

Collecting Robert Heinlein

R. Eden Martin

“No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money.”
– Samuel Johnson

Unlike contributors to the *Caxtonian*, Robert Heinlein was no blockhead.

Collecting books is normally an adult rather than a juvenile vice. But I remember a long time ago, when I was a teenager – riding in a passenger train to my home town in central Illinois and poring over one of Robert Heinlein’s books of short stories by the dim light over the passenger seat. Somehow I had a few of his paperbacks. The passenger service has now long since been discontinued, and those paperbacks disappeared many years ago. But what has not yet quite disappeared is my vivid sense of pleasure in the stories – their subtle mix of simple yarn and future science, often set in the context of space travel. I saved and reread Heinlein’s stories over the years, replacing the cheap paperbacks as they wore out or were discarded. Eventually, after I was stricken as an adult by the book-collecting virus, my eye turned back to some of the books I remembered from adolescence, including the works of Heinlein.

Robert Anson Heinlein was born on July 7, 1907, in a small town in Missouri, and spent his childhood in Kansas City, Missouri.¹

His parents were childhood sweethearts who had graduated together from a high school in the small town of Butler, in southern Missouri farming country. They lived at first in the home of his maternal grandfather, a physician who practiced in Butler. Robert Heinlein would later refer to his grandfather as “a horse-and-buggy doctor, who strongly influenced

Like his six brothers and sisters, Robert attended public school in Kansas City. One of his schoolmates in grammar school was Sally Rand, who eventually gained fame as a dancer of sorts. In one of his stories, published in 1940, he had his male protagonist refer to a girl as having a “figure like a strip dancer, lots of corn-colored hair, nice complexion, and

great big soft blue eyes” – that make her “look so much like Sally Rand.”

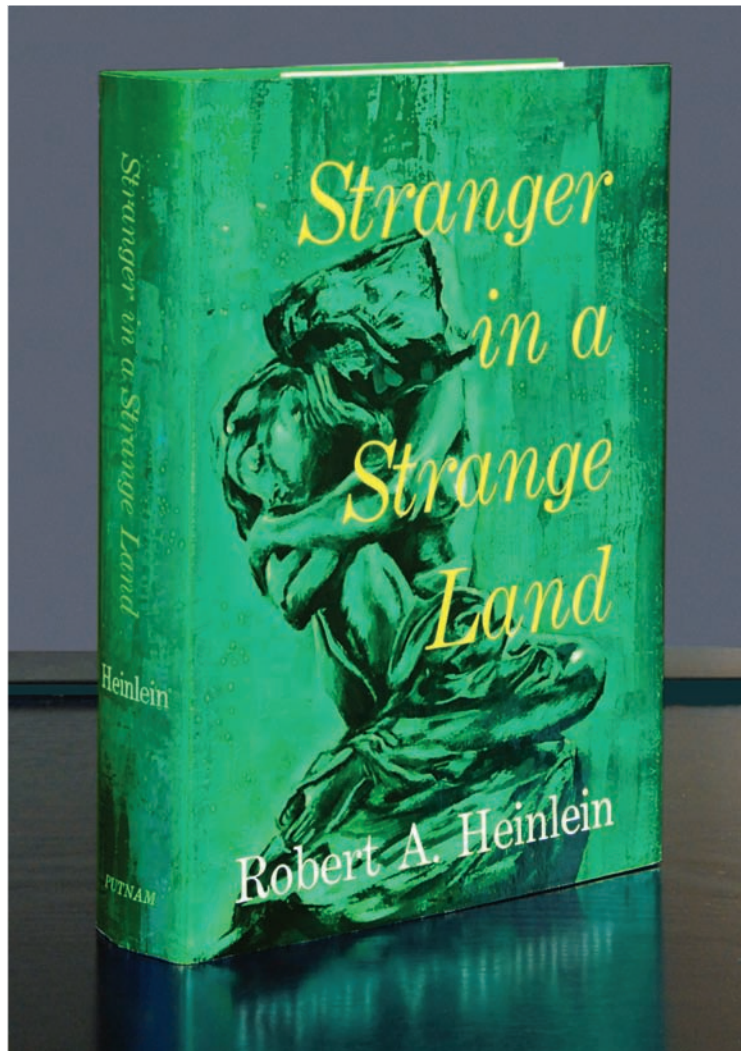
We know from what Heinlein later told an interviewer that he read popular fiction, particularly stories about science and technology:

As a boy, Heinlein was an avid reader of the Frank Reade, Jr., and Tom Swift science-fiction dime novels, and there are still copies of them in his library. His reading gradually moved on to authors with deep ties to this literature, including Verne, Edgar Rice Burroughs, and H.G. Wells, as well as the science fiction and other works of Mark Twain, Rudyard Kipling, and Jack London. He was also engrossed by the optimistic visions of the future projected in Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* and *Equality*. Technology and science promised great things for America and for him: “Science of all sorts and astronomy in particular were my hobby as a boy and I planned to become an astronomer.”³

When Robert graduated from high school in 1924, the school yearbook identified him as follows: “National Honor Society, ’23, ’24; Major, ROTC; President Central Officers Club; Captain Negative Debate Team; President Central Shakespeare Club; Student Council; Inter-society Council; Boys’ High School Club; Kelvin Club; Central Classics Club;

Rifle Club.” His classmates labeled him “Worst Boy Grind,” and added: “He thinks in terms of the fifth dimension, never stopping at the

See HEINLEIN, page 2



Stranger in a Strange Land (1961) established Heinlein’s reputation as a “serious” writer.

me.”² Not long after Robert was born, his family moved to Kansas City, where Robert’s father eventually worked in their small family business making agricultural implements.



CAXTONIAN

Caxton Club, Founded 1895

David S. Mann, *President*
 Wendy Cowles Husser, *Vice-President*
 Bruce H. Boyer, *Secretary*
 Thomas E. Swanstrom, *Treasurer*
 C. Steven Tomashefsky, *Past President*

Council

Class of 2010
 Dorothy J. Anderson
 Don Chatham
 Mary Ann Johnson
 Philip R. Liebson
 J. William Locke

Class of 2011
 Martha Chiplis
 Jill Gage
 Bradley Jonas
 Dan "Skip" Landt
 Alice D. Schreyer

Class of 2012
 Susan Hanes
 Jon Lellenberg
 Margaret Oellrich
 Morrell McKenzie Shoemaker, Jr.
 Mary S. Williams

Appointed Officers

Robert Karrow, *Programs*
 Paul F. Gehl, *Archivist-Historian*
 Hayward R. Blake, *FABS Representative*

Committees

Margaret Oellrich, *Audio Visual*
 J. William Locke, Dorothy Sinson
(Co-Chairs), Friday Luncheons
 Dan "Skip" Landt, *Membership*
 Susan Rossen, Kim Coventry,
Publications and Exhibitions
 Martha Chiplis, *Scholarship*
 John M. Dunlevy, Matthew Doherty,
Web Site and Directory

Caxton Club Staff

Dan Crawford, *General Manager*

Caxtonian

Robert McCamant, *Editor*
 Wendy Husser, *Copy Editor*
 Robert Cotner, *Founder*
 Matthew J. Doherty, Wendy Husser,
 Paul Ruxin, Florence Shay,
Contributing Editors

©2010, Caxton Club. The Caxtonian is published monthly by the Caxton Club, whose office is in The Newberry Library. Printing: Kelmscott Communications, Aurora, IL.

HEINLEIN, from page 1

fourth."⁴ Another source reports that he was "the top honors student of his class."⁵

So – we have from his yearbook a picture of a smart, popular young man, studious and skilled in argument, interested in literature and science, and apparently a decent shot with a rifle. His position as Major in the school Reserve Officer Training Corps pointed to a possible future career.

After one year at Kansas City Junior College, Heinlein was admitted to the United States Naval Academy. As he later explained, "Our family was always in politics. I worked two years writing letters and applications and finally got the appointment through a Boss Pendergast man, Jim Reed. [United States Senator, 1911-1929.] I would have taken West Point as readily, but the only opening was the Academy. I was always honored by Reed because I was the first of his appointees that ever graduated."⁶ Bob told another interviewer, "When I contacted the Senator's office, they said they had 100 letters – 50 in my behalf, and one each for 50 other candidates."⁷

At Annapolis Heinlein was a good student – graduating 20th in a class of 243. He also became an accomplished swordsman. Graduating in 1929, he embarked on a career in the Navy, and in 1931 was assigned to the country's first modern aircraft carrier, the USS Lexington, where he served as a gunnery officer, occasionally flying in the back seat of some of the planes, and also worked in radio communications.

A week or so after he left the Academy, Robert married Eleanor Curry, but the marriage ended within the year. The biographical sources offer no reasons.⁸ Perhaps the break-up was due to the stresses associated with separation while Robert was serving at sea. In 1932, he married again – Leslyn Macdonald. Isaac Asimov recalled that Heinlein once told him that at that time both he and Leslyn were political radicals. (Asimov also believed that – years later – when Heinlein married his third wife, he took a drastic swing to the right politically⁹.) Whether or not there was a connection between his politics and his romances, it is clear that Heinlein was active in liberal politics during the early 1930's: he supported Upton Sinclair's socialist "End Poverty in California" movement and Sinclair's campaign for governor of California in 1934.

In 1934, after five years of Navy service, Robert contracted tuberculosis, which required a lengthy stay in the hospital, and was then discharged from the service with a small disability pension. He would have serious health problems off and on for the rest of his life.



Heinlein in 1929

Without a job or regular income, Heinlein entered graduate school at UCLA to study physics and math. But a relapse soon led to his withdrawal from school and relocation to Denver to recuperate. He worked at odd jobs and invested unsuccessfully in silver mines. In 1938 Robert returned to California and ran for a seat in the legislature but lost.

Now what? The United States was still in the Great Depression. Robert's health problems apparently interfered with regular work. Yet his disability pension was not

enough to provide an adequate income.

In early 1939 Robert read an announcement of a \$50 dollar prize offered by a pulp magazine, *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, for the best amateur short story submitted by a previously unpublished writer. As Robert later remembered, in 1939 "one could fill three station wagons with fifty dollars worth of groceries." So – at the age of 32 – Robert Heinlein wrote his first story – "Life-Line." He turned it out in four days.¹⁰ But instead of submitting it for the \$50 prize, he sent it to *Collier's*, which rejected it. Robert knew that the top science-fiction magazine, *Astounding Science Fiction*, paid one cent per word for the best stories. Robert's story ran to 7,000 words – or \$20 more than the amount of the prize. So he sent it off to John W. Campbell, the editor of *ASF*.¹¹

Although Poe and others had occasionally written short stories around science themes, and a few authors (e.g., Verne and Wells) had written such novels, it was not until the decade following the First World War that science fiction began its sharp rise in popularity.

In 1908 Hugo Gernsback, a young man of 24, founded *Modern Electrics*, the world's first radio magazine. In 1911 he published in it a story called "Ralph 124C41+" – which has been called "the first science fiction story ever written."¹² The Hugo awards today for outstanding science fiction are named in recognition of Gernsback.

Another magazine, *Electrical Experimenter* – renamed *Science and Invention* in 1920 – also ran the occasional science fiction story. In August 1923 it published an entire issue devoted to what it called "scientific fiction." Robert Heinlein, then age 16, later told about returning home to Missouri from Colorado and finding a copy of that issue at a magazine stand in the railroad station. He bought the magazine and read it on the train, leaving him only a little money for doughnuts.¹³

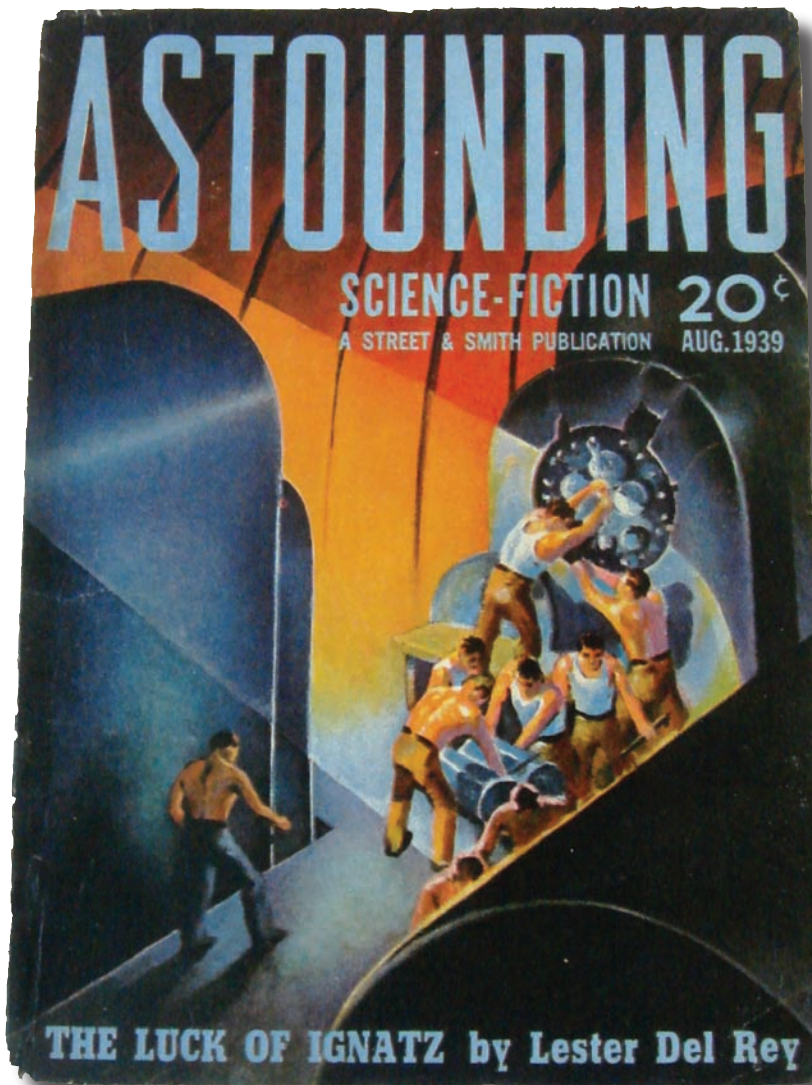
In 1926 Hugo Gernsback founded *Amazing*

Stories – the first magazine devoted solely to science fiction stories. Its initial issues reprinted earlier works, but within a year the magazine was publishing new works, most stressing scientific gimmicks. By 1931 nine “pulp” magazines were devoting all or most of their pages to science fiction. One expert summarizes their product as “essentially bad writing of high ingenuity.”¹⁴

One of the best of these magazines was *Astounding* – later rechristened *Astounding Science Fiction* – often referred to simply as *ASF*. Reginald Bretnor, the editor of one of the better books about science fiction, wrote that John W. Campbell “has done more than any other man to develop modern science fiction as a mature literary form. Indeed, its history may quite accurately be said to date from his assumption of the editorship of *Astounding Science Fiction* in 1937.”¹⁵ Campbell had graduated

in 1932 from MIT with a major in physics; but with little demand for scientists during the Depression, he took up writing science fiction, and then edged over into editorial work. When Campbell assumed the editorship of *ASF* in 1937, he resolved to publish work that was not only based on ingenious scientific or technological premises, but also well written.¹⁶

Campbell’s acceptance of Heinlein’s first story – “Life-Line” – in mid 1939 was the beginning of a long and profitable association for both men. The first letter in the volume of letters edited by Heinlein’s wife Virginia – *Grumbles From the Grave* – is Robert’s letter to Campbell enclosing that first short story.¹⁷ Campbell wrote back saying he liked it, and would offer the magazine’s regular rate of 1 cent per word – or \$70 – for the manuscript. When he received the check from Campbell, Heinlein



Astounding Science Fiction of August 1939 carried Heinlein’s first published fiction, the short story “Life-Line.”

took a look at it and said, “How long has this racket been going on?”¹⁸

“Life-Line” is about a scientist (Dr. Pinero) who invents a machine that enables him to predict with certainty the date of a person’s death. A life insurance company then goes to

mission when a calculating machine fails. That same fall Campbell accepted another story, which he liked so much he gave Robert a bonus: “The story, by practically all that’s good and holy, deserves our usual unusually-good-story 25% bonus. It’s a corking good yarn; may you send us many more as capably handled.”²¹

Robert’s first long fiction – “If This Goes On” – appeared in *ASF* during February and March 1940. Perhaps reflecting his own views on organized religion and the European dictatorships, the story takes place in the context of a theocratic dictatorship which runs what was formerly the United States; and the heroes are the revolutionaries who develop a way to break the psychological constraints that had been used by the dictators to

See HEINLEIN, page 4



His second story, “Misfit,” followed three months later



HEINLEIN, from page 3

condition the masses. Another of his early stories, which appeared in September 1941 – “Blowups Happen” – was a remarkably prescient tale about an “atomic power” plant and the psychological stresses its operation places on the technicians who run it.

Another long story, published in *ASF* over three issues (January through March 1941), was “Sixth Column,” about hordes of pan-Asians who perfidiously attack and invade the United States. This was, of course, only a few months before Pearl Harbor, at a time when the efforts of the United States were aimed at helping England survive the onslaught of the Germans.

Heinlein soon became one of *ASF*’s most popular writers. Most of his *ASF* stories were about what he called “future history” – both of the world and of space exploration. He later explained that these were not written as prophecy: “They are of the ‘What-would-happen-if’ sort, in which the ‘if,’ the basic postulate of each story, is some possible change in human environment latent in our present day technology or culture.”²² In the May 1941 issue of *ASF*, Campbell published a chart displaying hundreds of years of “future history” organized chronologically – identifying the stories, characters, and technical and “sociological” developments. Revised versions of this early chart would later appear as Robert published additional tales in the “future history” series.

By late 1941 Heinlein was supplying about 20% of Campbell’s material; and was regularly voted in reader polls its most popular writer – rivaled only by Anson MacDonald.²³ But “Anson MacDonald” was also Robert Heinlein.

The pulp magazines marketed themselves to specialized audiences. Readers of science fiction were not necessarily interested in fantasy. “Science fiction” focused on stories about engineering or technology. “Fantasy” included stories centered on ghosts and horror. The first of the fantasy pulps, *Weird Tales*, had been founded in 1923 – thus preceding Gernsback’s first “science fiction” magazine. Heinlein regarded the distinction as nonsense. Another distinction created by the pulp magazines within the “science fiction” genre was between stories about the future and stories about alternative worlds.

Heinlein’s initial run of stories about “future history” appeared in *ASF* under his own name. Others – in the “alternative world” genre – also appeared in Campbell’s *ASF* but under the pseudonym of “Anson MacDonald.” Other Heinlein stories which did not quite rise to the quality level demanded

by Campbell showed up in other magazines under the name of “Lyle Monroe.” One of his “fantasy” pieces appeared under the name “Caleb Saunders.”²⁴ Still another fantasy story – “The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag” – appeared in *Unknown Worlds* under the name “John Riverside.”

By 1941 Heinlein had not only become *ASF*’s largest supplier of material, he had paid off the mortgage on his house.

In the middle of the year, Heinlein wrote what became his first “book.” It was a speech, “The Discovery of the Future,” which he delivered on July 4, 1941, to the 3rd World Science Fiction Convention held in Denver. The speech was recorded, transcribed, and published in tan paper wrappers by Forrest J. Ackerman, who was a writer, agent, and general “player” in the world of science fiction. There were 200 copies.

Two days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Robert wrote to his friend and publisher John Campbell:

This is the first time in forty-eight hours that I have been able to tear myself away from the radio long enough to think about writing a letter.... For the last eighteen months I have often been gay and frequently much interested in what I was doing, but I have not been happy. There has been with me, night and day, a gnawing doubt as to the course I was following. I felt that there was something that I ought to be doing.... This country has been very good to me, and the taxpayers have supported me for many years [referring to his medical disability pension]. I knew when I was sworn in, sixteen years ago, that my services and if necessary my life were at the disposal of the country.

I logged in at the Commandant’s office as soon as I heard that Pearl Harbor was attacked.... The next day (yesterday) I presented myself at San Pedro and requested a physical examination.... I was rejected on two counts, as a matter of routine – the fact that I am an old lunger and that I am nearsighted beyond the limits allowed even for the staff corps. They had no choice but to reject me – at the time. But my eyes are corrected to 20/20 and I am completely cured of T.B.

My feelings toward the Japs could be described as a cold fury. I not only want them to be defeated, I want them to be smashed. I want them to be punished at least a hundredfold, their cities burned, their industries smashed, their fleet destroyed, and finally,

their sovereignty taken away from them.”²⁵

“Waldo” was the last story he wrote before going to work as a civilian; it appeared in *ASF* in August 1942. For the duration of the war he wrote only technical monographs.

Although Robert could not return to active service, he was able to go to work for the Navy as a civilian engineer at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, where he helped design and test materials used in aircraft and high-altitude pressure suits. Another technician who worked on the same floor in the navy yard was Isaac Asimov.²⁶

Also assigned to work in the navy yard was a young lieutenant in the WAVES – Virginia Gerstenfeld, who worked on a few engineering projects with Robert. When the war ended, Robert returned to Los Angeles with his wife. Virginia was not released from service until March 1946, at which time she enrolled at UCLA. In the book of Robert’s letters which Virginia edited, she writes that she “saw very little of Robert and his wife, Leslyn, although we lived not too far apart.” Then in the spring of 1947, she “had a call from Robert – he asked my help in clearing his papers from the house. He was getting a divorce.... We were married in October 1948.”²⁷ Virginia was described by a Heinlein friend as:

...a chemist, biochemist, aviation test engineer, experimental horticulturist; she earned varsity letters at N.Y.U. in swimming, diving, basketball and field hockey, and became a competitive figure skater after graduation; she speaks seven languages so far, and is starting on an eighth.²⁸

When the war ended in 1945, Robert (38) had to make a living. Writing for the pulp journals did not have much artistic or economic appeal. Though he continued for a time to send material to Campbell, their relationship gradually deteriorated as Robert looked to three broader markets: (1) “slick” general interest magazines; (2) “juveniles”; and (3) novels for adults. By bringing science fiction to these broader audiences, Bruce Franklin concluded, “Robert Heinlein was the principal American responsible for leading science fiction out of the ghetto, first to become integrated into American popular culture and later to gain token acceptance in high-class literary neighborhoods.”²⁹

To get his work published in “slick” magazines such as the *Saturday Evening Post*, Heinlein needed an agent. He was at that time living in Colorado, and the publishing busi-

ness was centered in New York. He consulted L. Ron Hubbard (who also wrote science fiction for *ASF* and other pulps),³⁰ and Hubbard referred him to Lurton Blasingame, a New Yorker who became his agent and good friend.

Heinlein's first story to make it into the "slicks" was one of my favorites – "The Green Hills of Earth." One of his "future history" series, it appeared in the *Post* on April 26, 1947, but I read it a few years later as a teenager, sometime in the 50s, after it had been published in one of Heinlein's short story collections. If not the first, it was surely one of the first science fiction stories to appear in a non-pulp magazine of wide circulation. "Green Hills" is the story of one of the first spacemen – the poet and song-maker Rhysling, "the blind singer of the Spaceways," who had lost his vision tending an atomic plant on one of the early space stations. Rhysling's songs were sung in the schools and were known to all the "sons and daughters [of Terra], wherever they may be."³¹ His best song gave its name to his story and to the later collection in which it appeared:

The arching sky is calling
Spacemen back to their trade.
All hands! Stand by! Free falling!
And the lights below us fade.

Out ride the sons of Terra,
Far drives the thundering jet,
Up leaps the race of Earthmen,
Out, far, and onward yet –

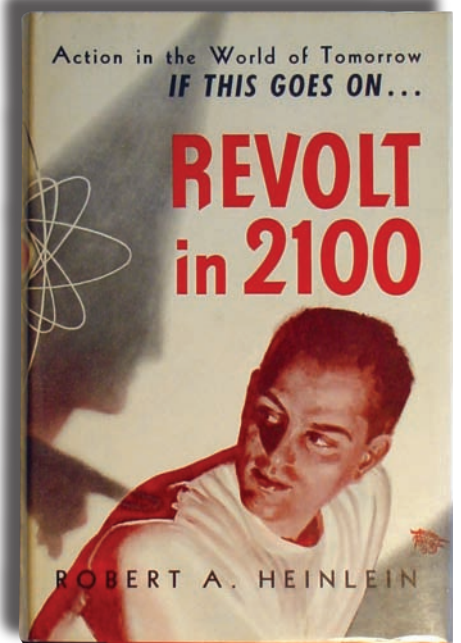
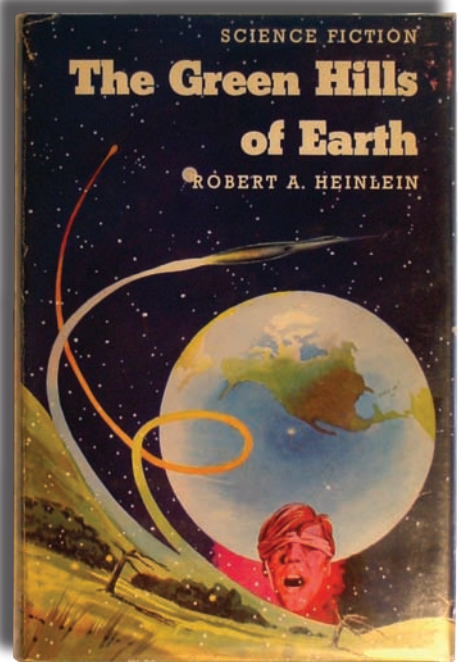
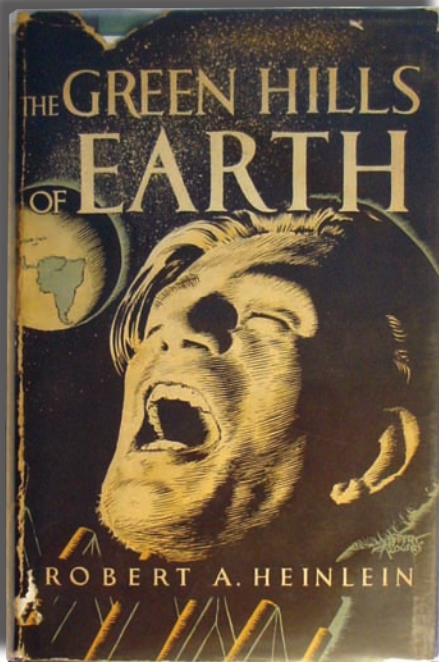
Let the sweet fresh breezes heal me
As they rove around the girth
Of our lovely mother planet,
Of the cool, green hills of Earth.

We rot in the molds of Venus
We retch at her tainted breath.
Foul are her flooded jungles,
Crawling with unclean death.

We've tried each spinning space mote
And reckoned its true worth:
Take us back again to the homes of men
On the cool, green hills of Earth.

We pray for one last landing
On the globe that gave us birth;
Let us rest our eyes on fleecy skies
And the cool, green hills of Earth.

The last stanza was "the last bit of authentic Rhysling that ever could be." Rhysling composes it as he dies – saving a space ship and its crew by exposing himself to radioactivity in order to deal with an explosion in the control



TOP American and English versions of *The Green Hills of Earth*; BELOW American versions of two additional story collections

room.³²

Great verse? Maybe not. But not so bad for a navy engineer who had not written – or at least not published – poetry before. In any event, his readers were delighted. Robert wrote that the *Post* story had "brought me in such a flood of mail that it has almost ruined me.... None of it appears to be from crackpots; about half of it comes from technical men. All of it shows that the United States is still made up of believers and hoppers...."³³

Including "Green Hills of Earth," Heinlein published a dozen stories in the "slicks" during the late 40s and early 50s – mostly in the *Post*,

but also in *Argosy*, *Town and Country*, *Imagination*, the *Blue Book*, and even a couple of girls' magazines.³⁴

During the 1950s several collections of Heinlein's "future history" stories were published in book form. Three of these collections – *The Man Who Sold the Moon* (1950), *The Green Hills of Earth* (1951), and *Revolt in 2100* (1953) – were published by a Chicago company, Shasta Publishers, located at 5525 S. Blackstone. Shasta had been founded in 1947. One of the cofounders was Erle Melvin Korshak. The dust jackets of these books – like the

See HEINLEIN, page 6

HEINLEIN, from page 5

jackets of many other works of science fiction and fantasy from this period – are attractive works of pop art.

As is the case with many other books published in the 20th century, because the jackets tend to be discarded or damaged, a fine jacket is often much rarer than the book it protects – with the result that books in fine jackets frequently bear prices many multiples of the book by itself. The art work for the dust jacket of *Green Hills* was done by Hubert Rogers, a talented “pulp artist” who created many dozens of jackets and magazine covers during the 1940s and 1950s, and whose work is still exhibited today. Rogers had done the jackets for the trade editions of John Buchan’s books (whose books I also collect). Heinlein liked his work so well that he had one of his paintings in his home.³⁵

Many years after I first read *Green Hills* as a teenager and had begun to slip into the book collecting habit, I happened upon an unusual item in the catalogue of a dealer who specialized in science fiction. It was the original artwork Rogers had done for the Shasta collection of Heinlein’s stories that



Original cover art by Hubert Rogers for *The Green Hills of Earth*, framed with a copy of the jacket itself.

included “Green Hills.” The cover featured a portrait of the blind singer Rhyshling with the earth behind him over his right shoulder. The nicely-framed cover art was accompanied within the frame by a fine copy of the jacket itself. Korshak had sold it to the book dealer in April 1990, not long before it appeared in the latter’s catalogue. Although I usually confined my collecting instinct to books, in this instance I yielded to impulse and bought the cover art. For almost two decades it has resided comfortably on the wall in my library just behind my reading chair.

Sometime a decade or so after I bought the cover art, I received a call from the book dealer. He told me that the publisher Korshak wanted to talk to me, and asked if I would take a call. (Book dealers normally will not give out the name of a customer who buys a book unless the customer consents.) I agreed, and Mr. Korshak called to set up an appointment. He appeared in my office a few days later. A pleasant man, he asked if I would sell him back the Rogers cover art for *Green Hills of Earth*. He did not say why he wanted it and did not offer any amount. I learned later that original Rogers drawings and paintings had sharply escalated in value. In any event, I had no interest in selling it. It had never been an investment and was now a part of my home. When I see Rhyshling on the wall of my library now, the lines often come to mind:

Let us rest our eyes on fleecy skies
And the cool, green hills of Earth.

The second breakout by Heinlein from the confines of the pulp market was his series of twelve “juvenile” novels published by Scribner. All were about space travel; and the movement is outward from earth – the first book being about the first trip to the moon, and subsequent books about voyages to the planets and then other parts of our galaxy beyond the solar system. Heinlein tried not to “write down” to his youthful readers or to adopt a “patronizing tone.”

I have held to that rule and my books for boys differ only slightly from my books for adults – the books for boys are somewhat harder to read because younger readers relish tough ideas they have to chew and don’t mind big words – and the boys’ books are slightly limited by taboos and conventions imposed by their elders.³⁶

Despite Heinlein’s intention not to “write down” for his audience of teen-age boys, these juvenile novels should not be judged

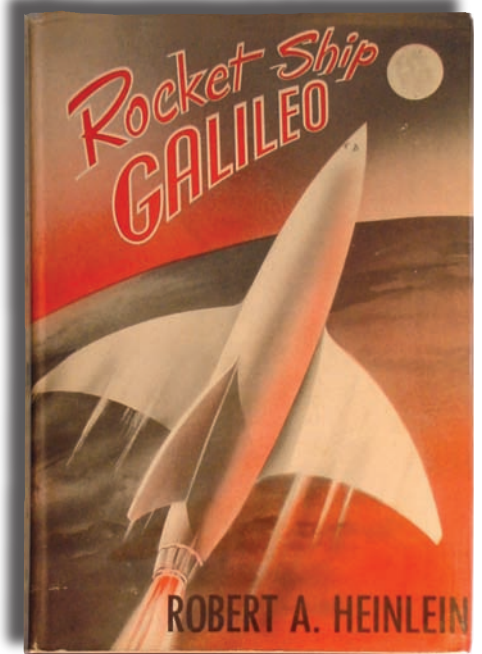
by adult standards. The first of these, *Rocket Ship Galileo* (1947), illustrates the point. It is about three boys who have just graduated from college and who have experimented with model rockets. One of their uncles is an atomic engineer. The uncle and the three boys build the first atomic-powered rocket ship to the moon, where they find a colony of unreconstructed Nazis who are about to launch a sneak nuclear attack on the Earth from their base on the moon.

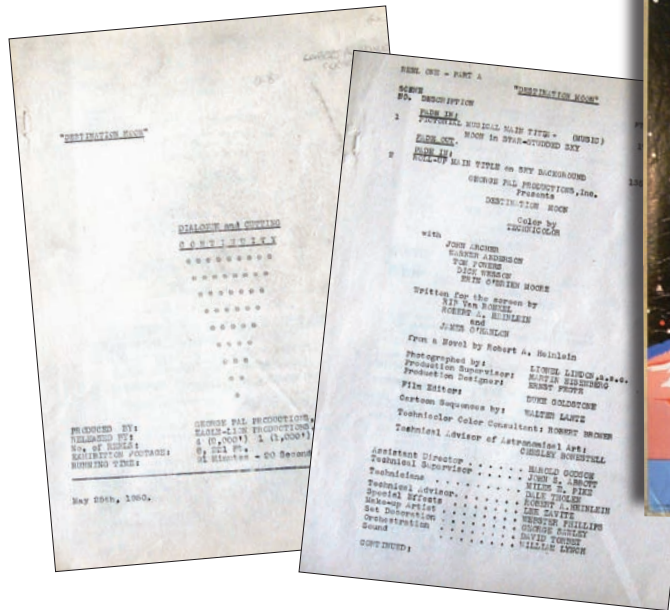
Before the book was published, a Scribner editor with whom Heinlein frequently came into conflict, Alice Dalgliesh, invited Heinlein to suggest an artist for the jacket. He proposed Hubert Rogers – the artist who would later do the *Green Hills* jacket. Miss Dalgliesh rejected the suggestion and wrote back that Rogers was “too closely associated with a rather cheap magazine” – Campbell’s ASF. To prove her point, she enclosed the cover of a recent issue of ASF with Rogers’ art work for the story “By His Bootstraps,” written by one Anson MacDon-ald. Heinlein chuckled and declined to tell her that it was his story, published under one of his several aliases.³⁷

Rocket Ship Galileo was not only the first of Heinlein’s commercial books.



ABOVE Author photo accompanying *Rocket Ship Galileo*. BELOW Its cover.





Screenplay and LP jacket for movie of Destination Moon.

It led to what many consider to be the first modern science-fiction movie about space travel – *Destination Moon*. There had been sci-fi films before – mostly juvenile serials with little or no attention to scientific or technological reality. Heinlein’s intention was to make a movie that was scientifically accurate. He set out for Hollywood in 1948 looking for a producer. His first step was to work out a collaboration arrangement with an experienced film writer named Van Ronkel, with whom he turned out a script using *Rocket Ship Galileo* as a point of departure. The script – initially entitled “Journey to the Moon” – was thus a separate literary creation. The next step was to find a producer. Eventually George Pal agreed to be the producer and to put up some of the money.

It took time for Pal to raise the remaining needed capital. Along the way the script was reworked: the title was changed to “Destination Moon,” and the Nazi threat was rewritten to make it a Communist plot, with atomic rockets aimed at all major U.S. cities. The screenplay – complete with dialogue and “cutting continuity” – ran to 83 mimeographed

leaves. Heinlein served as technical advisor on the set during filming, which began in mid-November 1949. The movie, shot in Technicolor, appeared in 1950, the year in which the Korean War broke out and anti-Communist sentiment surged in the United States. It turned out to be “an enormous success, which spawned the entire science fiction movie boom of the 1950s.” The special effects won an Academy Award for George Pal.³⁸

Heinlein told the story of the making of the film³⁹ in a separate article, “Shooting Destination Moon,” which appeared in *ASF*, July 1950. He also produced a separate novelette – adapted from the film but “only generally similar to the film story.” Both the story of the film-making and the separate novelette were later republished in a book, *Destination Moon*.⁴⁰

So Heinlein – ever with his eye on the commercial possibilities – was paid for (1) the book for juveniles, (2) the movie script, (3) the separate novelette, and (4) the article on the shooting of the movie. He was also paid for his work as technical advisor on the movie.

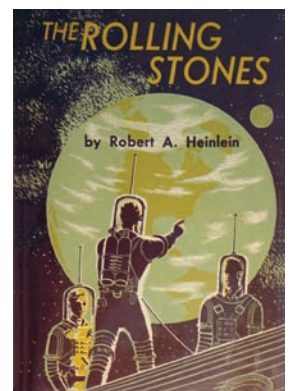
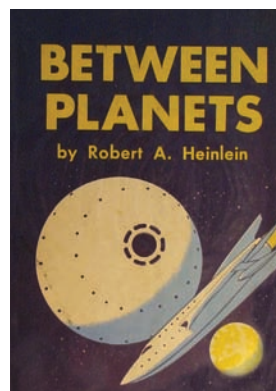
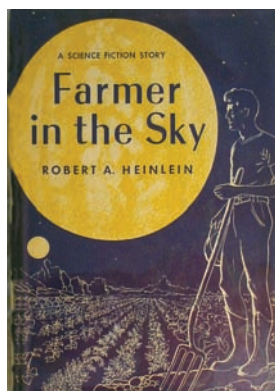
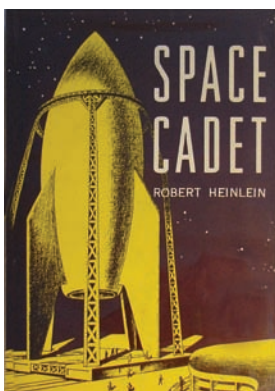
Heinlein’s twelve juvenile novels appeared

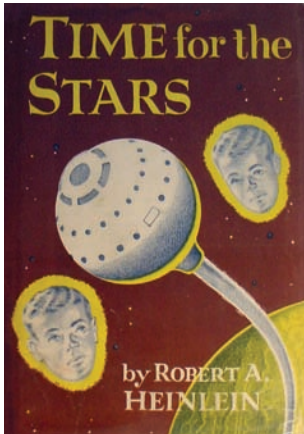
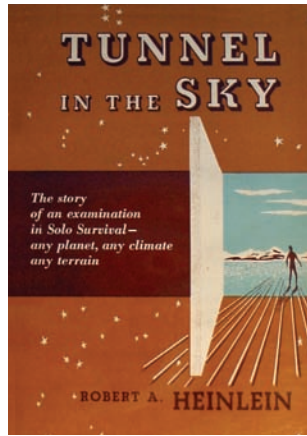
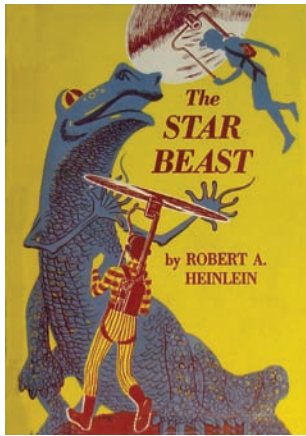
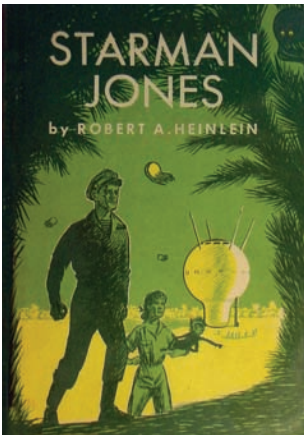
businessmen of genius and daring. Many, as Franklin noted, consisted of “extended tests of endurance, loyalty, courage, intelligence, integrity, and fortitude.”

After *Rocket Ship Galileo* (1947) came *Space Cadet* (1948), *Red Planet* (1949), *Farmer in the Sky* (1950), *Between Planets* (1951), *The Rolling Stones* (1952), *Starman Jones* (1953), *The Star Beast* (1954), *Tunnel in the Sky* (1955), *Time for the Stars* (1956), *Citizen of the Galaxy*, (1957), and *Have Space Suit – Will Travel* (1958) – the last of the Scribner series. They appeared slightly later in Great Britain via different publishers.

Heinlein’s third and main breakout during the decade of the 50s was his transformation from writer of juvenile books to writer of adult novels.

The first of these was *The Puppet Masters* (1951), written during the Korean War. Franklin called it “a Cold War allegory which... warns of the insidious Communist menace, projected in the form of alien invaders taking over the bodies and minds of Americans,” only in Heinlein’s story the invaders are giant slugs
See HEINLEIN, page 8





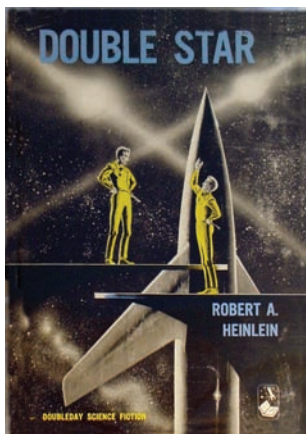
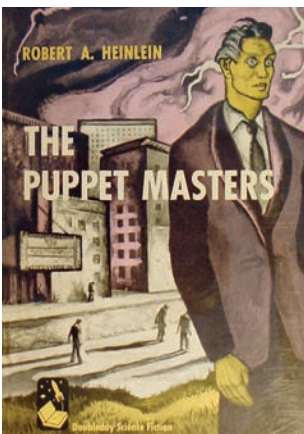
HEINLEIN, from page 7

from space which attach themselves to people and turn them into mindless zombies.⁴² Initially serialized by *Galaxy* magazine, the book version was published by Doubleday. The Doubleday editor made proposed revisions which Heinlein accepted philosophically: “He’s paying for it and I need the money.”⁴³

Doubleday also published his next two adult books. *Double Star* (1956) was about an unsuccessful actor who finds himself impersonating the most powerful political leader in the solar system, who had been abducted by his political opponents. Eventually, the ordinary man rises to greatness on a platform that includes freedom and equal rights for all the citizens of the Empire. *Double Star* was serial-

ized and then published as a book, winning Heinlein his first Hugo award for best science fiction novel. *The Door Into Summer* (1957), also serialized before book publication, was the tale of a modern Rip Van Winkle character.

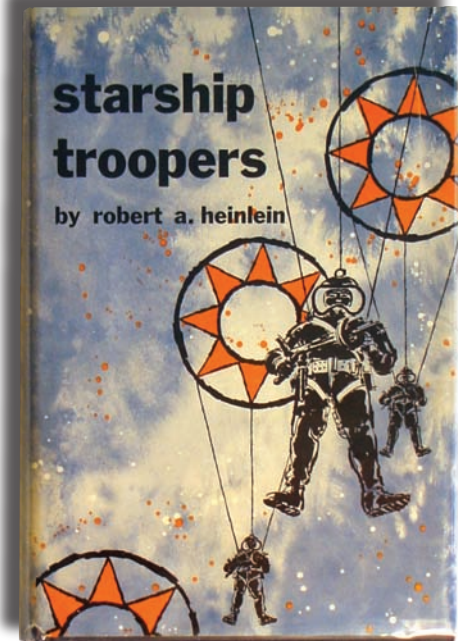
Starship Troopers (1959) had started out to be a juvenile, a part of the Scribner series. Heinlein finished it in November 1958, and after it was typed, sent it off via his agent to his Scribner editor, the difficult Ms. Dalglish. It was the story of a young soldier and his adventures in a futuristic military unit in an interstellar war between mankind and an arachnid species called “the Bugs.” The story gave Heinlein an opportunity to explore some of his favorite themes – including the



demands of citizenship and the need for a strong defense to protect humanity. Ms. Dalglish rejected it, as did the entire Scribner board, on the ground that it was too militaristic. That was the end of Heinlein’s long relationship with Scribner, but the beginning of a fruitful one with Putnam. Many critics panned the book on the ground that it was too didactic or pro-military,⁴⁴ but *Starship Troopers* won another Hugo award. A campy movie based on the book appeared in 1997.

Heinlein never forgave Scribner. A year after the *Starship Troopers* appeared, the wretched Dalglish was gone, and Scribner was anxious to “welcome [him] back.” But he was having none of it. As he fumed to his agent:

I feel that I was treated in a very shabby fashion, and I regard [Scribner] as in part responsible and do not wish to place any more stories with his firm. Scribner had published twelve of my books and every single one of them made a profit for them and each one is still making money for them.... So I offer a thirteenth book...and it is turned down with a



brisk little note which might as well have been a printed rejection slip, for it was just as cold and just as informative.

Based on my royalty records I conjecture that my books have netted for Mr. Scribner something between \$50,000 and \$100,000 (and grossed a great deal more). They have been absolutely certain money-from-home for his firm...and still are. Yet after years and years of a highly profitable association, Mr. Scribner let me be ‘fired’ with less ceremony than he

would use in firing his office boy... not a word out of him, and not even a hint that he gave a damn whether I stayed with them or not.⁴⁵

By now it was not enough for Robert Heinlein to publish commercially successful novels for adults. Like a rock star who wants to cross over into the classical movie world, Heinlein wanted to write a book that would be regarded as artistically significant. He told his agent Blassingame in early 1949 that he was collecting notes on “the Great American Novel:”

Yup, Lurton, I have fallen ill of the desire to turn out a ‘literary’ job. Specifically, I would like to do a job somewhat like Ayn Rand did in *The Fountainhead*....⁴⁶

A few months later, an idea began kicking around in his head. His wife Virginia later claimed that she originated it.

Eventually I suggested that it might be possible to do something with the Mowgli story – a human infant raised by a foreign race, kept apart from humans until he reached maturity. “Too big an idea for a short story,” said Robert, but he made a note about it....

Then Robert disappeared into his study and wrote eighteen pages, single spaced, of notes for ideas which the Mowgli suggestion had started rolling in his brain. He worked on those pages the whole night, and came out with a batch of papers titled *The Man from Mars*.... [It] was then set aside....⁴⁷

Virginia attests that this was the beginning of *Stranger in a Strange Land*.⁴⁸

Robert worked on the concept off and on for the next several years – in 1952 and again in 1955.⁴⁹

I believe that I have dreamed up a really new S-F idea, a hard thing to do these days – but I am having trouble coping with it. The gimmick is ‘The Man from Mars’ in a very literal sense. The first expedition to Mars never comes back. The second expedition, twenty years later, finds that all hands of the first expedition died – except one infant, born on Mars and brought up by Martians. They bring this young man back with them.

This creature is half-human, half-Martian, i.e., his heredity is human, his total environment up to the age of twenty is Martian. He is literally not human.... Among other things, he has never heard of sex, has never seen a woman – Martians don’t have sex.

He finally finished a first draft of *Stranger* in March 1960, telling his agent that he was “utterly exhausted from sixty-three days chained to this machine, twelve to fourteen hours a day.”⁵⁰

Robert had high hopes as his agent sent the manuscript off to Putnam in October 1960. Describing it as “an attempt on my part to break loose from a straitjacket,” he ruminated that “if it does get published, it might sell lots of copies. (It certainly has no more strikes against its success than did *Ulysses*, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, *Elmer Gantry*, or *Tropic of Cancer* – each at the time it was published.)”

Heinlein’s concern about whether the book could be published was based on his challenges to monogamous sex and traditional religion that are woven into the story. Valentine Michael Smith – the half-human from Mars – is transported to Earth where he gradually gains the normal abilities of a human and displays the super powers he had acquired on Mars. His Martian-trained mind enables him to make any object disappear – “disincorporate.” Uninhibited by Earthbound mores, Valentine enjoys liberated sex with his new human friends. They become his “water brothers,” whom he teaches to understand deeply and sympathetically – to “grok” – a verb that soon entered into the American version of English. He creates a new, highly-commercialized cult religion.

Another important character in the book is Jubal E. Harshaw – a popular author and sybarite – as Franklin notes, a “thinly disguised self-portrait of Robert A. Heinlein.”⁵¹

Jubal lives in ‘Freedom Hall,’ where ‘everyone does as he pleases.’ ‘Convinced that all action was futile,’ he has ‘that streak of anarchy which was the birthright of every American.’

Harshaw/Heinlein shares Samuel Johnson’s notion of what should be the proper motive of authors:

Most of my stuff is worth reading only once... and not even once by a person who knows the little I have to say. But I am an honest artist. What I write is intended to reach the customer – and affect him, if possible with pity and terror... or at least divert the tedium of his hours. I never hide from him in a private language, nor am I seeking praise from other writers for ‘technique’ or other balderdash. I want praise from the customer, given in cash because I’ve reached him – or I don’t want anything. [Ch. 30]

Putnam liked the *Stranger* manuscript so much that the firm made Heinlein an

offer – including an advance of \$1,500 – that he described as “one of the most generous I have ever seen; it is all loaded in my favor.”⁵² However, Putnam wanted cuts – particularly the sex scenes. Heinlein resisted, telling his agent: “I know the story is shocking – and I know of a dozen places where I could make the sex a little less overt, a bit more offstage ... But I don’t see how to take out the sex and religion. If I do, there isn’t any story left:”

[U]sing the freedom of the mythical man from Mars... I have undertaken to criticize and examine disrespectfully the two untouchables: monotheism and monogamy.... [M]y book says: sex is a hell of a lot of fun, not shameful in any respect, and not a bit sacred. Monogamy is merely a social pattern useful to certain structures of society – but it is strictly a pragmatic matter, unconnected with sin... and a myriad other patterns are possible and some of them can be, under appropriate circumstances, both more efficient and more happy-making.⁵³

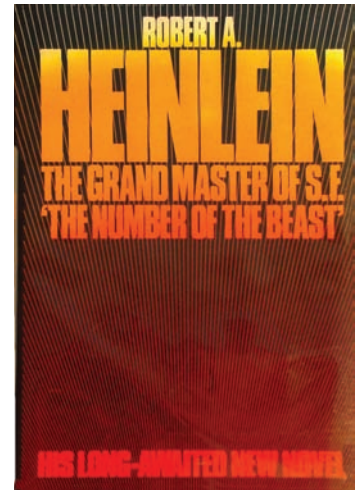
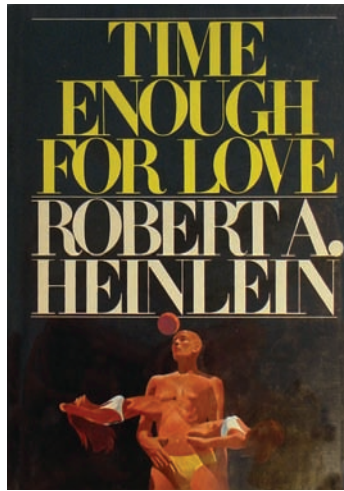
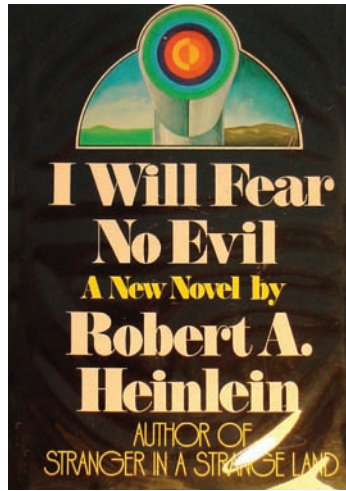
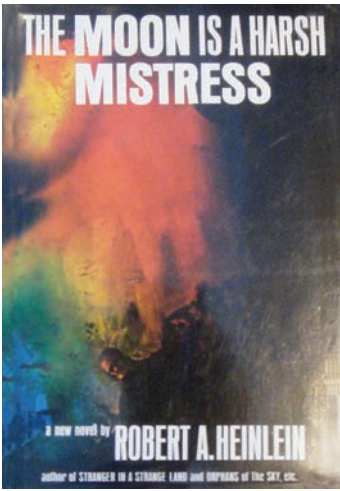
Heinlein resisted the proposed cuts to the point of telling his agent to find another publisher who would take the manuscript without changes. But eventually he gave in, finishing the cutting in January 1961. He had reduced a manuscript of about 220,000 words to one of about 160,000 words. He could not trim it further: “the story is now as tight as a wedge in a green stump.”⁵⁴

*Stranger in a Strange Land*⁵⁵ appeared in the spring of 1961, priced at \$4.50. The first edition bore green staining on the top edges and included a first-issue point of “C22” at the bottom of page 408. This distinguishes the first edition from the book club edition which came out a little later with the code “C23” at the bottom of p. 408. Sales were weak the first year, but soon accelerated through word-of-mouth advertising. It won Heinlein his third Hugo award in 1962, and became the first book of science fiction to make the *New York Times* best seller list.⁵⁶

Now Heinlein had made it – he had “broken out.” Bruce Franklin wrote that if Robert “had never written another word, *Stranger in a Strange Land* would still make him an important figure in modern American culture:”

Like Joseph Heller’s *Catch-22*, which also appeared in 1961, *Stranger in a Strange Land* has sold millions of copies, gone through dozens of printings (48 mass printings through 1979), put a new concept into our

See HEINLEIN, page 10



HEINLEIN, from page 9

language, and influenced the imaginations and perhaps the lives of millions.”⁵⁷

But *Stranger* seems to have appealed to kooks as well as the general public. In 1969 Sharon Tate and six others were murdered by followers of a lunatic named Charles Manson. A San Francisco newspaper was the first to run a story that Manson had found the model for his cult of young women worshippers in *Stranger*. The story was repeated in the national media – including *Harper’s* and *Time* magazine.⁵⁸ Heinlein looked into these stories and had his own lawyer interview Manson in jail. It turned out – according to Heinlein – that Manson had never read *Stranger*, had never heard of Heinlein, and was “scarcely literate.”⁵⁹

A few years later, a member of a *Stranger* fan group wrote to Heinlein, and he replied – shedding light on why he wrote the book. He identified three basic reasons: (1) to “support

himself,” (2) to “entertain my readers,” and (3) “if possible, to cause my readers to think”:

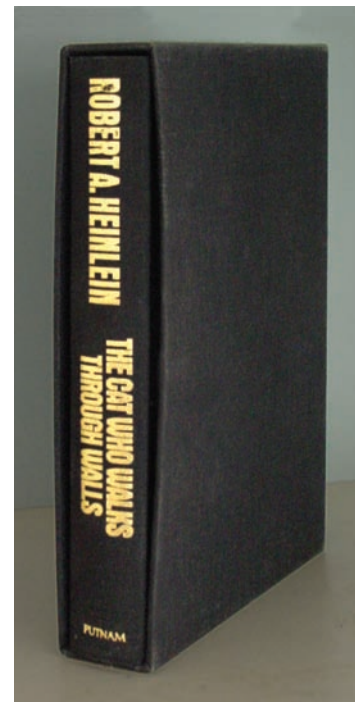
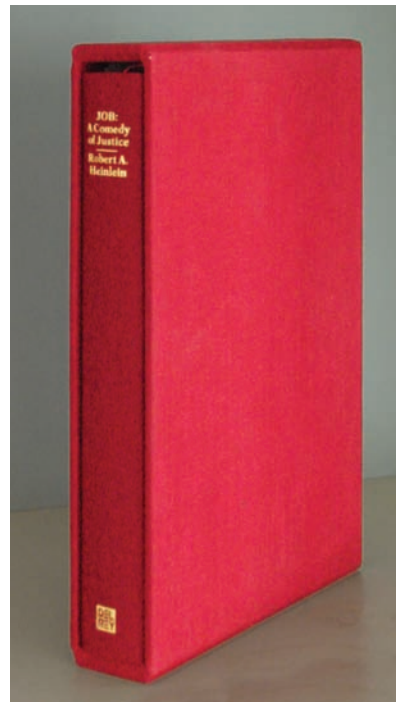
I write for money because I have a household to support and in order to earn that money I must entertain the reader. The third reason is more complex.... By the time I wrote *Stranger* I had enough skill in how to entertain a reader and a solid enough commercial market to risk taking a flyer... Well, what was I trying to say in it? I was asking questions. I was *not* giving answers. I was trying to shake the reader loose from some preconceptions and induce him to think for himself, along new and fresh lines....

Forgive me.... But I hope I have convinced you that *Stranger* is dead serious... as questions. Serious, nontrivial questions, on which a man might spend a lifetime. (And I almost have.) But anyone who takes that book as answers is cheating himself. It is an invitation to think – not to believe. Anyone who takes

it as a license to screw as he pleases is taking a risk; Mrs. Grundy is not dead.⁶⁰

With *Stranger*, Heinlein’s career peaked but not his earnings. He would write other popular books and commercial successes. *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* (1966) won still another Hugo award. In 1974 Heinlein received the Science Fiction Writers of America Grand Masters Nebula Award for “lifetime achievement” – the first such award given.⁶¹ *The Past Through Tomorrow* (1967) was a collection of Heinlein’s earlier “future history” short stories, which are still a pleasure to read. Modern Library’s “reader’s poll” in 1998 of the best novels of the 20th Century included three of Robert’s novels: *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* (number 15), *Stranger in a Strange Land* (number 16), and *Starship Troopers* (number 32) – beating out any novel by either Hemingway or Faulkner.

I Will Fear No Evil (1970) was his longest book up to that time; and it was soon followed by the even longer *Time Enough for Love* (1973). Then came *The Number of the Beast* (1980), which he wrote on his computer and for which he received an advance of \$500,000 – three times what had ever



before been paid for a work of science fiction.⁶² By this time, he was the Grand Master, which may explain why his publisher asked him to cut only about 2000 words from the 200,000 word manuscript.⁶³ Where was the demanding Ms. Dalgliesh when she was needed?

The final books were *Friday* (1982), *Job: A Comedy of Justice* (1984), *The Cat Who Walks through Walls* (1985), and *To Sail Beyond the Sunset* (1987), which was published on Robert's 80th birthday. Limited numbers of *Job* and *Cat* were specially printed, bound and signed by Heinlein. Most of these sold well – with several making the *Times* best seller list.⁶⁴ But Robert's questions and sexual themes had lost their novelty, and the stories sprawled.

Heinlein died in May 8, 1988. Six months later Virginia Heinlein received on his behalf the NASA Distinguished Public Service Medal for “his meritorious service to the Nation and mankind in advocating and promoting the exploration of space.... Even after his death, his books live on as testimony to a man of purpose and vision, a man dedicated to encouraging others to dream, explore, and achieve.” In her acceptance speech Virginia quoted passages from Robert's credo, “This I Believe”:

I believe in my neighbors. I know their faults, and I know that their virtues far outweigh their faults....

I believe in my townspeople. You can knock on any door in our town saying, “I'm hungry,” and you will be fed. Our town is no exception....

I believe in my fellow citizens. Our headlines are splashed with crime, yet for every criminal there are 10,000 honest, decent, kindly men. If it were not so, no child would live to grow up. Business could not go on from day to day. Decency is not news. It is buried in the obituaries, but it is a force stronger than crime....

And, finally, I believe in my whole race. Yellow, white, black, red, brown. In the honesty, courage, intelligence, durability, and goodness of the overwhelming majority of my brothers and sisters everywhere on this planet. I am proud to be a human being. I believe that we have come this far by the skin of our teeth. That we always make it just by the skin of our teeth, but that we will make it. Survive. Endure. I believe that this hairless embryo with the aching, oversize brain case and the opposable thumb, this animal barely up from the apes will endure. Will endure longer than his home planet – will spread out to the stars and beyond, carrying with him his honesty

and his insatiable curiosity, his unlimited courage and his noble essential decency.⁶⁵

In 1991 Putnam published the original, uncut version of *Stranger in a Strange Land* – restoring the 60,000 words that had been cut in 1961.

The older the writer, the more he or she needs a good editor. It is a proposition heartily endorsed by my children – though not yet by my more generous wife.

§§

All photographs by the author except that of *Stranger in a Strange Land*, which was photographed by Robert McCamant.

NOTES

¹ Unlike many well-known, mainstream literary craftsmen, Heinlein has not been the subject or victim of first-rate scholarly biographies; so the biographical details are sketchy. However, there are several useful sources of information about his life and writing, including Leon Stover, *Robert Heinlein* [Boston, 1987]; H. Bruce Franklin, *Robert A. Heinlein, America as Science Fiction* [Oxford, 1980]; and Joseph Olander and Martin Greenberg (eds.), *Robert A. Heinlein* [New York, 1978]. There is also a selection of his letters, published in *Grumbles From the Grave*, edited by Virginia Heinlein [New York, 1989]. William H. Patterson, Jr., the editor of *The Heinlein Journal*, has worked on a fuller biography for years, and told me last year that his publisher was considering a release date sometime in the spring of 2010.

² Franklin, p. 6.

³ *Id.*, p. 11-12.

⁴ *Id.*, p. 9.

⁵ Stover, p. 17.

⁶ Franklin, at 12.

⁷ Stover, p. 17.

⁸ In one of his novels written many years later, *Time Enough for Love* [1973], Heinlein has the lead character – Lazarus Long – tell a story to his grandson about a young friend of his who many years before had gone to the Naval Academy. The young friend was a fencer – like Heinlein himself. In the story, he impregnated his girl friend and, to prevent her father from going to the head of the Academy, married her right after graduation. It seemed to me that Heinlein might have been letting his own experience work its way into the story. So I asked Bill Patterson (editor of the *Heinlein Journal*), about it. He told me this story referred to the experience of one of Heinlein's classmates – not Heinlein. (Email, June 2, 2009.)

⁹ Quoted in *I Asimov*, Wikipedia biography of Heinlein.

¹⁰ Stover, p. 21.

¹¹ *Id.*, p. 22.

¹² Reginald Bretnor, ed., *Modern Science Fiction* [New York, 1953], p. 29.

¹³ Stover, p. 21.

¹⁴ Anthony Boucher, in Bretnor, p. 31.

¹⁵ Bretnor, p. 3.

¹⁶ *Id.*, p. 32.

¹⁷ Letter of April 10, 1939.

¹⁸ *Grumbles*, p. 3.

¹⁹ *Grumbles*, p. xiv-xv.

²⁰ *Id.*, p. 17.

²¹ *Id.*, p. 4.

²² *The Man Who Sold the Moon*, Chicago, 1950, p. 15.

²³ Franklin, p. 13.

²⁴ *Id.*, p. 34-37.

²⁵ *Grumbles*, p. 26.

²⁶ Franklin, p. 14-15.

²⁷ *Grumbles*, p. 93.

²⁸ Introduction to *The Past Through Tomorrow*, p. 11.

²⁹ Franklin, p. 67. Franklin was a Marxist who criticized what he found to be the ultra-patriotic, elitist and even “racist” elements of Heinlein's fiction; but he admired his craftsmanship. He presented Heinlein with a copy of his book, *Robert A. Heinlein. America as Science Fiction*, with this inscription: “To Robert A. Heinlein with deep respect and admiration, and a few disagreements. Warmest Wishes Bruce Franklin.”

³⁰ *Supra*, p. 3.

³¹ Heinlein, *The Green Hills of Earth*, Chicago, 1951, p. 180.

³² *Id.*, p. 194.

³³ *Grumbles*, p. 131.

³⁴ Franklin, p. 68-70.

³⁵ *Grumbles*, p. 49.

³⁶ Quoted in Franklin, p. 74.

³⁷ *Grumbles*, p. 48.

³⁸ *Destination Moon* [1979], Introduction by David Hartwell, p. viii.

³⁹ Leith Stevens did the musical score for the movie. This score was released by Columbia Records on an “LP” record that same year. In 2005 a press specializing in science fiction published a book entitled, *With Fritz, Willy, and Bob and the Summer of '48*, which contains a letter from film director Fritz Lang to his friend, the scientist Willy Ley, recounting how Heinlein had visited Lang in the hope of persuading Lang – rather than Pal – to produce the film.

⁴⁰ Gregg Press, 1979.

⁴¹ Franklin, p. 73.

⁴² *Id.*, p. 98.

⁴³ *Grumbles*, p. 162.

⁴⁴ Stover, p. 46

⁴⁵ *Grumbles*, 83-85.

⁴⁶ *Id.*, p. 94.

⁴⁷ *Id.*, p. 52.

⁴⁸ *Id.*, p. 222.

⁴⁹ *Id.*, p. 75, 222

⁵⁰ *Id.*, p. 226.

⁵¹ Franklin, p. 131

⁵² *Grumbles*, p. 227, 230.

⁵³ *Id.*, p. 228

⁵⁴ *Id.*, p. 232.

⁵⁵ Putnam, 1961

⁵⁶ Franklin, p. 45.

⁵⁷ *Id.*, p. 126-27.

⁵⁸ *Id.*, p. 127; Stover, p. 57.

⁵⁹ Stover, p. 57.

⁶⁰ *Grumbles*, p. 244-46.

⁶¹ Stover, p. 46.

⁶² Franklin, p. 199.

⁶³ *Grumbles*, p. 248.

⁶⁴ Stover, p. 45.

⁶⁵ *Grumbles*, p. 264-67.

CAXTONIAN FOOTNOTES

Wynken de Worde

Construction continues on the underground library going down at the University of Chicago, between the Regenstein Library and the John Crerar Library. Already the students are referring to it as, "The Reg and the egg."

"Rare books are those returned by friends." Have I mentioned Sydney J. Harris before? That was, for me, one of his more memorable *bon mots*.

Harris was a long-time columnist for the *Chicago Daily News*. One of his regular motifs was to connect a series of unrelated short pieces under the headline, "Things I learned While I Was Looking Up Something Else." Looking up. How quaint. How pre-internet. Let me steal that theme; after all, Harris is not using it.

Recently, while trying to find the PBS show "Nova", and its feature on the Milky Way, I stumbled past a broadcast interview of Chicago alderman Ed Burke, who has previously addressed the Caxton Club. The alderman was discussing the book he co-authored about the Chicago police killed in the line of duty, *End of Watch* (2007). Burke is one of the few Chicago aldermen that I can accuse of having actually finished reading a book.

Another, a former Chicago alderman, and justice of the peace, was Judge D. Harry Hammer. Hammer reportedly had "one of the finest libraries in Chicago." That is the first I have learned of it or him. Judge Hammer shrewdly bought much of the burned out real estate at the south end of the Great Fire. Later he made millions by re-selling that acreage. The money enabled him to build a fine home at 37th St. and Grand Boulevard (now Martin Luther King Drive). Reportedly it has 67 rooms, which should have had ample space to house a fine library – or two.

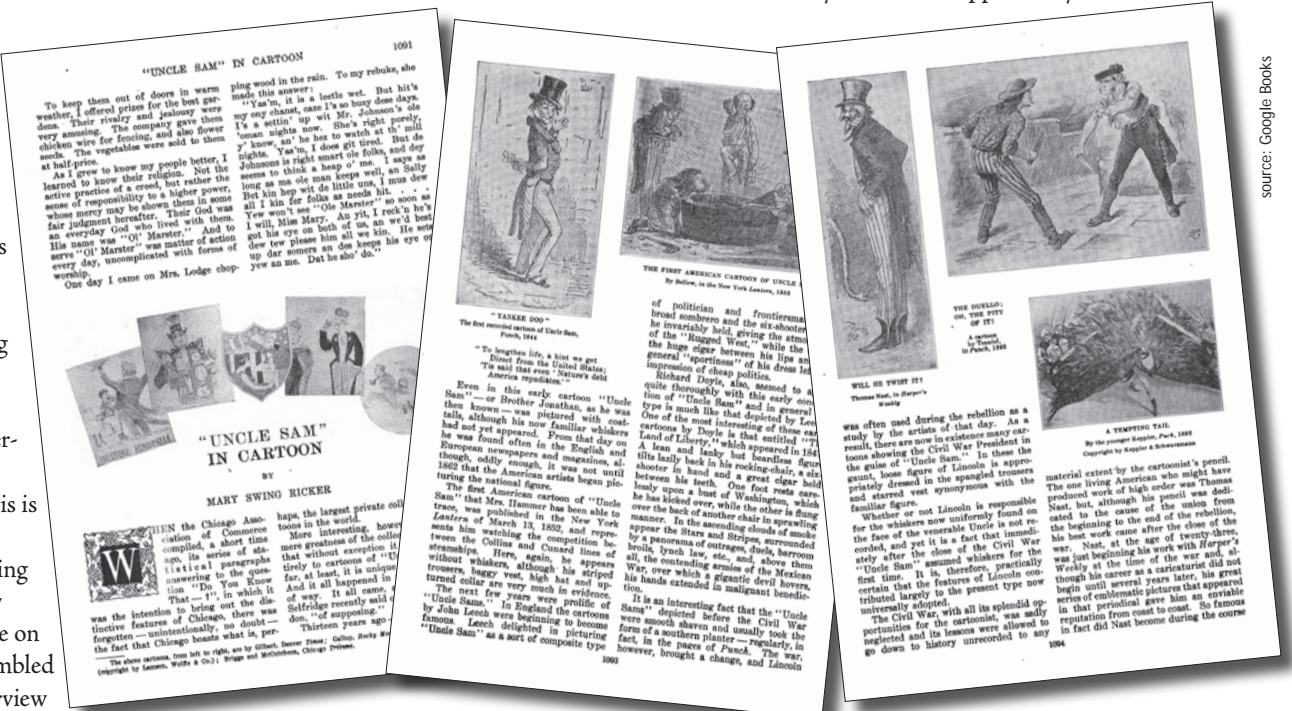
Through the miracle of Google maps, I was able to match the old photograph of

that house with the photographic image of the house where it remains anchoring the northwest corner of 37th & MLK Dr. I invite you Chicago history and architecture buffs to check it out via Google and estimate how many rooms the mansion might have.

But the most remarkable fact about that home probably was its mistress, Mrs. D. Harry Hammer. In addition to being a prominent socialite, club woman, and partisan of social causes, Mrs. Hammer had an obsession

in 1897. By bedtime, after scrutinizing all of the papers and journals in the house and in the attic, she had compiled some three hundred examples already. She took to mounting them on strawboard for display. The Caxton Club was likely one of the few prominent local clubs she did not address on her prime subject. She delivered her Uncle Sam lecture *gratis* in Boston, Denver and elsewhere.

Traveling abroad with her husband and family was also an opportunity to con-



"Uncle Sam" in Cartoon" by Mary Swing Ricker, in *The World Today* Vol. 19, 1910.

with the sketched images of Uncle Sam. This too was a revelation to me. Mrs. Hammer assembled an estimated *thirty thousand* cartoons of Sam. Starting small, from the daily newspapers, some weeklies and monthlies, Mrs. Hammer plucked and preserved the appearances of Uncle Sam from sources in the press of a dozen countries. What she believed was the earliest use of the image was in an 1844 issue of *Punch* magazine, captioned "Yankee Doo." That was about ten years prior to an image in the *Lantern*, and long before Thomas Nast drew the image that we recognize today, still a favorite of editorial cartoonists.

The inspiration to assemble a collection of Uncle Sams caused Mrs. Hammer to drop her embroidery onto the floor of the porch of their country home in Hinsdale on a June day

to delve into her passion. Pre-internet Caxtonians of both sexes may identify with the intrepid Mrs. Hammer who found that "her chief pleasure has been in what she terms 'excavating' in libraries and old book stores. On these occasions... she has often been regarded as a 'suspicious' character, owing to her desire to rummage through the basements and attics of the old book shops, and has been forced, in fact, to don old clothes in order to prove her sincerity in the work."

In that turn-of-the-century era, Judge Hammer's wife appears to have been a "Thoroughly Modern Millie." Wisely she eventually employed a clipping service to search the current press for fresh examples. Even at that period some fifty new examples would show up each Monday in her mail box. Nor did she ignore collecting the original artwork for these cartoons when she could, and Chicago was a prime locale to obtain originals from

artists such as McCutcheon and Briggs of the *Tribune*, Wilder of the *Chicago Record-Herald*, Heaton of the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, and Bradley of the *Chicago Daily News*. Other brand-name artists in the collection were John Leech, Phil May, Sol Eltinge, Opper and so on, and so on.

When asked, Mrs. Hammer stated simply that she was going to give her collection, of course, "To Uncle Sam." I would naturally interpret this to mean that they went to the Library of Congress; but I can find no evidence yet as to if and when or where this collection ended up. If any of you know, please share with me at wynkendeworde@comcast.net

On a similar note, I wanted to dislike *Sixpence House*, by Paul Collins, his account of moving to the Welsh book town, Hay-on-Wye. Despite my best efforts, I have to agree with the review in – of all places – *The Onion*, which remarked, "Wowed and wide-eyed scholarship stands at the center of *Sixpence House*, a winsome memoir of a quixotic book lover's affairs.... Charmed storytelling."

Had he known about Mrs. Hammer, or, as an American, had he known what a head start the English had on depicting Uncle Sam, I am certain that Collins would have employed some of his "excavating" time searching through the immense accumulations of paper in Hay in pursuit of a depiction of Uncle Sam which eluded Mrs. Hammer.

Notwithstanding, Collins did himself observe that,

Britain has some of the world's finest editorial cartoonists. American editorial cartoons have an absolute craven desire to make sure that nobody, not even the ignoramuses who don't read the paper anyway, will miss their meaning. The American cartoonist labels every object in the frame. It is not enough to use a donkey and an elephant: you also have to helpfully label them DEMOCRATS and GOP, just in case someone hasn't had the idea explained to him yet. If you draw George W. Bush, you still have to write BUSH somewhere on his person. The American editorial cartoonist grabs you by the labels and shakes you: "Do you get it? *Do you get it?* DO YOU GET THE JOKE?"

He continues,

The British have a subtlety that puts state-side cartoonists to shame. There is, today, a cartoon in the paper depicting William Hague as the pope; he is being pinned down by a meteorite. First, the cartoonist is assuming that you will recognize an unlabeled William Hague, and that you will recognize the reference to his current agonies in the polls. And then – most astonishingly – that you will recognize a controversial installation piece by Maurizio Cattelan at the Royal Academy of Art, which shows a lifelike statue of the pope

getting floored by a meteorite that has crashed through a cathedral ceiling

You cannot do this in America. There are only four works of art that American editorial cartoonists can refer to: the *Mona Lisa*, *Whistler's Mother*, *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, and *American Gothic*. If you work for a highbrow paper, you might get away with *Nighthawks*. Sculpture is limited to the Statue of Liberty, Mount Rushmore, and *The Thinker*. But that's it: nothing else from the last century is allowed, and certainly nothing from last week.

Moreover, this cartoon of William Hague is rendered in glorious color. It is an art here. We are in the land of Hogarth. American can put color in weather maps and useless pie charts, but not newspaper cartoons. Those only get colored ink for their Sunday installments of *Family Circus* and *Cathy*.

Well, I get Paul Collins' point, and it is not easy to disagree with it; but Uncle Sam is an exception. He is a staple of our cartoons, but, no he was not inspired by a famous painting. And Mrs. Hammer's collection will prove that as well as anything, if only we knew where we could find it. Could it still be installed in a secret room, a vault, at 37th and King Drive? That could be a job for another "cartoon," Geraldo Rivera.

§§

David Novick, civil engineer and Caxtonian

We report with sadness the death of David Novick from a sudden heart attack.

He joined the Club in 2006, nominated by Morrell Shoemaker and seconded by Adrian Alexander. They had known both David and his wife Minna through activities at the Newberry Library.

He was the subject of a "Caxtonians Collect" article in April of 2009. It told of his education at the Columbia University School of Engineering, his work on the Connecticut Turnpike, and his coming to Illinois to work on the Illinois Toll Highway. He and his wife Minna ended up spending the rest of their lives in Chicago. In recent years he had become an adjunct professor at Northwestern's engineering school, and was working on the intersection of engineering topics with public policy.

§§



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.)

Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-443-3600: "Everyday Adventures Growing Up: Art from Picture Books" (works by award-winning illustrators Nancy Carlson, Peter McCarthy, and Timothy Basil Ering, showing how picture books help children to decode images and develop critical thinking skills), Ryan Education Center and Gallery 10, through November 28.

Chicago Botanic Garden, Lenhardt Library, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-8202: "The Orchid Album" (written by Robert Warner, illustrated by John Nugent Fitch, and setting the nineteenth century standard for orchid description and illustration, with more than 500 stunning chromolithographic plates), through May 9; "Japonica: The Artistry of Rare Books" (delicate and artistic books with floral themes such as peonies and irises, often on rice paper and in watercolor), May 14 through August 15.

Chicago Public Library, Carter G. Woodson Regional Library, 9525 S. Halsted Street, Chicago, 312-747-6900: "Chicago Alliance of African-American Photographers Presents a Ten Year Retrospective" (work that informs and records history, by Pulitzer Prize winning photographers Ovie Carter, Milbert Brown, Jr., and John H. White), through January 7, 2011.

Loyola University Museum of Art, 820 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-915-7600: "The Papercut Haggadah" (artist Archie Granot's fifty-five page Haggadah, using geometric and abstract shapes to tell the traditional story of Passover), through May 9.

Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, 312-943-9090: "Henry IV of France: The Vert Galant and His Reign" (marking the 400th anniversary of the French monarch's death and including a facsimile of a letter to his mistress, a beautifully illustrated manual on horsemanship, a treatise by the royal gardener, and a 1608 publication marking the establishment of a French colony at Quebec), Spotlight Exhibition Series, May 4 through July 15; "Exploration 2010: The Chicago Calligraphy Collective's Annual Juried Exhibition" (including handmade artists' books and broadsides as well as three-dimensional works executed in various media and styles, from classical to contemporary), Herman Dunlap Smith Gallery, through May 28.

Northern Illinois University, NIU Art Museum, 116 Altgeld Hall, DeKalb, Illinois, 815-753-1936: exhibitions exploring the impact of the artwork and arts projects of the New Deal era, including "This Great Nation Will Endure" (a traveling exhibition of photographs by Dorothea Lange, Gordon Parks, Walker Evans and others, organized by the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum), "Coming of Age: The WPA/FAP

Graphic Section and the American Print" (New Deal prints and graphics that gave fine art status to printmaking, created the Silk Screen Unit of the WPA, and promoted public interest in this new medium), "New Deal Era Images and Objects" (including depression era novels on loan from Rare Books and Special Collections of University Libraries), all through May 28.

Northwestern University, Charles Deering Library, 1970 Campus Drive, Evanston, 847-491-7658: "The Once and Future Saint: Two Lives of Hildegard von Bingen" (documents focusing on Hildegard's twelfth century life as a famous author, composer and visionary, as well as

her twentieth century revival as feminist and New Age icon), Main Library, through August 27; "Burnham at Northwestern" (documents, photographs, blueprints and sketches of Daniel Burnham's 1905 "Plans of Northwestern," a redesign of the University's Evanston campus), Special Collections and Archives, ongoing.

Northwestern University, Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, 40 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, 847-491-4000: "The Brilliant Line: Following the Early Modern Engraver, 1480-1650" (engravings by German, Dutch, Italian and French artists, illustrating how ideas and techniques were exchanged by means of the medium's visual language), Main Gallery, through June 20.

Oriental Institute of Chicago, University of Chicago, 1155 E. 58th Street, Chicago, 773-702-9514: "Pioneers to the Past: American Archaeologists in the Middle East, 1919-20" (never before exhibited photos, artifacts, letters and archival documents highlighting the daring travels of James Henry Breasted, noted Egyptologist and founder of the Oriental Institute), through August 29.

Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, 5500 S. Greenwood Avenue, Chicago, 773-702-0200: "People Wasn't Meant to Burn: Ben Shahn and the Hickman Story" (sixteen original drawings by artist Ben Shahn, originally appearing in Harper's magazine and documenting the murder trial of James Hickman, who shot and killed his landlord after the four Hickman children died in a 1947 Chicago tenement fire. Drawings donated by legendary Chicago alderman Leon Depres, who served as one of Hickman's original defense lawyers.), May 11 through August 29; "The Darker Side of Light: Arts of Privacy, 1850-1900" (prints, drawings, illustrated books and small sculptures from private collectors, many unsuitable for public display and stored away in cabinets, including works by Kathe Kollwitz, Max Klinger, James McNeill Whistler, and others), Richard and Mary L. Gray Gallery, through June 13.

University of Illinois at Chicago, Richard J. Daley Library, Special Collections and Archives, MC 234, 801 S. Morgan Street, Chicago, 312-996-2742: "An Architect's Library: Books from the Burnham and Hammond Collection" (selections from the 700-volume working library of the firm of Daniel Burnham, Jr., Hubert Burnham, and C. Herrick Hammond, architects of famous structures like the Carbide and Carbon Building, now known as the Hard Rock Hotel), through May 31.

Bernice Gallagher will be happy to receive your listings at either 847-234-5255 or gallagher@lakeforest.edu.



Calligraphy Collective at Newberry Library
EVEREST, BY REGGIE EZELL

Caxtonians Collect: David Hartmann

Sixty-fifth in a series of interviews with members

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

David Hartmann is in the process of reinventing his life, and the Caxton Club is one of several parts of his new life that has caught him by surprise. “Phil Liebson invited me to come to a few meetings and join,” he says. “I wasn’t exactly sure what I would get out of it, since I don’t claim to be a real book collector. But it’s been an unexpected revelation to see who Caxtonians are and what they’re interested in. They’re all characters! People like this aren’t supposed to exist any more. Many Caxtonians could be walking out of the pages of Thackeray or Dickens. Sit next to somebody and you discover they have a collection of wood blocks made by an Englishman more than 200 years ago. And the person on your other side turns out to know all about American railroad timetables.”

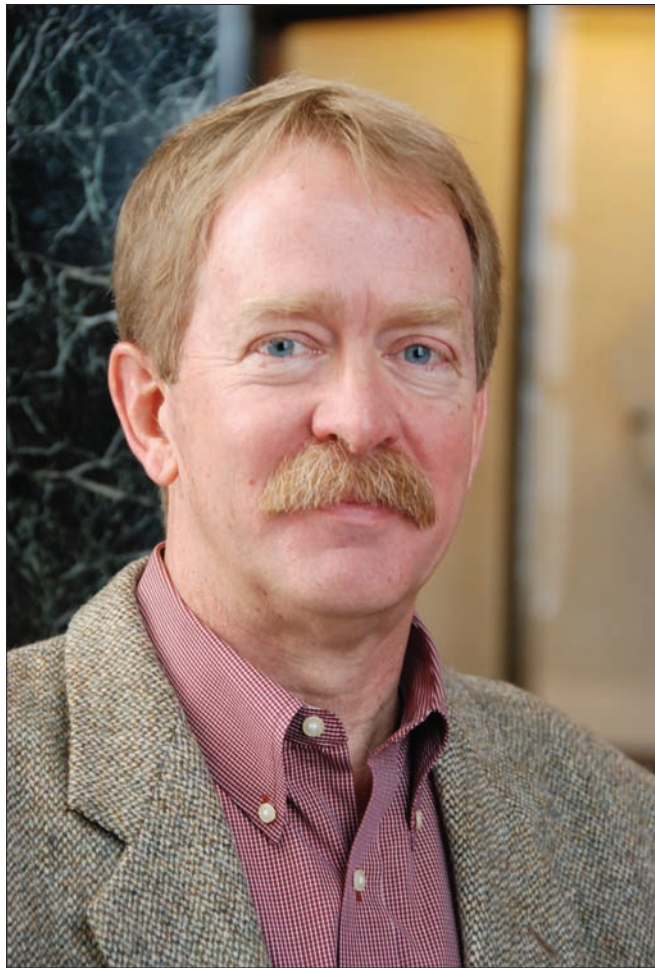
In his previous life, Hartmann lived in Naperville with his wife, Dee, raising five children (four boys and a girl) and commuting to trade bonds at the Board of Trade. “It was a great way to make a living,” he explains. “You’re done early in the day so you can go home and spend time with your children. Once you get the hang of it, it’s not particularly stressful. I had the right skill set for trading on the floor, the ability to read peoples’ faces and catch a meaningful glance.”

But that all changed in 2002 when the Board of Trade went to computerized trading. “Now the people with the right skill set grew up playing games on their Nintendo, or programming computers late at night in their bedroom. I quickly found that it was not right for me.” He hung on for a few more years trading corn, but finally decided to give it up. Right now he’s doing volunteer work at the Red Cross and trying to figure out what his next occupation should be.

Another major change was moving downtown from Naperville. “I came kicking and screaming,” he says. His wife had taken a position in the Loop, and at the time he was commuting to Evanston. “We were spending a lot of time in our cars. Dee insisted that we should try living downtown and see how we

liked it.” They rented an apartment for a year.

“Suddenly I had 2-1/2 hours more in my day! Our health improved because we had time to get some exercise. There was more time to read. You could join the Art Institute and drop in any day on your way home.” So they sold their (almost) empty house in Naperville and bought downtown. Dee, who now has a private practice in physical therapy (specializing in chronic pelvic pain), has



opened an office in the building where they live. The one problem is what was left in the (almost) empty house: the books. They don’t fit in the new apartment downtown, so they’re in storage for now.

The books are not a collection, Hartmann insists. “When I’m not reading English literature, I’m reading history,” he explains. “For example, many, many years ago I engrossed myself in Winston Churchill’s early autobiography, *My Early Life: A Roving Commission*, and his *Story of the Malakand Field Force*. From that it was a natural step to his *Ian Hamilton’s March* about the Boer War. So one

thing leads to another, and before long I had quite a few books about World War I.” In the same way one novel by Trollope begat ten novels by Trollope.

“If you find that something delights you, you just end up looking for more.”

A recent discovery in his reading is the Reformation. Hartmann is a lifelong Catholic, which would account for his not having paid much attention to it previously. But “Cromwell is fascinating!” and “the massacres of both Protestants and Catholics deserve to be studied.”

Hartmann grew up in Effingham, a small town in southern Illinois (now growing because it is near the junction of Interstates 57 and 70). His father was an MD who trained in Chicago but wanted to raise a family in a more rural area. He heard that fire had destroyed Effingham’s hospital, but that the town had put up a new one in response, so it looked like a good town to pick.

His father was a driven small-town doctor, who allowed the stresses of the job to build up. He died of a heart attack at age 35, leaving his wife with six children ranging in age from 3 to 12. David was the youngest. “It was a hard time for the family, but it made us all very close. The extended family still gets together regularly, mostly in Effingham.”

Hartmann ran track and cross-country in high school. This was an important factor in his choosing North Central College in Naperville, which had the best college track program in the state at the time.

Upon graduation he married Dee, whom he had known since age 15. Together they moved to New York City, where he earned a master’s in political science at Columbia. But that didn’t lead to any jobs, so the two came back to Naperville. Within a few years they had a growing family and Hartmann was trading bonds.

But Columbia brings us back to Phil Liebson. They met at a Chicago Columbia-alumni event, and both ended up becoming active in organizing them. Liebson suggested the Caxton Club, and he joined in 2006.

§§



NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 437
AURORA IL

CAXTONIAN

Caxton Club
60 West Walton Street
Chicago, IL 60610
USA

Address Correction Requested

Bookmarks...

Luncheon Program

Friday, May 14, 2010, Union League Club

Janice Katz

"The Caxton Connection in the Art Institute's
Fabulous Japanese Illustrated Book Collection"

Janice Katz, the Roger L. Weston Associate Curator of Japanese Art at the Art Institute of Chicago, will present an illustrated program about the Institute's illustrated Japanese books from the Edo through the Meiji Periods (17th - 19th centuries), 98% of which were donated by Martin Ryerson, a founder of the Caxton Club and Frederick Gookin, an early member (1895), and later an Honorary Member.

Janice's talk will include information about our Club's early exhibitions and speeches involving Japanese books and their artist/illustrators (such as Hokusai); a general history of Japanese books and the conservation process; how she became involved in this fascinating area of Asian art; the most-talked-about item in the collection: *Birds of the Capital* (1802) and its most phenomenally complex print images. Not to mention details of the exciting new Japanese Gallery opening in the Art Institute on September 25, 2010.

Expect a lively discussion.

Both May meetings will take place at the Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Boulevard. Luncheon buffet (in the main dining room on six) opens at 11:30 am; program (in a different room, to be announced) 12:30-1:30. Luncheon is \$30. Dinner will take place in the 5th floor Crystal Room. Timing: spirits at 5:00, dinner at 6:00, program at 7:30. Dinner

Beyond May...

JUNE LUNCHEON

The luncheon will be Friday June 11 at the Union League Club. John Long will present the fascinating story of the creation of the most successful, (and also elegant), map of all time: The London Underground Map.

Dinner Program

Wednesday, May 19, 2010, Union League Club

Thomas Hahn

"The Adventures of Robin Hood:
The Americanization of an Outlaw Hero"

Howard Pyle's 1883 *Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* became an instant classic and has never gone out of print. Scribner's billed it as "undoubtedly the most original and elaborate [book] ever produced by an American artist." They had it bound in embossed leather, and sold it for \$4.50, probably about \$100 in today's money. With numerous illustrations taken from his own remarkable collection of Robin Hoodiana, our speaker will trace the history of this remarkable production. The talk will include comparisons with Pyle's models in the woodcuts of Caxton's successors, De Worde and Pynson, and with other children's books, like Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* (1876). It will also address Pyle's relation to the Arts and Crafts Movement and William Morris's Kelmscott Press.

Prof. Hahn (English, University of Rochester) specializes in medieval literature and culture, and popular culture. Among his many publications is *Robin Hood in Popular Culture: Violence, Transgression, and Justice* (Boydell & Brewer, 2000), which will be available for purchase at the meeting.

is \$55. drinks are \$4 to \$12. For reservations call 312-255-3710 or email caxtonclub@newberry.org; **reservations are needed by noon Tuesday for the Friday luncheon, and by noon Friday for the Wednesday dinner.**

JUNE DINNER

On Thursday(!), June 17, British Wodehousian Tony Ring will speak at Petterino's on "Beyond Jeeves and Bertie: The Quirks, Peculiarities, and Uses of a P. G. Wodehouse Collection."