CAXTONIAN

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Ralph Fletcher Seymour

Arts and Crafts book designer and illustrator, inveterate networker, and habitual clubman of a century ago

Jerry D. Meyer

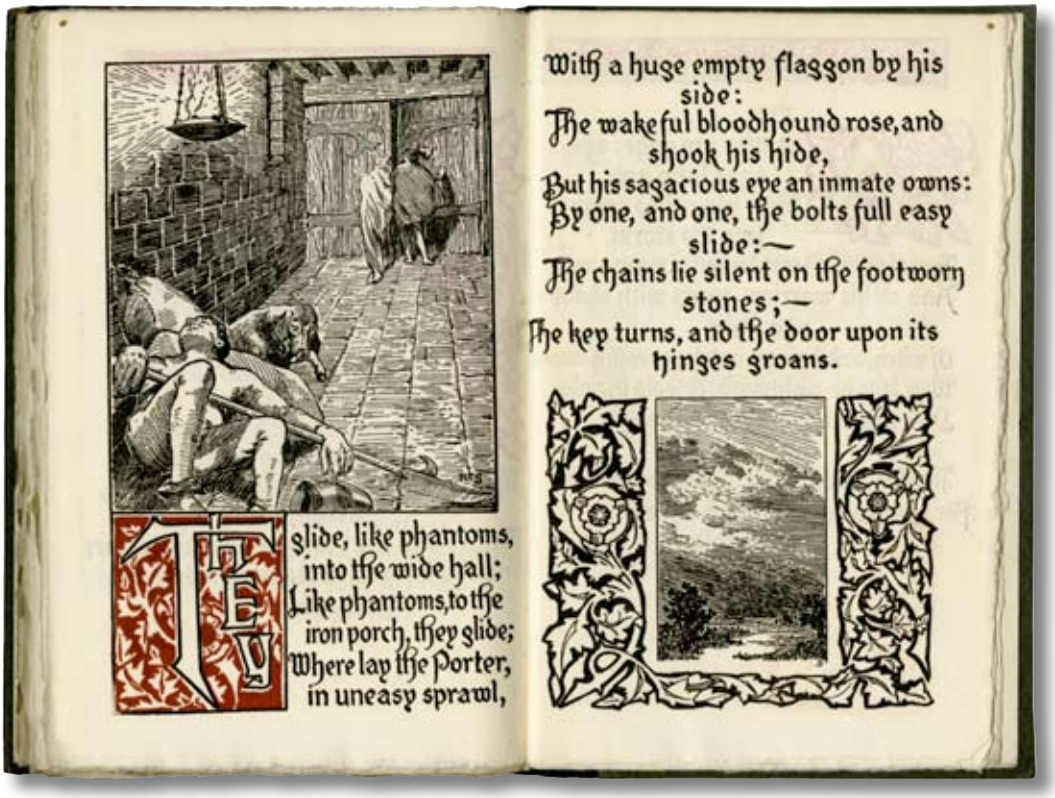

Fig. 7: J. Keats, The Eve of St. Agnes, *1900, Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Publisher (collection of the author).*

By the late 19th century, Chicago had become a fertile womb for new architecture and industrial design, as well as commercial publishing and graphic arts. In the 1890s, Chicago-based *Inland Printer* was a premier voice for Midwestern printers, and the publishing firms of Stone and Kimball and Way and Williams were leaders in fine press books. Stone and Kimball's innovative *Chap-Book*, a semi-monthly pamphlet (1894-1898), provided a vehicle for many prominent European and American graphic artists. Will Bradley, Frederic Goudy, Will Ransom, Joseph Leyendecker, and Ralph Fletcher Seymour were among the important illustrators, typographers, and book designers who got their start in Chicago in the 90s, influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement.* Of these individuals, all but Seymour and Ransom left Chicago for other parts of the United States by the early 20th century.

During his long and distinguished career, Ralph Fletcher Seymour (1876-1966) (Fig. 1) played a central role in the evolution of the Chicago book arts scene in the early years of the 20th century. In this article, I will explore the individual and organizational networking that helped make Seymour so successful relatively early in his career and clarify some confusing timelines in Seymour's early years in Chicago.

Fig. 1: Ralph Fletcher Seymour, c. 1912 (courtesy of Juliet Teipel).

The Chicago that Seymour discovered on his arrival[1] was a vibrant, if sometimes raw, city. The decades of the 1880s and 90s saw Chicago rise from the ashes of its great fire of 1871 and its evolution to becoming a cultural mecca in the Midwest. In his autobiography, Burton Rascoe, an early writer and critic for the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, noted that during these two decades,

> Chicago was, in the main, crude, vulgar, vital and grasping – 'hog butcher to the world'.... [it] was a place where wealth accumulated but men did not decay. On the contrary, they asserted themselves with energy and magnificence, creating, out of their profits, within a brief time, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Chicago Public Library, the Field Museum, the Auditorium for Opera, Orchestra Hall for concert music...the Rush Medical School, the University of Chicago....[2]

The commercial publishing industry had taken a firm hold, offering aspiring artists opportunities to provide text and images for newspapers and the many advertising catalogs printed and distributed nationwide from Chicago. These included mailings for the large, Chicago-based retailers Montgomery Ward and Sears, Roebuck and Company. While the private press had only a modest presence in the Chicago area in the early 20th century, the commercial printing industry was represented by several large companies, among them Rand McNally, Cuneo Press, W. H. Hall, and R. R.

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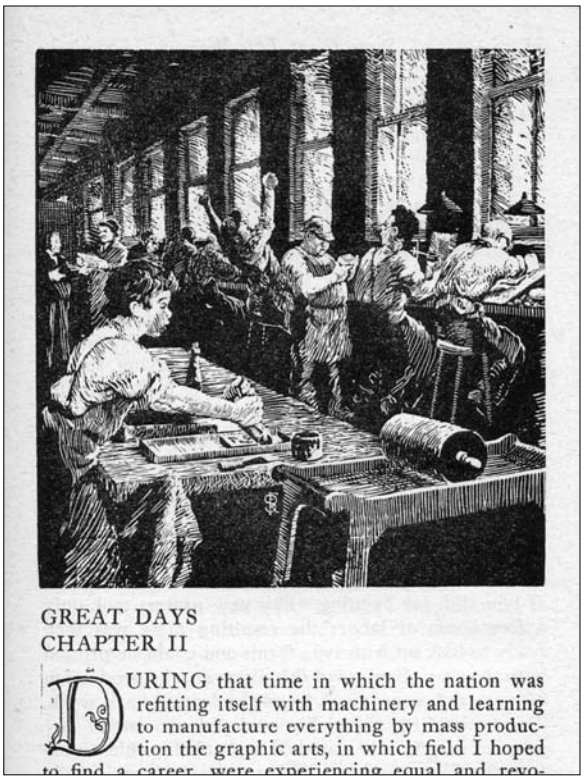
RALPH FLETCHER SEYMOUR, *from page 1*

Donnelley and Sons.[3] By 1905, Chicago was second only to New York in the dollar value of book and job printing.[4] The introduction of a new linotype machine in 1886 (in New York City) spread across the United States, and, along with other new machines, it revolutionized the speed with which typesetting and text composition could be prepared and copy printed for all sorts of material, but especially newspapers.

While Seymour was interested in designing and printing his own books, his initial job consisted of working long hours in one of Chicago's many engraving houses, the J. Manz Engraving Company, drawing and lettering for a variety of advertising publications. In Seymour's description of his working environment at J. Manz, artists occupied quarters at one end of a long room illuminated by a row of windows. Numerous engravers, sitting on high stools in front of long, tilted work tables, translated artists' drawings to wood engravings, while young boys inked and proofed the engraved plates nearby (Fig. 2). As Seymour noted in his autobiography, these wood engravers, providing "cheap small cuts" for mail order catalogs, were the last survivors of their craft, soon to be replaced by photo engraving, a process steadily revolutionizing print media in Europe and America since its introduction in the 1860s.[5]



GREAT DAYS
CHAPTER II

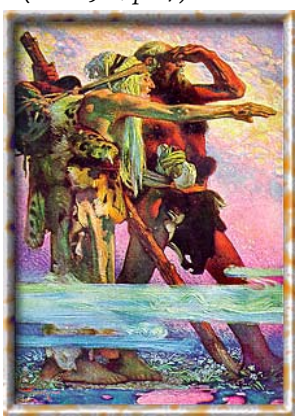
DURING that time in which the nation was refitting itself with machinery and learning to manufacture everything by mass production the graphic arts, in which field I hoped to find a career, were experiencing equal and revo-

Fig. 2: Seymour, artists room, J. Manz Engraving Company, p. 33, Some Went This Way.

Among the artists working at J. Manz upon Seymour's arrival was the German-born *wunderkind* illustrator, Joseph C. Leyendecker (1874-1951). Seymour greatly admired Leyendecker's art, enviously gushing, "His work was so admirable that I wondered if it was not as great as Raphael's."[6] Beginning in 1894, while still employed at J. Manz, Leyendecker enrolled in three evening courses at the Art Institute of Chicago in order to enhance his considerable talent as a draftsman. In early 1896, Leyendecker, just two years older than Seymour, won *The Century* magazine's prestigious cover competition for its August Midsummer Holiday (second place went to Maxfield Parish).

With national fame and fortune suddenly flowing his way, Leyendecker left J. Manz and, with his brother Frank, traveled to Paris, arriving there September 17, 1896.[7] At the recommendation of one of his instructors at the Art Institute, John H. Vanderpoel, Joseph enrolled at the famous Académie Julian. Vanderpoel was himself an alumnus of the institution. In the summer of 1897, with international experience and favorable exposure in that spring's *Salon du Champs de Mars*, Joseph and his brother returned to Chicago and acquired a studio in the Fine Arts Building. In Europe, Joseph had

Fig 3: J. C. Leyendecker, "It is There," illustration for William Vaughn Moody, "The Death of Eve," The Century Magazine, Vol. LXXIII, No. 2 (Dec. 1906, p. 27).

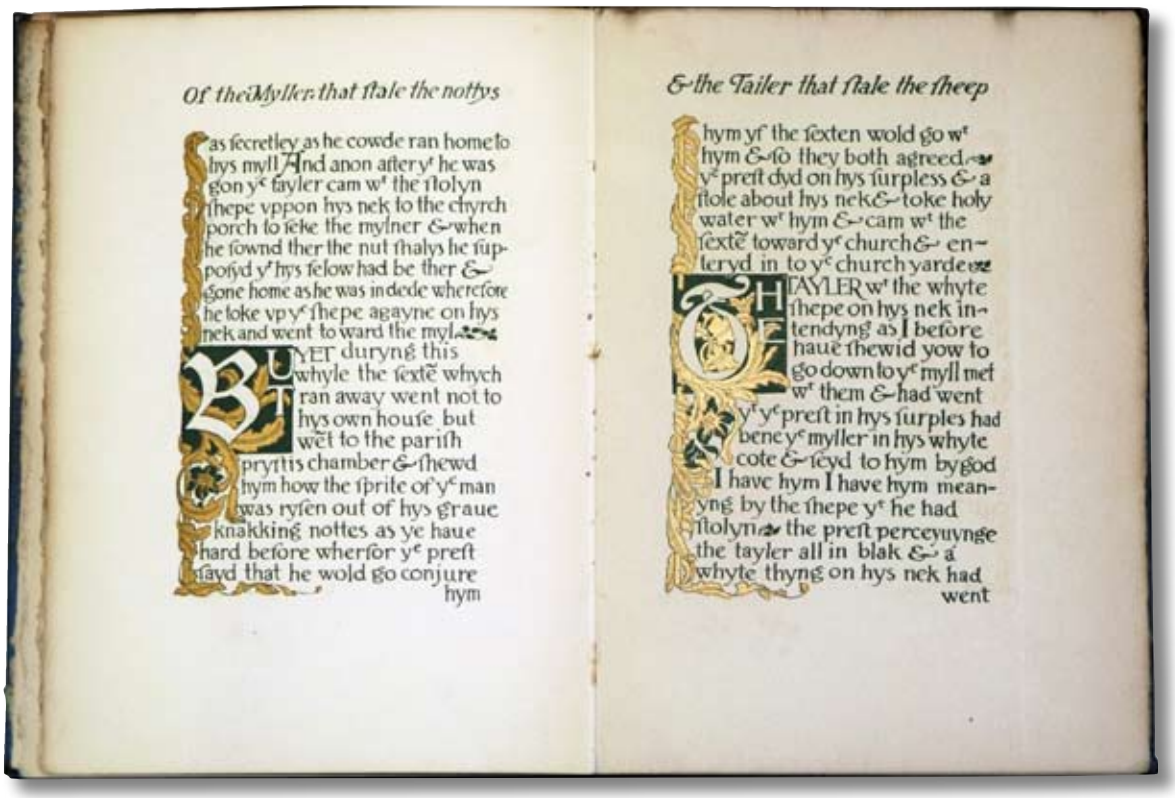


Slate of Officers and Council Members to be approved at the May dinner meeting

President – Bruce Boyer
Vice-President – Tom Swanstrom
Secretary – Jo Ellen Dickie
Treasurer – Don Chatham

Council Class of 2014:
Michael Gorman
Celia Hilliard
Wendy Husser
Hal Kugeler
Dorothy Sinson

Council Class of 2013:
Nancy Lynn


Of the Mylner that stale the nottys

as secretley as he cowde ran home to hys mylle And anon after yᵗ he was gon yᶜ tayler cam wᵗ the stolyn shepe vppon hys nek to the chyrch porch to seke the mylner & when he sownd ther the nut shalys he supposyd yᵗ hys felow had be ther & gone home as he was indede wherefore he toke vp yᶜ shepe agayne on hys nek and went to ward the mylle

BUYET duryng this whyle the sextē whych ran away went not to hys own house but wēt to the parish pryttis chamber & shewd hym how the sprite of yᶜ man was ryſen out of hys graue knakking nottes as ye haue hard before wherfor yᶜ preſt sayd that he wold go conjure hym

& the Tailer that stale the sheep

hym yf the sexten wold go wᵗ hym & so they both agreed yᶜ preſt dyd on hys surpless & a stole about hys nek & toke holy water wᵗ hym & cam wᵗ the sextē toward yᶜ church & enteryd in to yᶜ church yarde

THE TAYLER wᵗ the whyte shepe on hys nek intendyng as I before haue shewid yow to go down to yᶜ myll met wᵗ them & had went yᵗ yᶜ preſt in hys surples had bene yᶜ myller in hys whyte cote & seyd to hym by god I have hym I have hym meanyng by the shepe yᵗ he had stolyn the preſt perceyuynge the tayler all in blak & a whyte thyng on hys nek had went

Fig. 4: Three Merry Old Tales, *1898, Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Publisher (Special Collections, Northern Illinois University*

been compared to the Czech Art Nouveau innovator Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939), then very much in vogue. For a time, some of Leyendecker's illustrations reflected this influence (Fig. 3). In 1900, nationally sought after as an illustrator, Joseph moved to New York City with his brother, following that path to fame and fortune that was to attract other talented artists who got their start in the Midwest.

Once Seymour's situation at J. Manz evolved from unpaid apprentice to paid worker, he began designing and publishing his own books in his spare time. The first was completed in 1897, featuring John Keats' *Ode to Melancholy*. He hand-lettered the text and designed the small book to imitate the old woodblock books he had seen at the Cincinnati Art Museum library as a student.[8] Seymour had his drawings photo-transferred to zinc plates, which he then inked and printed in an edition of only six copies at J. Manz, using their Washington hand-proofing press. The small tome attracted some favorable attention, leading to his design of another volume, based on the "Shakespeare Jest Book."

From this collection of stories, Seymour chose three and titled his modest volume *Three Merry Old Tales*. It was slightly larger in format and considerably more ambitious than his first. It too was hand-lettered, 48 pages in length, but this time printed in an edition of 300 (Fig. 4). Seymour had this book bound by A. J. Cox Bindery, which Cox, himself a transplant from England, claimed was the best such business in America.[9] The company had been binding books for the large, influential Chicago-based A. C. McClurg & Company for years. It was this second book by Seymour, completed in 1898, which launched his regional fame as a book designer. He attracted the attention of preacher, educator, art collector and fervent bibliophile Frank W. Gunsaulus (1856-1921).

At the time that Gunsaulus took an interest in Seymour, he was the influential pastor of Chicago's Plymouth Congregational Church, President of the newly established Armour Institute of Technology (now the Illinois Institute of Technology) of which he was a founding member, and a Trustee of the Art Institute of Chicago.[10] For Seymour, the clergyman's interest in his private presswork was a Midas touch. Among other things, Gunsaulus often held court at A. C. McClurg & Company's large retail bookstore. When he was there, he occupied the so-called "Saint's Corner."[11] Many socially prominent Chicagoans perceived him as a virtual saint. It was in McClurg's that one could find examples of the best European and American books, both commercial and private press, including those from William Morris' influential Kelmscott Press.

Gunsaulus took the 23-year-old Seymour in hand, introduced him to major bibliophiles and their collections in Chicago, and suggested that, for his third book, Seymour select some love sonnets, for which he, Gunsaulus, would write the introduction. The clergyman coached him on how to sell his private press books with alluring announcements of their pending publication.[12] For young Seymour, manna was literally falling from heaven!

Seymour selected Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese* as his third book, laboring "months of nights" hand-lettering the pages.[13] As promised, Gunsaulus wrote the introduction, and the 64-page book was published in an edition of 510 copies in 1899 (Fig. 5). The title page was elaborately decorated, with scrolling leaves and vegetative shapes, undoubtedly inspired by William Morris' Kelmscott books. The publication was favorably noted in a November 1899 *Chicago Daily Tribune* "Brief Mention" column:

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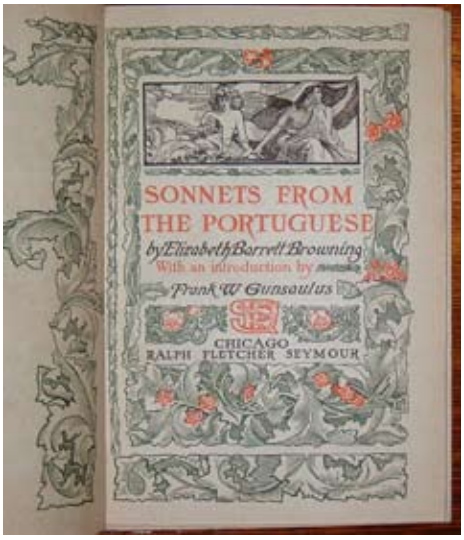
Fig. 5: E. B. Browning, Sonnets from the Portuguese, 1899, Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Publisher (image from J. Sheldon's Fine Press Books website: www.elstonpress.com).



RALPH FLETCHER SEYMOUR, *from page 3*

> Ralph Fletcher Seymour of Chicago, who did the lettering of the lines in [L. Frank Baum's] "Father Goose," has completed an artistic edition of Mrs. Browning's "Sonnets from the Portuguese," every word which was drawn with a pen, like the illuminated initials and decorative designs in which the volume abounds. The pages are printed in three colors, and the book shows genuine artistic ability. Dr. Gunsaulus has written an introduction for the volume....[14]

According to Seymour, the financing of the Browning book exceeded his resources, and during the winter of 1899 he worried about meeting production debts. However, Dr. Gunsaulus had asked Seymour for several hundred announcements of the book's pending publication and forwarded them, along with his personal calling card, to many friends. The result was that the edition of the book almost immediately sold out: "By this almost magical transaction," Seymour exclaimed, "I became a solvent book-man."[15]

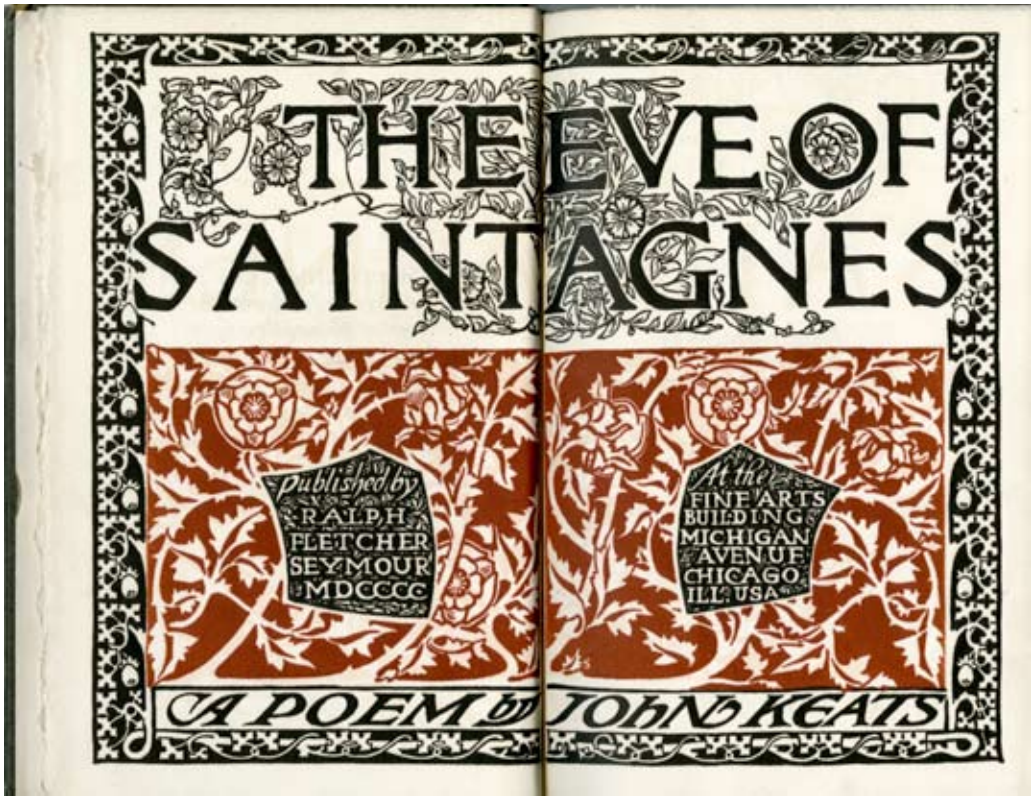


Fig. 6 Title spread, J. Keats, Eve of St. Agnes, *1900, Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Publisher (collection of the author).*

Seymour's success with the *Sonnets* was feted at the home of socialite Harriet C. Brainard on Christmas day, 1899, according to an amusing recollection published by Charles Collins in his "Bookman's Holiday" column many years later.[16] Her home at 2970 Groveland (later Ellis Avenue), Collins noted, was then regarded as "Chicago's leading literary salon." We might presume that Dr. Gunsaulus was also among the guests present at the occasion. At the moment the butler announced that dinner was served, according to Collins, "young overworked Seymour quietly slid off the piano bench on which he had been cheerfully perched and hit the floor in a dead faint. When revived he said weakly: 'I had too many sonnets from the Portuguese.'"

As a result of his rising fame, inquiries for Seymour's services in the production of graphic work started pouring into the J. Manz front office. Seymour indicates that such personally directed inquiries were frowned upon and that it was time for him to strike out and set up his own studio, as Leyendecker had done. The precise date Seymour established his office in the Fine Arts Building at 410 South Michigan Avenue is not known, although it must have occurred in the early summer of 1900.

The Fine Arts Building, designed by Solon Spencer Beman, was constructed in 1884-85 as the Studebaker Building and became available for other uses following the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. It was acquired by promoter Charles C. Curtis and extensively remodeled in the late 90s, at which time it became known as the Fine Arts Building. As such, it was devoted, as it is today, to the performing and visual arts as well as literary functions.

At the time of Seymour's move into the building, the influential sculptor Lorado Taft and portrait painter Ralph Clarkson were among the strong personalities with established studios. It was also the nexus for cultural enterprises that would put Seymour in the heart of Chicago's artistic and literary happenings. For a time in the early 20th century, the Caxton Club, founded in 1895, had its offices and meeting rooms there. A number of the members of The Little Room cultural group, established in the mid-1890s by Chicago authors Hamlin Garland (brother-in-law of Lorado Taft) and Henry B. Fuller, and painter Charles Francis Browne, were tenants. This group eventually included Margaret Anderson (1886-1973) who, in the spring of 1914, established her famed *Little Review* with offices in room 719 of the Fine Arts Building.[17]

In 1912, a decade after Seymour had become a fixture in the building, Harriet Monroe (1860-1936) approached him about designing and publishing a new literary journal, *Poetry Magazine*. The first issue of this groundbreaking enterprise came out in October of that year, and Seymour remained the publisher for the next four years.[18] Henry Fuller, a friend of both Seymour and Monroe, assisted in proofing the pages of the magazine, usually in Seymour's office. In fact, Fuller later persuaded Seymour to publish his revolutionary novel of homosexual love, *Bertram Cope's Year*, in 1919, which, to Seymour's and Fuller's great distress, failed to sell.[19] These individuals, and numerous others, were either directly or indirectly associated with Chicago's literary renaissance and shaped Seymour's professional life during the first two decades of the 20th century.

Seymour indicated that the idea of acquiring an office in the Fine Arts Building was a result of meeting illustrator W. W. Denslow at his studio in the building. At that time, Denslow was illustrating Frank Baum's *Father Goose: His Book* (published in 1899), and Denslow and Baum had contacted Seymour about hand-lettering the book's text, offering as an enticement the listing of Seymour's name in the book's credits. Denslow's "golden haired" wife, Seymour recalls, often served free lunches in her husband's studio, of which the young designer partook.[20] In addition to the free food, Seymour also accepted a modest commission.

From Seymour's remarks, paired with other

Fig. 8: T. Sturge Moore, Danaë, *1903, Charles Ricketts Publisher, Vale Press (image from J. Sheldon's Fine Press Books website: www.elstonpress.com).*

information, we know that he acquired space in the Fine Arts Building during June or July of 1900. Seymour obtained his studio from Charles Francis Browne, landscape painter and editor of a local publication, *Brush and Pencil*, where favorable reviews of Seymour's books had appeared. Seymour approached the painter concerning acquisition of building space, and Browne indicated that his studio would soon be available. He was leaving for his summer home, and when he returned in October, he would be moving into a different space. Seymour could have his studio rent-free until October, after which time, he could arrange to rent it from Taft.[21] Brown was renting space on the top floor from Lorado Taft, whose studio was next door. Thus, again favorably blessed, Seymour struck out on his own as a freelance graphic artist and private press publisher.

In addition to an expanding workload of commissions, Seymour published two or three private press books annually for the next several years. But, as Paul Gehl notes, he was an "artistic pragmatist" whose primary income accrued from his reputation as a designer and illustrator of "elegant ephemera" including theater programming, posters, advertising pieces and bookplates.[22] His career was comfortably assured, and his reputation as a book designer accelerated for the next several years. At the relatively tender age of 24, he acquired the reputation of virtuoso follower of William Morris among an expanding circle of influential Chicago literati.

In October of 1900, Seymour, turning again to Keats, published an ambitious, hand-lettered, limited edition of *The Eve of St. Agnes* (Figs. 6 and 7, on pages 4 and 1).[23] The double title page, with its vegetative surroundings and blocks of tendril patterns, emulates, like his embellishments for *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, the decorative approach favored by Morris in his Kelmscott productions. In addition, Seymour's occasional book illustrations at this time emulated the mannered stylistic qualities in the woodblock images Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) provided for Morris' publications.

The same tendency is also found in Seymour's English contemporary, Charles Ricketts (1866-1931), a follower of Burne-Jones, whose Vale Press editions (specifically mentioned by Seymour in his autobiography) have a deliberately archaic, Pre-Raphaelite feel. This can be seen in the illustrations both Seymour, in *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and Ricketts, in his *Danaë* (Fig. 8), created for their books. Both designers exploit the sort of self-conscious, single-point perspective favored by Italian Quattrocento artists and often imitated by the Pre-Raphaelites in their artwork. A decade and a half later, Seymour's elegant illustrations for his 1917 edition of Bergen Applegate's *Poems of Paul Verlaine*, while not as Pre-Raphaelite in style, nonetheless retain a late Victorian feel (Fig. 9).

During the course of his career, Seymour imitated a variety of styles, including the late Medieval, and he could paint and draw in a realistic mode; but he was never comfortable with the modernist experimentation favored by some of his contemporaries, nor as inventive and sophisticated as Leyendecker. Probably for this reason, and in spite of his significant contributions to book and graphic design in the Midwest, he did not gain the national or international reputation afforded some of his fellow graphic artists working in Chicago in the late 19th century, and among them, Will Bradley (1868-1962).

Bradley, like Seymour, was strongly inspired by the English Arts and Crafts Movement. Seymour, Bradley, and Leyendecker all

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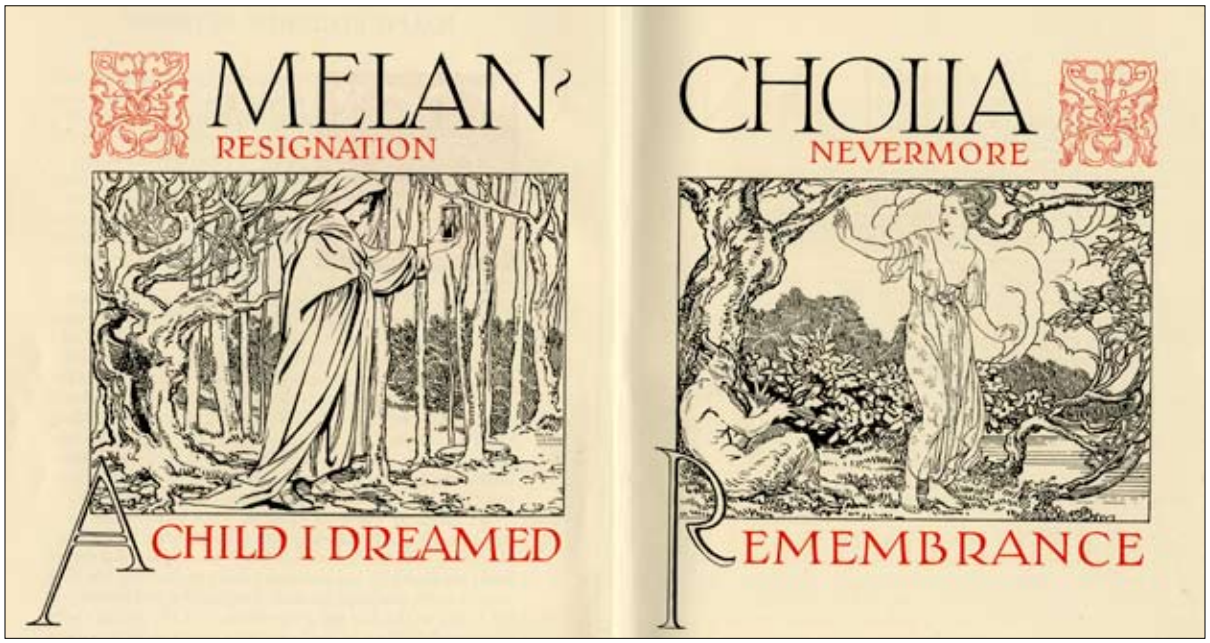
Fig. 9: Melancholia, Poems of Paul Verlaine, *1917, Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Publisher, reproduced in Some Examples of the Work of American Designers, Philadelphia: Dill & Collins Co. Paper Makers, 1918 (collection of the author).*



provided cover designs and illustrations for the Chicago monthly *Inland Printer* as well as other regionally published material. But Bradley, especially influenced by the Art Nouveau style of Aubrey Beardsley, was able to absorb his English and Continental sources and create a highly original style. At times, his illustrations were abstract and more modernist than either Seymour's or Leyendecker's designs (Fig. 10). By 1895, Bradley, now a freelance artist, acquired a national reputation such that he felt comfortable moving from his home in Geneva, Illinois, to Springfield, Massachusetts, where he established his Wayside Press.

While still a student at the Cincinnati Art Academy, Seymour had come to admire the Pre-Raphaelites (established in 1848) and William Morris (1834-1896), primary founder of the English Arts and Crafts Movement. In his autobiography, Seymour noted: "They held that Art was of the people and belonged among the people. This sounded rational.... Knowing of no better gospel for artists I became a Morris convert."[24] A number of English artists associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement also visited the United States and lectured on aspects of the arts. This included Walter Crane, T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, and Charles Ashbee, among others. In 1900, Ashbee was a guest at the Caxton Club in Chicago, where, as he later reported, the works of the Kelmscott Press were much talked about and admired by Club members.[25] In his autobiography, Seymour states that Cobden-Sanderson, associate of William Morris and founder of Doves Press, twice visited Chicago, once calling upon Seymour in the Fine Arts Building.[26]

Seymour's association with W. Irving Way and Chauncey Williams undoubtedly augmented his interest in William Morris. During the 1890s, W. Irving Way, an ardent bibliophile, wrote a book column, "Books, Authors, and Kindred Subjects," for the *Inland Printer*. In his feature for July 1892, he noted: "Mr. William Morris' Kelmscott Press Books are so eagerly sought by collectors that the editions are sold out long in advance of issue and the prices double, treble, and even quadruple within a few months."[27]

Fig. 10: Will Bradley, "The Twins," poster for The Chap-Book, *August 1894, Chicago: Stone and Kimball (Google Images).*

In 1895 W. Irving Way, with the financial backing of Chauncey Williams, co-founded the famed, but short-lived, Chicago publishing firm Way & Williams. It closed in 1898, but before shuttering its doors, it had the unique honor of being the only American publishing company to issue a book with the Kelmscott press. Chauncey Williams befriended Seymour, giving him several fine books, including a vellum copy of the Kelmscott book *Hand and Soul* by Dante Gabriel Rossetti.[28] This was the book co-published with Way & Williams in 1895.[29]

As Gunsaulus, Williams, and other influential bibliophiles became aware of Seymour's early books around 1900, he would be associated with the ideals of William Morris. In a June 1901 article, extracted from the *Chicago American*, the *Inland Printer* quoted comments in praise of Seymour's work, made by local author and lecturer, Wallace Rice (1859-1939), presumably before a group at the Chicago Art Institute:

> [in regards to the Fine Arts Building and the people who have inhabited it] by no means the least famous of the tenants which have made this building significant is Ralph Fletcher Seymour, a young man whose art education was gained in the city. Not contented with the better trodden paths, he sought some new road in which artistic excellence might find scope, and, cheered by the successes of William Morris and his Kelmscott Press, he determined upon giving Chicago a series of books which should rank in point of excellence with those of the greatest presses of the Old World.... The crown of all this work was issued during the year just closed in the form of a strictly limited edition of Keats' *The Eve of St. Agnes*....[30]

In the same article, Rice mentions several upcoming books planned by Seymour using

> ...a font of type to be cut and cast during the present year.... In all of these the same scrupulous care manifest in the earlier productions will be exercised, the whole process of publishing being a rebuke to certain pretentious charlatans who have been leading the people

of the United States away from the true art of book designing and printing.

Rice does not identify exactly who the "pretentious charlatans" are, but his effusive comments about Seymour only served to enhance the book designer's increasingly favorable exposure in Chicago's world of publishing and printing. As the *Inland Printer* article announced, Seymour was in the midst of designing his own press fonts. The labor-intensive process of hand-lettering his books led Seymour to follow William Morris' example and create a personalized font that he could use when designing his private press publications.

For the technical task of designing fonts, Seymour approached Frederic W. Goudy (1865-1947) who had arrived in Chicago in 1890. Goudy and C. Lauron Hooper had established The Booklet Press, designing their own type for the printing of advertisement booklets. They changed the name to Camelot Press when approached by the large Chicago printing concern, Stone & Kimball, to set type for their popular *Chap-Book* publication in 1898.[31]

The process of generating fonts involved designing several sizes, in addition to grammatical notations for 26 letters of the alphabet. At least 250 characters were needed in one size of type alone to establish a complete font. In the traditional process, dozens of hardened steel punches and their flat brass matrices had to be laboriously cut and cast. Goudy apprised Seymour of the intricacies of designing type and put him into contact with his own typeface cutter, Robert Weibking. As Seymour relates, Weibking used a pantograph for transferring the type letter design onto the brass matrix instead of hand chiseling it first on the end of a steel punch. He then used precision instruments to cut the letterform down into the brass matrix.[32]

Seymour used his newly conceived typeface, which he called Alderbrink, in his book, *The Art of the People*, published in 1902. The book, a lecture presented by William Morris to the Birmingham Society of Arts in 1879, was printed by George F. McKiernan and Company of Chicago, and Seymour's new typeface was, appropriately, inspired by Morris' Golden Type.[33] The reception of Seymour's private press publications, following his shift from hand-scripted to typeface printing, continued favorably. A March 1903 review of his publications in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* column, "Among the New Books," was complimentary, referring to him as "the young printer of fine books…," and noting that his *The Art of the People* was "…an attractive volume and one of which Mr. Seymour may feel proud."[34]

From 1905 onward, Seymour used the imprint of *The Alderbrink Press* for his most ambitious private press books, including his slim, elegant 1912 volume, *The Japanese Print*, by Frank Lloyd Wright.[35] His facility as a typophile and designer attracted the attention of R. R. Donnelley and Sons, as well as other presses, and he was soon collaborating on commissioned gift books and commercial press books, some printed by Donnelley for the Indianapolis-based Bobbs-Merrill Company.


Orchestra. Friday afternoons and Saturday evenings the Auditorium Theatre was crowded with music

Fig. 11: Seymour, "The Little Room group," p. 69, Some Went This Way.

Beginning in the late 19th century, Chicago literary and social clubs brought together people of influence and learning to shape the city's cultural advances. In 1880, Mrs. Elkin Starrett, editor of the Chicago-based *Western Magazine*, had a section in the journal called "The Club." In the column, Mrs. Starrett told her readers that there was "no more significant sign of social progress than the spread of literary and social organizations known as clubs…."[36]

Mention has already been made of *The Little Room*, whose members met in the Fine Arts Building. Unlike many clubs at that time, it was not gender-restricted, and members met once a week on Friday afternoons following concerts by the Theodore Thomas Orchestra (predecessor to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra) in Louis Sullivan's magnificent Auditorium. Seymour was part of this group, and after the Friday concert, as he recalls, "nearly everyone with literary or artistic pretensions walked around the corner to the Fine Arts Building and met in Ralph Clarkson's studio on the top floor for tea."[37] It was a spacious two-story room, and Seymour's illustration captures something of the elegance, not to say pretension, of the gatherings (Fig. 11).

Among the groups to which Seymour belonged, the Caxton Club was one of the more significant. It was founded in 1895 by 15 influential bibliophiles, among them Herbert Stone, George M. Millard, Chauncey L. William, and W. Irving Way. Seymour was inducted as a member in 1902 and would remain one until his death in 1966. As he remarks in his autobiography, the Caxton Club "…has survived many vicissitudes and remains to this day the epitome of all a very good book lover's club should be…. This club has fostered the love of books and encouraged many men to keep on adding to their libraries in spite of opposition by wives, by business interests or by other influences."[38]

Like many clubs at this time, it was a male-only organization, a tradition that persisted until 1975.[39] And the male membership loved their liquor! Seymour relates that the Club's rooms were on the top floor of the Fine Arts Building (for which, in 1904, it was paying rent of $150 a month) with monthly luncheons catered from the Auditorium kitchen: "At

See ***RALPH FLETCHER SEYMOUR****, page 8*

each table members and their guests found one-fifth of Scotch, a quart of bourbon, and usually, their [*sic*] was another of rye available for those who wanted theirs strong."[40] The clubrooms were fitted with numerous bookcases with glass doors, a large Jacobean Oak table, and a continuous plush settee half circling the large room and fireplace. The club's book collection served as a reference library, and at meetings, members would show and purchase books.

Seymour served on various committees during his Club tenure, including the council and the publication committee. In 1904, he was paid $100 a month as the Club's curator of exhibitions.[41] While on the publication committee, he was commissioned to produced two Club books: James Westfall Thompson's *The Frankfort Book Fair* (1911) and Milo M. Quaife's *Development of Chicago 1674-1914* (1916).

Seymour belonged to other literary clubs, among them, the short-lived, exclusive DOFOBs, an acronym for "Damned Old Fools Over Books."[42] Membership was limited to 40, and fun, according to Seymour, was an important goal. Again, liquor was central to meetings, which often included a potent champagne punch concocted by member George Peck. Howard Pyle, whom Seymour called "the greatest graphic artist this country has so far produced," was a member and provided an illustration for the only yearbook issued by the organization.[43]

Although he does not specifically mention it, Seymour was, for a time, also a member of the Book Lovers. He was serving as its president in 1920 when it was featured in a January 1, 1921 *Chicago Daily Tribune* article titled "How the Frolicking Artists Frolic."[44] Chicago artists sponsored an elaborate New Year's Eve Ball at the Coliseum, December 31, 1920, which included staged masques and elaborately costumed participants. The Ball's theme was the evolution of arts and culture in Chicago. Seymour's "masque," entitled "The Evolution of the Book," included a procession of costumed personalities representing "living papyri" from the days of the Ptolemies, Pompeiian diptychs, an Aldine octavo, rare Groliers, and Caxtons. The article noted that while Chicago may not yet be the Athens of the world, "it seems to be progressing rapidly along the Appian Way."

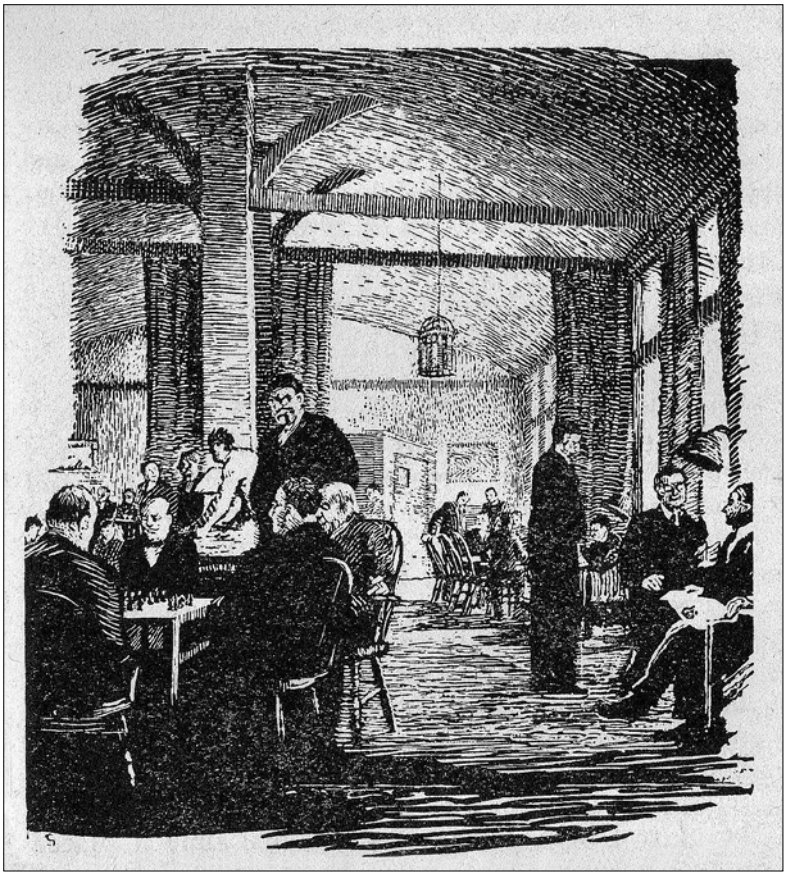


Fig. 12: Seymour, "The Cliff Dwellers," p. 139, Some Went This Way.

In 1907, with writer Hamlin Garland as prime mover, a group of 13 men applied for a charter establishing a club devoted to the promotion of the arts. At first, it was called the Attic Club, but the name was soon changed to The Cliff Dwellers, in homage to the title of Henry B. Fuller's 1893 Chicago-based novel of the same name. The members of The Little Room, Seymour among them, were invited to become members of the new club. But as Seymour relates, Henry Fuller, often an irascible and difficult personality, refused.[45]

Appropriate to its mission in promoting the arts, The Cliff Dwellers established its meeting rooms on the top floor of Daniel Burnham's 1904 Orchestra Hall (now Symphony Center), in space remodeled by Howard Shaw. Seymour designed the club's logo, the Indian motifs (in sympathy with the prehistoric cliff dwellers of the American Southwest) that appear on napkins and at one time appeared on the club's matchbooks and china. He also designed several of their publications, including a number of their yearbooks, and served as the club's president for the 1940-1941 term.[46]

As a men-only organization (Fig. 12), it was anticipated by most of the Cliff Dwellers that smoking and drinking hard liquor would be part of the social ritual. But as Seymour relates, this activity was curtailed during the first seven years that Garland was president: "…[He] vise'd everything and gave it the stamp of his moral and mental viewpoint. He supervised too much and finally became something of a nuisance to the more free spirits of the club."[47] Garland was aware that many of his friends considered him prudish: "The fact is, I was a poor club man. I did not smoke, and never used rum except as a hair tonic – and beer and tobacco were rather distasteful to me.… No doubt I was considered a dull and profitless companion.…"[48]

Finally, in 1915, Garland decided to leave Chicago for New York City. As Bernard Duffey comments, Garland tried to import an East Coast gentility into literary Chicago, but never received the recognition he felt he deserved.[49] After Garland's departure, the Cliff Dwellers commissioned Ralph Clarkson to paint his portrait and hung it in their main room in honor of Garland's early importance to the club. A dinner was planned recognizing his contributions. However, as Seymour rather humorously reports, Garland was unable to return for the occasion and a few "modifications" in the planned program were undertaken:

> An attractive and glittering bar was rigged up at one end of the room below the ex-president's portrait.… The portrait was turned face to the wall and a large sign hung across it on which was lettered "THIS PLACE HAS CHANGED HANDS."[50]

Seymour remained very fond of his Cliff Dwellers associations, and in his old age, as Wilbert Hasbrouck reports, almost always lunched at the club when he was in the city attending to business.[51]

For approximately eight years, Seymour

Fig. 13: Seymour, "Paris Wine Shop," etching, 1935 (collection of the Lake Zurich Golf Club).

taught courses in decorative illustration at the School of the Art Institute. Existing records indicate that Seymour was on the Institute's staff between 1907 and 1918.[52] While there, he was given a year's paid sabbatical to study art in France. Based on information from the Institute's *Bulletins*, his 12-month leave began in the late summer or early fall of 1912 and ended around September or early October of 1913.[53]

While he was able to touch base with such notables as Ezra Pound, Robert Frost and Upton Sinclair, among others – all either living in Europe or traveling there coincidental with Seymour's visit – Seymour used his time in France to experience the contemporary art scene and learn the art of etching. Having seldom come across an arts-related organization he did not join, Seymour had been one of the original members of the Chicago Society of Etchers, founded by Bertha E. Jaques (1863-1941) in 1910. But as he states, he had not bothered to learn the printmaking process until his trip to France.[54]

After establishing residency in the artsy Latin Quarter of Paris, Seymour sought out printmakers Otto Schneider and William Auerbach Levy, who "adopted" him and taught him the intricacies of etching. By the end of his sabbatical, Seymour was an accomplished printmaker. A group of 15 or 20 of his etchings completed in Europe was exhibited in the Art Institute's Print Room in December of 1913, and proclaimed by Harriet Monroe as demonstrating a "promising talent."[55] His etchings would continue to receive considerable attention during the 1920s and 30s. His print *Lake Michigan Shore Bluff* was included in the *Exposition de la Gravure Moderne Americaine* at Paris' Bibliotheque Nationale during the summer of 1928, and he won first prize for his print, *Paris – Wine Shop*, at the annual exhibition of the Chicago Society of Etchers held in the Fine Arts Building's Roullier Gallery in 1935 (Fig. 13).[56]

While a number of private collectors and various institutions, including the Art Institute of Chicago, acquired Seymour's etchings, one of the largest groups of his prints can be found today in one of Seymour's favorite organizations, the exclusive Lake Zurich Golf Club, claimed by the organization to be the oldest golf club in the Midwest. Along with numerous drawings, paintings, and project studies, several dozen framed etchings wrap around the hall walls on the clubhouse's second floor, a gift by the artist towards the latter part of his career. Tacked to the walls of the large third floor attic of the clubhouse (which also served as an overnight dormitory for members and guests), are a number of painted studies on paper by Seymour for what was to be a colorful pool-floor mosaic (Figs. 14 and 15). Seymour also designed the club's charming bookplate, emulating a 16th century German print, showing the club's patron saint, Barnabas, in a small library enclave with a set of golf clubs leaning against a table and the club's free-range chickens in the foreground (Fig. 16, p. 10).

These and many other Seymour artifacts scattered about the main building are evidence not only of the designer's artistic talents outside of his graphic design work, but are testaments to the intimate part played by the club's rustic and homey quarters. The wonderful yesteryear flavor emanating from the grounds and buildings is apparent, for instance, in the wood-paneled clubhouse dining room, filled with memorabilia of past and present associations (Fig. 17, p. 11).

See ***RALPH FLETCHER SEYMOUR****, page 10*

Fig.14, 15: Seymour, Studies for Pool Mosaics (collection of the Lake Zurich Golf Club).

Chronological verification of Seymour's membership in the Lake Zurich Golf Club remains unexplored in the organization's numerous boxes of correspondence and other documents awaiting systematic study.[57] Seymour was not a founding member of the club. Charles B. Wood established the nine-hole course in 1895 with a group of friends on 83 acres of land overlooking Lake Zurich. In his 1965 conversations with Wilbert Hasbrouck, Seymour had suggested his founding membership, linking his association with the golf club's origins to his early memberships in such organizations as the Cliff Dwellers: "Yes, I'm the only surviving founder of everything I belong to."[58] If Seymour was in the Chicago area as early as 1895, he was a struggling apprentice or designer in J. Manz Engraving Company. But one can be forgiving. After all, Seymour was nearly 90 years old when recalling these long-past early events, and he had belonged, or still had membership in, so many Chicago area professional and social groups at the time.

For most of its existence, the male-only membership in the Lake Zurich Golf Club was restricted to between 29 and 34 individuals. Other than a live-in couple who looked after general maintenance and food preparation, upkeep and other club responsibilities were shared by the small membership. A long-term club policy has been "conservative management." Scholarly study of the organization's history and past membership based on an examination of existing documents has not been a club priority, other than a centennial booklet. Early membership was small and dominated by academics from the University of Chicago and Rush Medical College. Around 1914, with the economic viability of the club hurting, it was decided to infuse the membership with a wider circle of gentry and it may have been during these next few years that Seymour acquired membership.

Certainly, Seymour generously offered his artistic talents on behalf of the Lake Zurich Golf Club, as he did for the Caxton Club and the Cliff Dwellers. He designed a wood-arched entrance to the grounds (which no longer exists), created carved decorative totem-like images – some evidently intended for the variously named holes on the course – designed the bookplate, and did various drawings of members wearing their distinctive Scottish-inspired red coats (Fig. 18).[59]

It is puzzling that Seymour fails to mention the Lake Zurich Golf Club in his 1945 autobiography. The club was obviously dear to his heart, and it is notable that he spent his final night celebrating New Year's Eve at a club party in Lake Zurich. He was struck and killed by a car as he was walking home from the club. He had turned down several offers of rides because "it was a beautiful, cold, moonlit winter's night," and hiking a few miles would be good for him.[60] One of his acquaintances at the Cliff Dwellers noted a bit later: "If Ralph could have chosen a way to go, what better could he have asked then to go quickly after a great New Year's Eve party, a little bit tipsy, enjoying a lovely night in his 90th year." [61]

Fig. 16: Seymour, Bookplate for the Lake Zurich Golf Club.

At the time of his death, Seymour was an icon in the Chicago history of book design and illustration. He had literally outlived most of those who had helped him pave a path of artistic significance. Vincent Starrett, also a Caxtonian and himself an icon of literary Chicago, wrote a touching memorial upon Seymour's passing that sums up his significance:

> When the definitive cultural history of Chicago, bohemian and orthodox, is written by the right person, it will contain many pages about the late Ralph Fletcher Seymour.... He was a fine artist and a great human being. Since 1898 (*sic*), when he came to Chicago from the proverbial small town in Indiana, Ralph had been a distinguished figure, the friend of everybody worth knowing. He will be missed equally by the many who knew him only by his work in nearly all the fine arts....[62]

§§

NOTES

* I am indebted to a number of people who either provided information or directed me to useful sources in preparation of this article. Tom Joyce suggested the unexplored relationship of Seymour to the Lake Zurich Golf Club. Paul Gehl and Dan Crawford of the Newberry Library efficiently and expeditiously searched Caxton Club archives for some specific information concerning Seymour, and the staff of Northern Illinois University Libraries Special Collections was helpful in providing material. Finally, I very much appreciated the generosity of Robert E. O'Connell and Tyke Nollman, members of the Lake Zurich Golf Club, in spending several hours with me at the club and introducing me to Seymour's considerable artwork in the club's collections.

[1] In his autobiography, Seymour states that he arrived in Chicago in the autumn of 1898 (Ralph Fletcher Seymour, *Some Went This Way: a Forty Year Pilgrimage Among Artists, Bookmen and Printers*, Chicago: Ralph Fletcher Seymour Publisher, 1945, p. 19) and this date has been indiscriminately accepted. However, the date is erroneous. Seymour's first venture, designing his private press publication, John Keat's *Ode to Melancholy*, was produced in 1897, while he was employed at the J. Manz Engraving Company. It is unlikely that Seymour pursued the designing of a book so soon after his initial employment, which involved a lengthy apprenticeship. And J. C. Leyedecker was still employed at the Manz Company when Seymour began his apprenticeship. Thus, Seymour would have arrived in Chicago no later than 1896 (see note 6 below). Seymour's few references to specific dates in his autobiography are not particularly trustworthy. Tom Joyce states in his brief essay on Seymour that he arrived in Chicago in 1894, although this date seems early and currently lacks verifying data; see, Thomas J. Joyce, "Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Publisher, 1897-1963, Alderbrink Press 1905-39," in *Inland Printers: The Fine Press Movement in Chicago, 1920-45*, Chicago: The Caxton Club, 2003, p. 14.

[2] Burton Rascoe, *Before I Forget*, Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1937, pp. 315-316.

[3] Paul F. Gehl, "Introduction," in *Inland Printers: the Fine-Press Movement in Chicago, 1920-1945*, Chicago: The Caxton Club, 2003, p. 6.

[4] Hugh Dalziel Duncan, *The Rise of Chicago as a Literary Center from 1885-1920: A Sociological Essay in American Culture*, Totowa, N.J.: Bedminster Press, rev. ed., 1964, p. 69.

[5] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, p. 36.

[6] Ibid., p. 38. Seymour's account of his friendship with Leyendecker, and the chronology of both artists at J. Manz, is vague in Seymour's autobiography. If Leyendecker left J. Manz soon after Seymour went to work there, as Seymour states, the date of Leyendecker's departure for Europe, September 1896, provides a timeline for determining Seymour's latest arrival in Chicago.

[7] Laurence S. and Judy Goffman Cutler, *J. C. Leyen-*

Fig.17: Dining Room of the Lake Zurich Golf Club.

Fig.18: Seymour, Drawing of Members of the Lake Zurich Golf Club (Club Collection).

decker: American Imagist, New York: Abrams, in cooperation with the National Museum of American Illustration, 2008, p. 25. The Cutler book is the most authoritative scholarly book on Leyendecker to date, and all the information about Leyendecker in this article is based on the Cutler study. Because Leyendecker was gay, with a nearly 50-year life-partnership with Charles Beach (1886-1952) – one of the models for many of Seymour's ads beginning in late 1897 or 1898 – early serious scholarship on the artist was dampened. Research was made even more difficult by Leyendecker's request that all his surviving papers, and some artwork, be destroyed after his death by his companion.

[8] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, p. 40. Seymour states that his book was six pages in length, but in his Alderbrink Press checklist, Will Ransom indicates that the volume was 12 pages, and printed in black and red. Perhaps the additional pages were blank; see Will Ransom, *Private Presses and Their Books*, New York: Philip C. Duschnes, 1963 (1929 reprint), p. 195.

[9] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, pp. 40-41.

[10] Much of the background material I have used has been extracted from the excellent Wikipedia article on Gunsaulus.

[11] In contrast, Eugene Field, *Chicago Daily News* columnist and writer, occupied the "Sinner's Corner" in the same store. See Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, p. 41.

[12] Ibid., p. 44.

[13] Ibid., p. 45.

[14] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 25, 1899, p. 11.

[15] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, p. 45. According to Will Ransom's Alderbrink checklist, Seymour was charging $2.50 for the hand-made paper edition of 490 copies and $10 for the Japanese vellum edition of 20. If the entire edition sold, Seymour would have pocketed more than $1400 before expenses, a considerable sum of money for a working man at the turn of the 20th century.

[16] Charles Collins, "Bookman's Holiday," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 1, 1943, p. E10. On May 7, 1909, Harriet Brainard married Chicago poet and dramatist William Vaughn Moody. He died a little over a year later.

[17] Bernard Duffey, *The Chicago Renaissance in American Letters: A Critical History*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1972 (originally published 1956), p. 190. Duffey notes that *The Little Room* group was established sometime between 1892 and 1896. Its last recorded meeting was January 3, 1931, according to the organization's papers in the Newberry Library; see Duffey, *The Chicago Renaissance*, pp. 52-53, 55-56.

[18] After he had agreed to publish *Poetry Magazine*, Monroe told Seymour, "Give it your most careful consideration. It is my child and I have brought it to you to dress and help care for." See *Some Went This Way*, pp. 139-140.

[19] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, p. 144. Interestingly, Seymour published the book under his Alderbrink Press imprint, but Will Ransom fails to include it in his Alderbrink checklist. It remains one of the very first American novels to deal with gay love relationships, and copies of the first edition are exceedingly rare. In his autobiography, Seymour states that Fuller later asked him for the unsold copies as well as the leftover unbound sheets, and destroyed them (pp. 144-145). The Fuller archives are today in the collections of the Newberry Library. Curiously, in the book the character Cope faints at a dinner party, just as Seymour had in real life.

[20] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, pp. 45-46. Seymour received $50 for the job. This first book commission probably came about as a result of the attractiveness of Seymour's first two self-published and hand-lettered books, in particular *Three Merry Old Tales*. As Joyce notes in his essay, Seymour got this job because of his fine hand-lettering talents. See Thomas J. Joyce, "Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Publisher," p. 14.

[21] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, p. 52. Although Seymour, typically, does not mention a precise date in this passage of his autobiography, it would have been some time in 1900, based on the colophon of his next private press publication, the *Eve of St. Agnes*, published in 1900.

[22] Paul F. Gehl, "Introduction," in *Inland Printers*, p. 8. Seymour designed numerous bookplates during his career, including one for the John M. Wing Foundation of the Newberry Library and one for the Lake Zurich Golf Club. The Wing Foundation at the Newberry currently houses a large archive of bookplates by various artists, including Seymour.

[23] Among Seymour's books published by 1900, Keats' *Eve of St. Agnes* was the largest edition: 800 copies on hand-made paper by L. L. Brown, 20 on Japanese vellum, and 4 on parchment. This was Seymour's second book devoted to Keats and the next to last hand-lettered book issued by him prior to the creation of his Alderbrink type. John Keats (1795-1820) was a favorite poet of the later Victorian period and especially revered by Pre-Raphaelite poet and painter, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Keats died of consumption at the age of 25. See the exhibition catalogue, *Presenting John Keats: A Celebration of Six Million Volumes*, curated by Libby Chenault and Katherine Carlson, Rare Book Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 2008. The catalogue text is available online at www.lib.unc.edu/rbc/keats/presenting-john-keats.php.

[24] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, p. 30.

[25] William S. Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press: A History of William Morris' Typographical Adventure*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, p. 275.

[26] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, pp. 104-105.

[27] *Inland Printer*, Vol. IX (July 1892), p. 871.

[28] The colophons of both the English and American editions are dated 24 October 1895. Way & Williams issued the American edition in 300 paper and 11 vellum copies; the price of the vellum issue was $3.50; see Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press*, p. 320. W. Irving Way had traveled to London in the spring of 1895 during which time, April 29, he visited the Kelmscott Press. At this time, he persuaded Morris to jointly issue the Rossetti book; see Susan Otis Thompson, *American Book Design and William Morris*, New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1977, p. 34.

[29] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, p. 113.

[30] "The Work of Ralph Fletcher Seymour," *Inland Printer*, Vol. XXVII, No. 3 (June 1901), p. 401. Wallace Rice is remembered as the designer of Chicago's municipal flag in 1917.

[31] Thompson, *American Book Design and William Morris*, p. 127.

[32] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, p. 118. On some of the technical advances affecting book design and printing in the 19th century, see Ruari McLean, *Modern Book Design: From William Morris to the Present Day*, London: Faber and Faber, 1958, pp. 4-16.

[33] Thompson, *American Book Design and William Morris*, pp. 108-110.

[34] "Among the New Books: Mr. Seymour's Art," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 11, 1903, p. 13. After establishing his Alderbrink type, Seymour hired out his printing to such private presses as Blue Sky and Prairie, or commercial presses R. R. Donnelley and George F. McKiernan. See Kathryn Mary Camp, *Ralph Fletcher Seymour and His Alderbrink Press (Chicago,*

See ***NOTES TO SEYMOUR****, page 12*




Pictures from a party

NOTES TO SEYMOUR, *from page 11*

1898-1965): A History and Checklist of His Publications. University of Chicago: (unpublished) M.A. thesis, March 1979, p. 14.

[35] T. Joyce, "Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Publisher, 1897-1963," p. 14. As Joyce notes, the Frank Lloyd Wright book was produced in three variants. According to Seymour's recollections to Wilbert Hasbrouck, Wright "had vehemently rejected the first version, ordering them destroyed," so two additional issues were printed. Seymour, however, secretly saved a few copies of the first issue for his own files. See Wilbert R. Hasbrouck, "Ralph Fletcher Seymour, As Remembered by a Long-Time Friend," *Caxtonian*, Vol. VI, No. 10 (October 1998), p. 5.

[36] Hugh Dalziel Duncan, *The Rise of Chicago as a Literary Center from 1885-1920: A Sociological Essay in American Culture*, Totowa, NJ: Bedminster Press, (1948) rev. ed., 1964, pp. 49-50.

[37] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, p. 69. As Hamlin Garland notes, the name "*Little Room*" was suggested by Madelaine Yale Wynne's story of an intermittently vanishing chamber in an old New England homestead. See Hamlin Garland, *A Daughter of the Middle Border*, New York: Macmillan, 1921, p. 5.

[38] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, p. 157. In 1951, Seymour was given the distinction of being named an Honorary Member.

[39] See Dan Crawford's article, "Find the Women: The Untold Story of How Women Came to Join the Caxton Club," *Caxtonian*, Vol. XVIII, No. 8 (August 2010), pp. 1-2.

[40] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, p. 158.

[41] This information comes from a ledger in the club's Newberry Library archives, May 21, 1904; see the *Caxtonian*, Vol. XIII, No. 3 (March 2005), p. 6, note 2.

[42] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, p. 159.

[43] Ibid., p. 159.

[44] "How the Frolicking Artists Frolic," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 1, 1921, p. 3.

[45] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, pp. 160-161. Seymour gives 1909 as the founding year for the Cliff Dwellers, but this is incorrect. In 1996, the club moved from its original home in Symphony Center to its current home in the office building next door on the corner of Michigan Avenue and Adams.

[46] This information comes from two sources: the official Cliff Dweller's website, www.cliff-chicago.org, and Kathryn M. Camp, *Ralph Fletcher Seymour and His Alderbrink Press*, p. 22. According to Seymour, the Cliff Dwellers met temporarily in the nearby Lafayette Hotel until space in Orchestra Hall was readied.

[47] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, p. 161.

[48] Duncan, *The Rise of Chicago as a Literary Center*, p. 104, quoted from Garland, *A Daughter of the Middle Border*, New York: Macmillan, 1921.

[49] Duffey, *The Chicago Renaissance in American Letters*, p. 88. As early as 1895, Garland lamented in his notebooks the vanity of "this bitter war of Realists and














Photographs by Robert McCamant

Association Copy Gala, 18 March, 2011

Romanticists"; Duffey, pp. 86-87.

[50] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, p. 162.

[51] Wilbert R. Hasbrouck, "Ralph Fletcher Seymour, As Remembered by a Long-Time Friend," pp. 6-7.

[52] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, pp. 169-170. Seymour's specific tenure at the Institute is based on Kathryn Camp's research and interviews, *Ralph Fletcher Seymour and His Alderbrink Press*, p. 26. The courses he taught were in the "illustration department," initiated, as Seymour states, when "commercial art was beginning to be thought of as worth teaching."

[53] In the Institute's *Bulletin*, Vol. VI, No. 4 (April 1913), p. 56, Seymour is listed as one of the "officers" abroad. The *Bulletin*, Vol. VII, No. 2 (October 1913), p. 30, states that Seymour "…of the illustration department" and other staff members "return from periods of travel and study in Europe." According to Seymour (p. 172), it was through the influence of Newton Carpenter, the Art Institute's secretary, that he received the sabbatical.

[54] Seymour, *Some Went This Way*, pp. 152-153, 179. Seymour consistently misspells Jaques as "Jacques."

[55] Harriet Monroe, "An Early Rembrandt Masterpiece," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Dec. 28, 1913, p. G6. While Monroe's column features a brief essay on a Rembrandt painting on exhibit at the Art Institute, she also includes information about other displayed artwork.

[56] "R. F. Seymour Gets Prize of Etcher Society," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 8, 1935, p. 15. According to the article, there were 68 entries, and Seymour received $500 for First Prize. As winner, Seymour's etching was published as a gift that year for the society's associate members.

[57] Outside of conversations with two members during my visit to the club, information on the organization comes from a booklet published on the club's 100-year anniversary: Hooper White Scrivener, *Lake Zurich Golf Club, 1895-1995: The First 100 Years*. A number of the founders and notable members are mentioned in the booklet; however, R. F. Seymour's name is only specifically listed with the reproductions of one of his paintings and carved images of a wooden owl and a chipmunk in the club's collection.

[58] Wilbert R. Hasbrouck, "Ralph Fletcher Seymour, As Remembered by a Long-Time Friend," p. 7.

[59] The club's nine-hole course was laid out by James B. Foulis, a member of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews in Scotland. In homage to the early foundations of golf in Scotland, the membership of the Lake Zurich Club adopted the tradition of wearing distinctive red coats for special occasions.

[60] Hasbrouck, "Ralph Fletcher Seymour, As Remembered by a Long-Time Friend," p. 7.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Vincent Starrett, "Books Alive: A Glimpse of Early Chicago," *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 23, 1966, p. M9.

Book and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by Robert McCamant
(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: "Richard Morris Hunt and the American Renaissance in Architecture" (features Hunt's drawings of mansions for Chicago magnates), Gallery 24 through May 15. "Color and Rhythm: Henri Matisse's Jazz," (often considered the pinnacle of *livres d'artistes*) Ryerson & Burnham Libraries, through May 9.

Chicago Architecture Foundation, 224 South Michigan, Chicago, 312-922-3432: "Chicago Model City" (unique models of downtown, of the Eisenhower expressway from 1950, more.) Atrium Gallery, ongoing.

Chicago Botanic Garden, Lenhardt Library, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-8202: "Plants in Print: The Age of Botanical Discovery" (the close relationship between plant discovery and printed communication, with 34 important works published over four centuries), through June 5. Gallery talk at 11 a.m. on Saturday, May 7.

Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington Street, Chicago, 312-744-6630: "Sears at the Center: New Work by Donald Fels" (collages from historic Sears catalogs), through June 26. "Movie Mojo: Hand-Painted Posters from Ghana" (inspired by movies, created by a wide variety of artists), through September 18.

Chicago Botanic Garden: Plants in Print
Robert Warner (c. 1815-1896) The orchid album, London, 1882

Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State Street, Chicago, 312-747-4300: "Chicago Artists' Archive: Hidden Pages Brought To Light" (artist Anne Hayden Stevens has been reading the Chicago Artists' Archive, and has selected documents to display, highlighting themes such as art leagues, art worlds, photographers, artistic firsts, and lovely artifacts; every two weeks a new set of documents will be presented), Flat Exhibit Case, Eighth Floor, through July 8.

Columbia College Center for the Book and Paper Arts, 1104 S. Wabash, Chicago, 312-369-6630. "MFA Thesis Show" (including work by Caxton scholarship winner Daniel Mellis), through May 20.

DuSable Museum of African American History, 740 East 56th Place, Chicago, 773-947-0600: "For all the World to See: Visual Culture and the struggle for Civil Rights" (the historical role played by visual images in shaping, influencing, and transforming the fight for civil rights), through May 16.

Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society, 361 E. Westminster Avenue, Lake Forest, 847-234-5253: "Uncanny, Unabridged, Unforgettable: 150 Years of Lake Forest" (honors Lake Forest's Sesquicentennial), through December 29.

Loyola University Museum of Art, 820 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-915-7600: "After the Flood: Eklavya Prasad's Photographs of Life in North Bihar, India" through July 31.

Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, 312-280-2660: "MCA DNA: Thomas Ruff" (early large-scale portraits of German citizens, studies of modernist architecture, digitally modified pornographic images), through June 19; "Jim Nutt: Coming Into Character" (the first major exhibit of his work in 10 years), through May 29.

Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, 312-943-9090: "Exploration: The 25th Annual Juried Exhibition of the Chicago Calligraphy Collective" and "Calligraphic Purchase Prize Winners at the Newberry Library," both through June 25. "Illuminated Manuscripts and Printed Books: French Renaissance Gems of the Newberry," Spotlight Exhibition Series, R. R. Donnelley Gallery, through May 28.

Northern Illinois University Art Museum, NIU Altgeld Hall, DeKalb: "Wassily Kandinsky: Klänge," ("Synesthetete" Kandinsky explored sounds [Klänge] through both word in poetry and image in woodcut to create an intimate book; here presented with both sides of the pages individually framed) through May 14.

Northwestern University, Charles Deering Library, 1970 Campus Drive, Evanston, 847-491-7658: "Who is the journalist?" (using books and rare materials from the Library's collections to explore an array of journalistic identities and incarnations), main library, through September 2. "René Binet and Ernst Haeckel's Collaboration: Magical Naturalism and Architectural Ornament" (Binet's work parallels the broader Art Nouveau style but is unique in its geometric developments taking off from Haeckel's studies of biological morphology), Special Collections through October 28.

University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library, 1100 East 57th Street, Chicago, 773-702-8705: "Firmness, Commodity, and Delight: Architecture in Special Collections" (drawing on a wide range of rare books, manuscripts, archives, and graphic materials elucidating the history of architectural practice, the exhibit celebrates the opening of the new Special Collections Research Center Exhibition Gallery and the completion of construction of the Joe and Rika Mansueto Library), Special Collections Research Center Exhibition Gallery, May 9-July 29.

University of Illinois at Chicago, Richard Daley Library Special Collections, 801 S. Morgan St., Chicago, 312-996-2742: "Illustrated Architecture Books: Highlights from 500 Years of Theory and Practice" (rare illustrated books from the UIC Burnham and Hammond Collection, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and loans from the private library of Jeffrey Jahns.), Room 3-330, through June 30.

For complete information on events and exhibits of the Festival of the Architecture Book, see www.1511-2011.org.

Until a replacement exhibit editor is found, please send your listings to bmccamant@quarterfold.com, or call 312-329-1414 x 11.

Caxtonians Collect: Greg Prickman

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

I caught up with Greg after the Symposium on March 19. Though he joined the Club while a resident Chicagoan, he now hails from Iowa City, so he doesn't make it to many events. But the one-two punch of gala and symposium was worth the trip.

He joined back when he worked at the Chicago Public Library, in 1999. He suspects that John Chalmers nominated him, but isn't certain, because others at CPL were Caxton members as well. At the time, he was archivist for the Harold Washington papers. He finished organizing them and redid the Washington exhibit, which he was pleased to note is still essentially as he left it.

Subsequently, he was rare books librarian at CPL. While in Chicago, he met his wife Rachel, who wanted to pursue graduate studies in St. Louis. So the two packed up and moved there in August of 2001. "It's hard to recall what a scary time September 2001 was in the United States," he says. "Nobody knew what the future would hold, and it was a difficult time to be looking for a job."

Photograph by Robert McCamant

As it turned out, Greg found a job as archivist for a St. Louis-based health care system, SSM Healthcare. "I wasn't sure it was exactly what I wanted to do," he admits. "But in the end it was an excellent experience. They were starting their first archive for hospitals in four states. I would travel around to hospitals and try to collect materials. Part of it was talking people into turning things over to a central office, and another part was envisioning how to make a useful archive out of what was available. I wouldn't want to do it forever, but it taught me a lot."

Once Rachel had her master's, it made sense to consider a move. They settled on Madison, where Greg worked in the History of Medicine Collection at the Ebling Health Sciences Library of the University of Wisconsin. Rachel found work at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. They had their first child, daughter Ava, while there as well.

Greg kept his ear to the ground, however, and heard that a position was becoming available in Special Collections at the University of Iowa. He secured it five years ago, and they moved. "Actually, Iowa City is a wonderful place to raise a family, too," he says. He was hired as Special Collections Librarian, but soon moved up to being Assistant Head of Special Collections & University Archives. A year ago, son Theodore appeared, giving stay-at-home mom Rachel plenty to do.

"There are problems at the University of Iowa, sure," he says. "There are everywhere. But the library is poised for the future pretty well, and we have a degree of flexibility that allows us to try new things." Though there are budget cutbacks in all areas, the library has held its own. He's had the good fortune to work on a number of projects, involving multiple departments, which try to flesh out the way libraries will be in the future.

"One really interesting project we have going is working with our Civil War letters and diaries. We have installed an exhibition to commemorate the Sesquicentennial, but beyond that we have digitized all of our Civil War-era letters and diaries. Now that we have finished that project, we are launching a site that will allow any interested volunteer to transcribe these documents from home. It seems to me a sensible answer to how libraries will work in the future. If what you need is pure text, you can get it conveniently online. But if you need a richer experience, you can come to Special Collections and pore over the documents themselves."

He goes farther: "What we're doing in Special Collections may well be the model of how libraries work in the future. Most reference needs from libraries can be handled electronically, but people in Special Collections are uniquely qualified to evaluate when a book is transmitting more than the words of its text. What was being discussed here at the association copy symposium is a good example."

Another interesting thing he has worked on is the establishment of a book festival in Iowa City. The first one was held in 2009 to celebrate the library acquiring its 5-millionth volume. Now it has become an annual event, with readings by authors at the University Library and a wide variety of businesses throughout the town. "It's not hard to find authors who are willing to read from their books in Iowa City," Prickman jokes, alluding to the many who come to town for the Writer's Workshop.

And everyone on the Special Collections staff participates in the daily visits by students and faculty to use the collection. "It speaks well of how well we're integrated into the instructional program that we almost never have time to go out and look for faculty to bring in classes. We're kept busy satisfying the requests they come up with," he concludes.

Like many a Caxtonian, Prickman has books among his earliest memories. His father read to the family faithfully, including into his adolescence. "I remember he read us *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James. That's a scary book when it's read aloud." He also remembers being fascinated by T.S. Elliott, including an infatuation with "The Waste Land" at age 13.

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Luncheon: Friday, May 13, 2011, Union League Club
Paul Saenger
The Best of the Newberry Library's Exciting Recent Acquisitions by the George A. Poole Curator of Rare Books and Collection Development Librarian

Caxtonian Paul Saenger's well-illustrated talk will include highlights of the hidden treasures donated by the McCormick Theological Seminary, the Catholic Theological Union, and six other collections of the Chicago area that are currently being catalogued as part of the Sister Ann Ida Gannon Initiative. He will also relate what happened when a very distinguished Caxtonian spotted a seventeenth-century book for sale on e-Bay that appeared to have been bound with an earlier manuscript. Finally, he will talk about the process by which an item is chosen for purchase and bring us up to date on the unique joint-acquisition program he developed with nine mid-America institutions. Through this program the Library recently acquired, in conjunction with the University of Notre Dame, a volume of heretical texts of which most other copies were burned by order of the Catholic Church.

Dinner: Wednesday, May 18, 2011, Cliff Dwellers
Dennis McClendon
Cartographic Tales of Chicago History

Historic maps of Chicago tell all kinds of intriguing stories about the city's origins and development: vanished creeks and woods, big projects never accomplished, forgotten ethnic groups and neighborhoods, mysterious subdivisions, abandoned industrial areas, vice districts and world's fairs, ghosts of railroad stations and streetcar lines and freight tunnels, reminders of a constantly changing Loop. Dennis McClendon, a Chicago geographer and historian who produced the maps for the Encyclopedia of Chicago, will show the interesting stories seen in various corners of three dozen maps from Chicago's past.

The May luncheon 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. Details of the May dinner: it will take place at Cliff Dwellers, 200 S. Michigan, 22nd floor. Timing: spirits at 5:00, dinner at 6:00, program at 7:30. Dinner is $48, drinks are $5 to $9. $10 parking, after 4 pm, at the garage on the SE corner of Jackson & Wabash – enter just south of Potbelly on Wabash. For reservations call 312-255-3710 or use the Caxton web site; ***reservations are needed by noon Tuesday for the Friday luncheon, and by noon Friday for the Wednesday dinner.***

Beyond May...

JUNE LUNCHEON

We will meet Friday, June 10 at the Union League Club. John Metoyer, Vice President/Academic Affairs at Harold Washington College, will speak on his artist book, *Blood Migration*, imagined and published by 21st Editions and containing John's poetry and photographs. In this book, he uses a wide range of 19th-century photographic techniques.

JUNE DINNER

Wednesday, June 15 at the Cliff Dwellers, Alan Fern will share his recollections of some of the influential figures of twentieth-century typography, including Stanley Morison, Beatrice Warde, Berthold Wolpe, Hans Schmoller, John Dreyfus, and Jan van Krimpen. Fern taught at the University of Chicago from 1952 to 1961, and met many of these luminaries through friends here.