and its librarians) in University Archives, through December 31; "The Multifarious Mr. Darwin" (books and other materials from the Deering Library's Special Collections, the Galter Health Sciences Library, the Field Museum and the Chicago Botanic Garden, gathered in honor of the bicentenary of Darwin's birth and the Sesquicentenary of the publication of *Origin of Species*) in the Main Library 3rd floor, through December 23.

Three exhibitions are featured in the Special Collections Research Center, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, 1100 East 57th Street, Chicago 773-702-0095: "Integrating the Life of the Mind: African Americans at the University of Chicago" (original manuscripts, rarely seen portraits, photographs and books, with profiles of notable graduates like attorney/legislator Richard Dawson, zoologist Ernest Everett Just, ethnographer/dancer Katherine Dunham, urban sociologist Charles Johnson, and others), through February 27, 2009; "East European Jews in the German-Jewish Imagination From the Ludwig Rosenberger Library of Judaica" (documents tracing the experience of German Jews, from emancipation in the nineteenth century to the eve of World War II), through June 22, 2009; "Discover Hidden Archives Treasures" (a new installment of recently uncovered treasures from the Special Collections archives and manuscript collections), through January 5, 2009.

"The 'Writing' of Modern Life: The Etching Revival in France, Britain, and the U.S., 1850-1940" (works by European and American artists like Haden, Meryon and Whistler, showing how printmakers of this period intertwined the arts of etching and writing) at the Smart Museum of Art,

University of Chicago, 5500 S. Greenwood, Chicago 773-702-0200, through February 4, 2009.

"Chester Commodore, 1914-2004: The Work and Life of a Pioneering Cartoonist of Color" (original cartoons, photographs, letters, awards and other memorabilia relating to the artist's work as editorial cartoonist for the *Chicago Defender*, with additional material from the Chicago Public Library's Vivian Harsh Research Collection) at the Carter G. Woodson Regional Library, 9525 S. Halsted Street, Chicago 312-745-2080, through December 31.

Two exhibitions continue at the Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State Street, Chicago 312-747-4300: "State Street: That Great Street" (newspaper clippings, books and memorabilia exploring the history and attractions of State Street over 150 years) in the Chicago Gallery, 3rd Floor, through June 21, 2009; "Called to the Challenge: The Legacy of Harold Washington" (items drawn from the Special Collections and Preservation Division of the Chicago Public Library, highlighting Harold Washington's life, image and work) in the Harold Washington Exhibit Hall, 9th Floor, ongoing.

Bernice Gallagher will be happy to receive your listings at either 847-234-5255 or [gallagher@lakeforest.edu](mailto:gallagher@lakeforest.edu).



*Artifacts of Childhood at the Newberry*  
EDY LEGRAND, VOYAGES & GLORIEUSES DÉCOUVERTES

# Caxtonians Collect: Josie and Jim Tomes

Forty-eighth in a series of interviews with members

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

Clearly, Josie (Joann) and Jim Tomes are not superstitious people. Their apartment number is 1313. “What’s more,” Jim says with a gleam in his eye, “With two adjoining apartments, we had our choice of 1313 or 1314, and we chose 1313!”

They joined the club ten years apart: Jim in 1995, and Josie in 2005. Jim was nominated by his good friend and past president Bill McKittrick, and Josie by past membership chairman John Chalmers. Jim was President of the Club from 2001 to 2003, having been the vice president and program chairman the two previous years.

When they moved to their North Side apartment four years ago (from Wilmette) they had to deaccession a lot of books. Jim’s collection of books on science and religion went to their new church home, the downtown Chicago First United Methodist Church, “The Temple”, which had a large room lined with empty shelves. This made sense, because the new senior pastor at The Temple is their old friend Phil Blackwell, whose long-running seminar on the same topic had been the occasion of Jim collecting all the books. And it has a side benefit: frequently, when Jim attends a meeting at the church, it’s held in the library with his old books, so he gets to commune with them. The library is catalogued and open to the public.

The confluence of science and religion is a major theme in Jim’s life. When he mustered out of the armed forces in 1947 and started at Northwestern, it was going to be all science, specifically biology and chemistry. But then the armed forces demanded

his services again in 1950, and by the time he was finishing at Northwestern, he was much more interested in history, philosophy, art, poetry, religion – the whole panoply of emotional realms that are the flip side of the rational, scientific realms of human life.

Meanwhile, Josie was also at Northwestern, at first pursuing theater studies. Then *Mademoiselle* magazine entered her life. She won a national writing contest, awarding her an internship in New York during her

ten years, as Assistant Fashion Director, travelling to New York and Paris, and organizing and presenting many fashion shows. Josie has continued to be active in Chicago’s fashion business ever since, and, after raising their four children, served regularly as a fashion consultant producing shows at the Apparel Center. She has also contributed her collection of Chicago fashion artifacts to the Chicago History Museum and the Columbia College

Department of Fashion Design.

But we’re getting ahead of the story. Back at Northwestern in 1948, a friend of Jim’s told him he should meet her. “You’ve got to meet Josie Raymaley. She’s the best-read woman on campus,” is his memory of his friend’s recommendation. They hit it off, and were married in 1954.

Jim decided that law was the sensible career for his liberal arts interests, and, after his second military stint, from 1950 to 1953, got his law degree from

Chicago-Kent in 1957. At first he did a few years of private practice as a trial lawyer, but found that it didn’t suit him. “Too much arguing about past events in a very inefficient court system.” But he did enjoy his volunteer work with the ACLU, which not only provided intellectual and professional challenges in worth-while cases, but also introduced the couple to a compatible circle of friends.

When the opportunity to become General Counsel for Bell and Howell Company presented itself, Jim jumped. “At first I organized and managed the legal department, and after five years the

See CAXTONIANS COLLECT, page 8

CAXTONIAN, DECEMBER 2008



Photograph by Robert McCamant

Junior year, and ended up doing a fashion project, meeting Truman Capote, and having interviews with Walter Hoving of Tiffany and Co. and Leo Lerman, *Mademoiselle’s* art director and later Cultural Director for Conde Nast. Publishing seemed a more promising career than theater; after all, most aspiring actors ended up waiting tables. She returned to Northwestern and, after a trip to Europe and some unexpected turns after graduation in 1950, she ended up working for Marshall Field’s in their then-prestigious Fashion Office. It was, for instance, Field’s who introduced Dior to America in 1950. Josie’s career with Field’s covered many responsibilities for the next

# Bookmarks...

## Luncheon Program

Friday December 5, 2008, Woman's Athletic Club

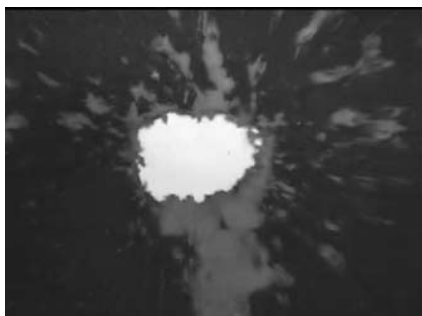
Drew Luan Matott

Drew Cameron

Eli Wright

"*Combat Papers: Paper-making Iraq Veterans, A Compelling Story*"

It all began when the 2007-2008 Caxton Club Scholarship winner, Drew Matott, met up with Iraq war veteran Drew Cameron, a member of Warrior Writer's Workshop, and a man desperately trying to put his shattered life back together through paper-making and writing. Drew and Drew took the self-discovery and healing process one step further, conceiving and convening over 20



Combat Papers Workshops teaching veterans all over the country to make paper *using their combat uniforms*. Our 3rd speaker, Eli Wright (combat medic), attended workshops and produced the powerful accompanying image, "Open Wound." Using silk screen and stenciling, Drew and Drew created Combat Papers Portfolios, now in important collections: The Library of Congress, Boston Athenaeum, Yale University and the Universities of Minnesota, Connecticut and Vermont, to name a few.

This is a meeting not to miss. (Note that it is, this time only, being held on the FIRST Friday of the month.)

The December luncheon will take place at the Woman's Athletic Club, 626 N. Michigan Avenue. (Enter on Ontario; see the doorman for room location.) Luncheon buffet opens at 11:30; program 12:30-1:30. Luncheon is \$32. The December dinner will take place at the Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton St. Revels timing: spirits at 5 pm, dinner at 6 pm, live auction

## Dinner Program

Wednesday, December 10, 2008, Newberry Library

2008 Revels and Auction

"The Stimulus Package"

Economic troubles got you down? You say you've eliminated Starbucks from your daily routine and now you have to abandon the weekly trip to Borders? The coffee table books and signed firsts that you were going to give yourself and friends for the holidays are now likely to be "quality paperbacks?" You missed the last Hindman auction to check out the used books at your local Salvation Army? Is that what's troubling you, Bunky? Well, get ready for the all-in-one Caxton Club Holiday Revels, where you can imbibe and dine splendidly at our reasonable rates, hear live music provided by a peppy new ensemble, the "Strictly Jug Nuts," and watch professional actors in a brand-new production based on Samuel Johnson's *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* and James Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides!* And, of course, take pleasure in the usual silent and live auctions where you will find book bargains galore, exercise the free market economy, and benefit the Caxton Club into the bargain. Don't miss this fiscal-and happiness-stimulus package on the SECOND Wednesday of December, the 10th, at the Newberry Library, 5-9PM. (And if you haven't yet donated something for the auction, it's not too late – donations will be accepted up to Friday December 5th. Get them to Dan Crawford at the Newberry.)

at 7:30 pm. Price for dinner is \$48. For reservations call 312-255-3710 or email [caxtonclub@newberry.org](mailto:caxtonclub@newberry.org); **reservations are needed by noon Wednesday for the Friday luncheon, and by noon Friday for the Wednesday dinner.** See [www.caxtonclub.org](http://www.caxtonclub.org) for additional parking and transit information.

## Beyond December...

### JANUARY LUNCHEON

On January 9, John Lupton, editor of the *Papers of Abraham Lincoln*, will deliver an illustrated and anecdote-filled talk about the mammoth project of finding *everything* Lincoln had ever written and received in his lifetime, scanning it, assembling it and then selectively publishing it with explanatory text and multitudes of footnotes.

### JANUARY DINNER

Caxtonian Greg Prickman of the University of Iowa will talk about "The Atlas of Early Printing" on January 21 at the Newberry Library. This online resource (his idea) graphically displays the spread of printing after Gutenberg. The Atlas will be demonstrated, and the history of its development will be traced.

### FEBRUARY LUNCHEON

The luncheon will be held at the Woman's Athletic Club on Friday, February 13. The speaker will be announced.

### FEBRUARY DINNER

John Solomon, of the University of Illinois, will speak on the popular phenomenon that was *Ben Hur*. It provided a veritable brand name and chariot logo for dozens of fledgling companies at the end of the nineteenth century, making it the prototype of synergy between American consumerism and popular art. February 18 at the Newberry.