

The Lakeside Classics

A Christmas Gift that Keeps on Coming

Susan M. Levy

It is especially fitting that the *Caxtonian* feature Lakeside Classics in December because this month R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company publishes the 110th edition of the series. It is a holiday gift for employees, retirees, customers, and friends that has been produced annually since 1903.

It all started with a set of razors. At least that's the company folklore. In 1902, T.E. Donnelley, son of the founder and then president of the company, received a set of straight razors as a gift from his friend H.C. "Harry" Atkins, president of his family's manufacturing firm in Indianapolis. By all reports, it was an elegant gift. There were seven razors, each with a day of the week engraved on one side and T.E.'s name on the reverse. But the special appeal was that the blades were a product directly associated with the donor's business, not a frivolous, unrelated item. T.E. thought it would be a fine thing if his company could provide something similar.

The project took root and by Christmas, 1903, the first Lakeside Classic, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, had been selected, designed, edited, printed, and was ready to ship. The basic elements and characteristics of this first volume were so well chosen that they have set the pattern for over one hundred years.

☛ The small-size format was intended for convenience, to fit in a man's pocket or a lady's reticule. The book was bound in a plain cloth cover. It was stamped, in real gold that also adorned the top-edge, with the R.R. Donnelley Indianhead logo that had been created by Chicagoan Joseph Leyendecker.

☛ The subject matter was also seminal – an autobiography or first-person narrative of

American history – although it would be another eight years before T.E. realized that he had hit it right this first time.

☛ It showcased the company's capabilities by being produced, as much as possible, in-house using state of the art commercial equipment.

☛ Distribution included employees, friends, and patrons of the company.

☛ Perhaps most important, it opened with a personal note from the company's management, a feature that after 1906 was called "The Publishers' Preface." These prefaces are a valuable source of information about the history of the Lakeside Classics and the history of R.R. Donnelley.

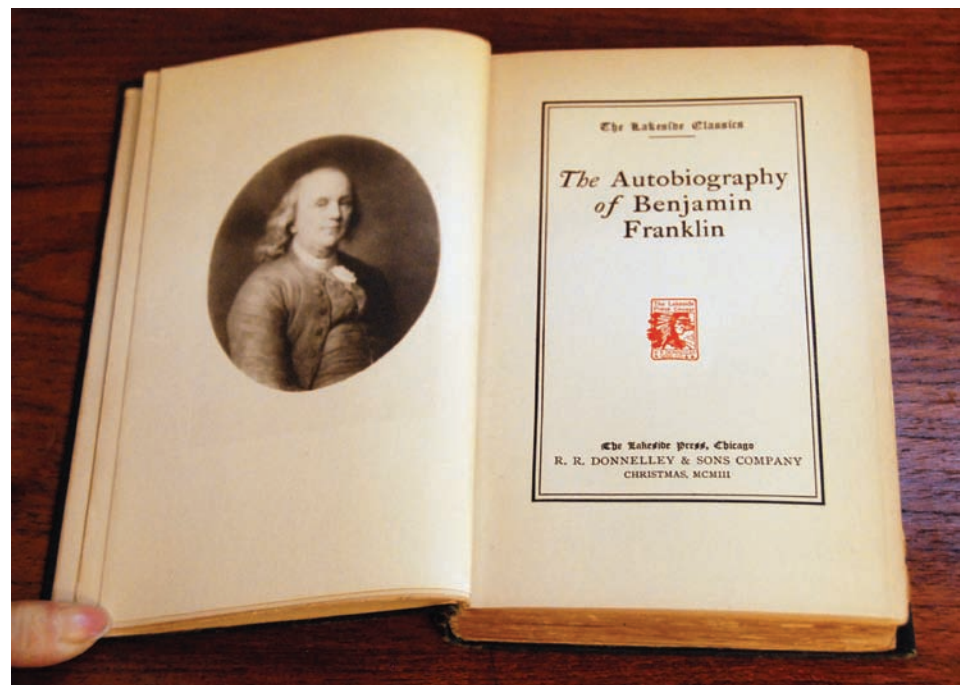
The very first preface, written by T.E. (as were all prefaces until his death in 1955), defines the purpose of the volume and the philosophy of the company. It is worth noting that the Kelmscott Chaucer had been issued only seven years earlier and the first volume of the Doves Press Bible came out that very year.

The aim of this little series is not to add another collection of English Classics to the

many already published, but to present to the friends and patrons of an old-established Press an occasional book of the best English prose, representing in its mechanical details the ideas of that Press in workaday book-making. And who could more happily act as the standard-bearer of such ideas than Benjamin Franklin, the patron-saint of American printers, who, in his wide experience showed the true spirit of progressiveness, tempered with sterling common sense?

This little volume goes forth as a modest protest against the present craze for so-called "Editions de Luxe" – books printed in unreadable type, on hand-made paper, on hand-presses, and sold at prices prohibitory to all except the rich. Such books may have their places in the collection of the dilettante, or on the shelves of those who affect a love for fine books, and thus attempt to convey an impression of literary culture. But to fulfill its grand mission of giving and preserving to the world the great thoughts of men, a book must be within reach of that world. To return in the name of art to the cost and elaborate antique

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Susan Levy has been Executive Editor of the *Lakeside Classics* since 1995. This essay is adapted from a talk given to a Caxton luncheon on February 10 of this year.



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methods of performing by hand what can be cheaply and better performed by machines seems a crime against progress.

In opposition to these attempts, this volume stands for the machine-made book. Its paper, its type-setting, its presswork, and its binding all are the product of the very latest labor-saving machines. It aims to be readable rather than eccentric, plain rather than decorative, tasteful rather than unique, useful rather than useless....

In the production of this book, the Lakeside Press takes pride, for with the exception of the paper it is entirely a product of the Press, an accomplishment possible in no other printing establishment in America. . . . In fact, the entire production—type-setting, electrotyping, binding, and even the ink-making—was made possible by the complete facilities of the plant.

If, in a modest way, this volume conveys the idea that machine-made books are not a crime against art, and that books may be plain but good, and good though not costly, its mission has been accomplished. (1903)

Ironically, the one thing that was not planned was the establishment of a tradition.

The Publishers did not plan to establish a sustained series issued annually, but thought that they would occasionally add to the series as a book or manuscript of unusual interest, and not readily obtainable by the public, presented itself.

But the first volume was received so enthusiastically that it was followed by another the next Christmas, and thus was established the custom of the Publishers of sending to their friends and patrons their Yuletide felicitations each season in the form of a volume of the Lakeside Classics. (1917)

At the end of the first twenty-five years, T.E. felt it necessary to contemplate changes. First, there would be no material change in book's size or format for:

To change the size and character of each year's volume, in order that we might present to our readers the very latest fashion of the printed book, is not the purpose of these volumes. Such examples would be of momentary interest and would perhaps make a record of the changes of fashion in good bookmaking. But such books are often unhandy to read, inconvenient on the bookshelf, and would show in their formats no common relationship. (1928)

He did, however, update the interior of the book, changing the typeface and the page layout to be more readable and more contemporary.

The most noticeable change, the appearance of color, was made not to improve the appearance, he

said, "but ... to mark off the series of the first twenty-five volumes which was completed last year." (1928) He also set the tradition of redesigning the logo with each series. But all would retain the same basic elements: the noble Indian in full, feathered headdress, the blockhouse of Fort Dearborn, and the waves of Lake Michigan.

T.E. did hedge on the life of the series:

To promise that the next quarter of a century will see completed another series of twenty-five volumes is a commitment the publishers are loath to undertake... but if the traditions of any press in America will continue for this length of time, we believe those of the Lakeside Press will. (1928)

The tradition did continue. The Lakeside Classics, the only work still published by R.R. Donnelley under the Lakeside Press imprint, is now the longest-running, continuous series of books in America and possibly the world.

It is a long-standing myth that the books will lose value if they are taken out of their shrink-wrap, like a car depreciating the moment it is driven off the dealer's lot. Thus many only see the exterior and never explore the contents.

The subject matter of the books is, however, just as important and distinguishing a characteristic as the physical aspect. Since the initial offering was *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, it is easy to assume that T.E. had a vision for the subject matter from the start. This is not true. It took another seven years in the wilderness before he actually hit upon the right formula.

From 1904 through 1910, with the exception of William Penn's *Fruits of Solitude* (1906), the Classics were compilations of speeches — *The Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents* (1904-05) and four volumes of *Memorable American Speeches* (1907-10). But then, in 1911, with the publication of *The Autobiography of Gurdon Staltonstall Hubbard*, the series finally found its voice.

The Hubbard Autobiography brought such enthusiastic praise from its readers that the publishers realized that by reprinting titles containing the personal relations of our frontiersmen and early settlers, they would add greatly to the interest of the series and would be making a real contribution towards a wider knowledge of the early history of the West. (1935)

It is interesting to see the series expand geographically and chronologically. At first it stayed in the mid-nineteenth century, first in Chicago with four volumes of *Reminiscences* (1912-15), then for five years in Illinois, including the first book by a Native American, *The Life of Black Hawk* (1917) and the first by a woman, *A Woman's Story of Pioneer Illinois* (1919). In 1921, the series took a big leap back in time

to the eighteenth century and west and north in geography with the publication of *Alexander Henry's Travels and Adventures in the Years 1760-76*. After that anything became fair game. T.E., like Emerson, didn't feel constrained by foolish consistency.

The publishers of The Lakeside Classics have long disclaimed consistency in the content of these volumes either as to time or subject matter. They have acquired the habit of sauntering through the whole field of American history, trying to find some little-known, personal narrative of historical interest which they believe is told in a manner that gives an insight into the spirit of the event and of the times. When they find such a narrative, they make bold to publish it, even if it appears out of sequence. (1930)

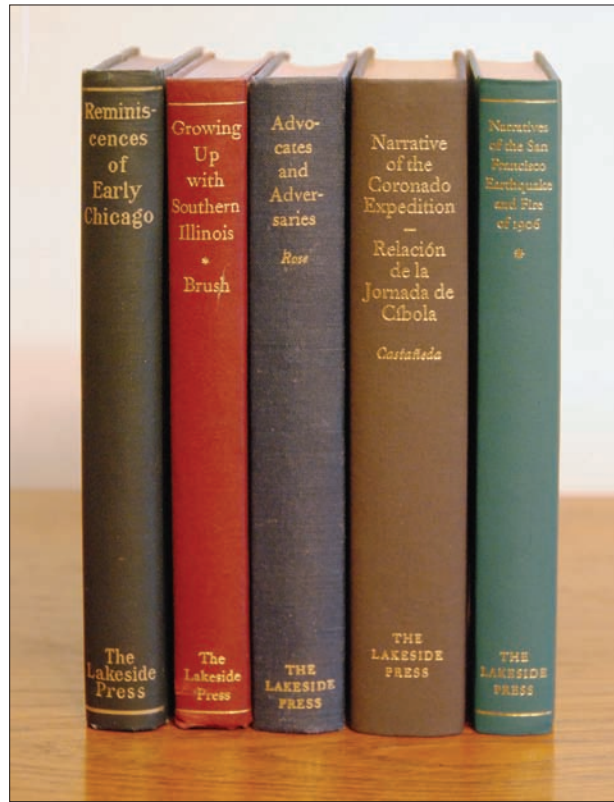
Nonetheless, over eighty years the majority of the books were about the American frontier and its exploration, expansion, settlement, and conflicts. A study done in 1952 of the first fifty books deemed eight general interest, twenty-one Middle West and twenty West. By the 1990s it had become known as a Western Americana series.

It was time to start looking for different topics. *My Life East and West* (1994) by a cowboy movie actor was a transition. The following year of *The Logbook of the Captain's Clerk* (1995) – about Commodore Perry's voyage into Japan – truly changed the direction of the series.

Today the basic criteria remain the same as those used for the past one hundred years: a first-person narrative, either about America or by an American abroad; a text little known or not readily available to the average reader. And, of course, a really good yarn.

But now the editor looks for books that reflect contemporary R.R. Donnelley—a global company, a diverse company, an urban and a rural company, a modern company with a deep respect for history.

Since 1996, the series has travelled to Canada, Greenland, Russia, France, England, the West Indies, Mexico, Puerto Rico, North Africa, the Pacific Ocean, Australia, New Zealand, and even Antarctica. It has published two titles by African Americans, one by an Hispanic, one by a Native American, and four by women. It has visited five centuries of American history including six volumes set in the twentieth century (which had been hardly



Binding colors have changed every 25 years, TOP; color illustration was first used in 1988.

touched before).

Searching for titles can be stressful. Editors can take comfort in T.E.'s sentiments on finding THE BOOK:

Yet somehow, with the aid of catalogues of book sales and dealers in old books, with suggestions from historians, collectors, the editor, and the readers themselves, and by constant reference to his own card catalogue built up during a number of years, the writer after weeks and months of reading, finally decides upon a title. . . . Then, like the small boy's joy when freed from the drudgery of school by the first day of summer vacation, the writer can, with a delicious feeling of irresponsibility, again dally with other reading and enjoy the pleasant, social intercourse of quiet evenings. (1935)

T.E.'s card catalog still exists but has not proved very useful since most of the titles are

for the types of frontier subjects no longer sought. Rather, a lot of time is spent reading bibliographies, asking anyone who expresses interest in the series to make suggestions, and scanning the shelves at the University of Chicago's Regenstein Library.

Titles have actually been found using all three of these methods. Nathaniel Philbrick's *Sea of Glory* about the U.S. Naval Exploring Expedition came in as a printing sample. Its bibliography led to *Twenty Years Before the Mast* (2006).

Caxtonians have been the best source of personal referrals. At a Revels in the late 1990s, Celia Hilliard mentioned a book she had recently found in a second-hand bookshop by Ulysses S. Grant's granddaughter who married a Russian prince. This led to *Princess Cantacuzene and Revolutionary Days* (1999). Last year, John Chalmers suggested the intrepid explorer and writer Isabella Bird. The 2012 Classics is her first book, *The*

Englishwoman in America.

The Regenstein's collections are far and away the most important Lakeside Classics resource. The university is to be commended on its decision not to ship little-used books to off-campus storage but to keep everything on-campus and the monographs on the open shelves for browsing.

Arctic Explorations (1996) was waiting to be found on a bottom shelf of B level. The next year, Jim Donnelley mentioned that little had been done on World War I. Again, assiduous shelf reading led to the discovery of *Fighting the Flying Circus* (1997). For a long time a book on woman's suffrage was on the wanted list. A bibliography led to the stacks. The book listed proved poorly written, but sitting next to it was Doris Stevens' *Jailed for Freedom* (2008).

One more library story: a particular translation of Pedro de Castañeda's *Narrative of the Coronado Expedition* (2002) was chosen. The old sign-out card in the back pocket of the Chicago Public Library's copy showed it was checked out in the 1940s by R.R. Donnelley. T.E. had considered the book and rejected it. Sixty years later it became the Centennial Edition.

Of course, none of this could have been done without the "publisher" and the editors who have shepherded the books through the years. T.E. controlled the book from its inception to his death. His son, Gaylord, took See LAKESIDE CLASSICS, page 4

LAKESIDE CLASSICS, from page 3 over as the mentor of the Classics, but the role changed. Gaylord approved the titles and wrote the prefaces, but other R.R. Donnelley managers – Caxtonians all – Harold Tribolet, Harry Owens, Frank Hoell, and Susan Levy became successively the executive editor who did the actual work of finding the book, hiring the historian, editing, printing, and distributing. When Gaylord died in 1992, the responsibility moved among various senior executives, including Jim Donnelley, and now is with Doug Fitzgerald, Executive Vice President, Communications.

The historical editors provide the expertise that has earned the Classics' reputation as scholarly works. John Vance Chaney and Caroline McIlvaine, librarians respectively at the Newberry Library and the Chicago Historical Society, edited the first twelve volumes. Then in 1916, T.E. hired Milo Milton Quaife, then Superintendent of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, later librarian of the Detroit Public Library, to edit *The Life of Black Hawk*. Quaife would edit every Classic but one until his death in 1959 – forty-three volumes in all. After Quaife's death, the executive editors began selecting each year's editor based on the subject matter of the book.

Quaife and T.E. worked together as a team but they had their conflicts, too. One of the more amusing files in the R.R. Donnelley Archives, now in the University of Chicago's Special Collections Research Center, concerns a dispute between them about payment for Quaife's services.

On November 19, 1943, Donnelley wrote to Quaife:

I have before me your bill for \$500 for editorial services on the current volume of *The Lakeside Classics*. As this book was one you had already edited and the work on it was very much less than editing the other books, I had expected that there would be a reduction in your annual bill.

Quaife responded on December 2:

I bring to your service the total sum of my historical scholarship and editorial skill.... It seems to me that it is this total sum of accumulated competence which renders me useful



Thomas Elliott (T.E.) Donnelley

to you, and for which you compensate me. Why this figure should be set at \$500 instead of some other sum is, of course, less clear. Like the price a manuscript or an out-of-print book commands, it seems to represent approximately the amount you are willing to pay and I am willing to work for.

T.E. reconsidered. On December 9th, he enclosed, in an abrupt letter, a check for the entire \$500.

Minor changes in design are made at any time. In 1995, to reflect the commitment to diversity, the date line on the title page was changed from *Christmas* to *December*. In 1998, a colophon was added to consolidate the details on design and manufacture. By 2010, the list of past titles, included since 1938, had grown to eight pages. In the interests of economy, it was dropped and the reader is referred to the R.R. Donnelley Web site (www.rrdonnelley.com) for an online version.

A major redesign takes place every twenty-five years. The most recent one was for the launching of the fifth series in 2003. There were three aspects to this project.

First, the company wanted to make the hundredth volume a really outstanding book. *The Narrative of the Coronado Expedition* by

Pedro de Castañeda, the first Classic by a Spanish explorer of North America, was chosen. Since it was relatively short, it was ideal for printing a unique bilingual edition. The front cover was decorated with a special centennial stamp. The entire first signature was printed on a four-color press, enabling a double-page color frontispiece and a double-spread in the Preface showing all four series.

By the way, color was first used in the Classics in tipped-in maps. The first color illustrations were in *Children of Ol' Man River* (1988). From 1995, until the end of the fourth series, every volume had color images ganged together in a sixteen-page color signature.

The second issue was whether there should even be a fifth series. Jim Donnelley asked if the company should consider ending the Classics with the hundredth volume. A questionnaire was sent to over two hundred executives, salespeople, plant managers, and human resource managers. Sixty-

four surveys were returned. To the question "Is publication of the Classic a company tradition that is valuable to continue?" seventeen said "absolutely" and thirty-five said "yes," with only three "somewhats" and one outright "no." A majority of ninety-two percent was deemed a mandate to continue.

The third issue was design. A team of senior Book Group executives, serving as an advisory committee, met one afternoon around the table in the Gaylord Donnelley Library.

The first question on everyone's mind was, of course, what color? Black was deemed too difficult to produce. Purple was too gaudy; gray was boring. Finally, someone said, "How about starting over again with green and solving our problem for the next hundred years." A bright green was selected, in contrast with the hunter green of the first series.

Next the head of book manufacturing asked "Why is the Classic being produced on one of the oldest presses in Crawfordsville?" Answer: because it had always been done that way. The new series was moved to the most modern six-color press which has made it possible to scatter color images throughout the book as they logically fit.

Designers were asked for proposals. Bruce Campbell was selected and has been working

on the Classics ever since. His previous design of "The Library of America" series was much admired, especially the printed endpapers. Similar ones were added to the Classics using as the design element printer's ornaments selected from an old R.R. Donnelley type book and also from the binding tools donated many years ago to the Newberry Library.

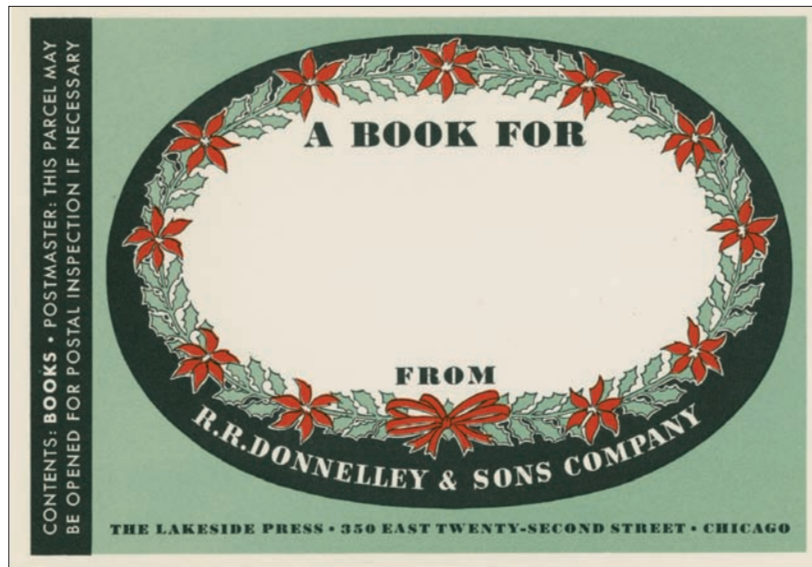
The cover design was returned to the elegance of the first two series by again gold-framing the covers, a touch that had been dropped, making the blues and browns rather drab. As always, the logo was tweaked a bit.

Internally, the typeface moved from Bulmer to Garamond, the lines framing the running heads were restored, and the paper went from a cream to a brighter white.

One very small change illustrates the attention to detail. For reasons long lost in time, the word "Publisher" was used in the plural throughout the first hundred years. Perhaps originally it was meant to include both T.E. Donnelley and his brother, Reuben H. In any case, it is now in the singular.

Distribution has always been an integral part of the Lakeside Classics project. The book was, from the beginning, a marketing device to showcase the skills of the company. Thus its presentation as a gift was very carefully planned.

For many years the books had a tissue jacket and were packaged in two-piece cartons that were then paper wrapped and tied with cloth tape. A new shipping label was designed for them annually. By 1995, attention to presentation had lapsed and the books were being shipped in plain brown kraft boxes with simple labels. In order to bring back the special gift look, the carton was redesigned with marbled paper and a bow. With the fifth



Shipping label, 1939. Presentation has always been part of the gift.

series, the box was again redesigned to match the endpapers.

T.E., an excellent salesman, was well aware of the importance of personalizing the gift. He inscribed many of the early books. Soon, however, specially prepared, individualized gift cards were enclosed. It was expected that the recipient would send an equally personal acknowledgement. And, indeed, there are many such letters in the archive. Among the earliest is a thank you letter to T.E. written in 1913, by Theodore De Vinne, president of the De Vinne Press.

Eventually, the insertion of these cards was dropped, possibly when the packaging moved to sealed cartons. Letters were sent from the company donor to inform the recipient that a book would soon be sent under separate cover. In the 1990s, thanks to the Internet and improved database management, it became possible again to match a personalized gift card with a specific recipient.

The Lakeside Classics became highly collectible very early in their history. Already in 1927, T.E. had recognized that "To possess the entire series has become the desire of many booklovers, and the earlier volumes which find their way to the shelves of dealers

in old books have a ready sale...."

Not much is known about print runs. The 1935 Preface says that fifteen hundred copies were printed of the first book. No other press runs are recorded until the 1970s when they were already in the tens of thousands.

Most of the value is in the first ten volumes. The scarcest is the 1904 *Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents, Washington to Lincoln*.

Perhaps they cut the run the second year or these volumes may have disappeared into

Washington and Lincoln col-

lections. The second hardest to get is *Fruits of Solitude*. Perhaps this, the slimmest volume in the series, was easily lost. Next in difficulty are the *Memorable Speeches*. An amusing theory is that of the late Charlie Haffner, grandson of T.E., who speculated that they were so unmemorable that everyone threw them out.

Interest has recently developed in a "knock off" version of the books. R.R. Donnelley allowed Reilly & Britton, a Chicago publisher, to reissue some of the earliest titles as "The Patriotic Classics." A copy that twenty-five years ago could be bought for \$30 is now offered for \$500.

As The Lakeside Classics enters its 111th year, it is the sole survivor of its genre. The Cuneo Christmas books had a forty-year run from 1942 to 1981. The beautiful Mead/Westvaco books showcasing the company's paper products lasted fifty years, 1958 to 2007.

In 1928, T.E. was loath to predict that The Lakeside Classics series would last another twenty-five years. In fact, it has lasted over three times that long. While equally loath to predict the future, all lovers of a good read in a beautifully crafted book can hope that the tradition will continue.

§§

The evolution of the Lakeside Classics logo over the years.



photos: Robert McCamant

Caxtonians Read: Love and War in the Apennines

Love and War in the Apennines
Eric Newby
Hodder & Stoughton, 1971

Reviewed by Jim Tomes

Little did I realize when a friend suggested that I read Eric Newby's *Love and War in the Apennines* that I would be embarking on a fascinating and probably long-term quest for travel literature. I'll begin here with a book review, and then tell you about the quest.

Eric Newby was born in Hammersmith, England in 1919 and died in 2006, after living an adventurous, sometimes very dangerous, and mostly happy life. His father was the owner of a struggling women's clothing business in London, but in his heart he was a small boat owner and sailor. This was surely the source of Eric's romantic desire for the life of a sailor.

Like many good writers, Eric did not like school. After suffering through an entry level job in a London advertising agency, he signed on in 1938 as an 18-year-old apprentice sailor on a Finnish four-masted barque, the *Moshulu*, to sail around the world from Belfast to Australia and back. The voyage became known as *The Last Grain Race* when Eric wrote a book about it many years later – in 1956. He carried a camera along and took many remarkable pictures from high on the top-gallant yardarm almost 200 feet above the keel, and all around the 320-foot-long ship, even during the gale force storms in both the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans. The pictures were also published in a beautiful large format book titled *Learning the Ropes* in 1999.

On returning to England from Belfast in 1939, Eric enlisted in the British Army and was sent to the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst where he was commissioned as a second lieutenant after a short "ninety day wonder" training course. He was first posted to India and then transferred to the Middle East. There he volunteered for commando duty in the Special Boat Section of the Black Watch, operating out of Alexandria, Egypt.

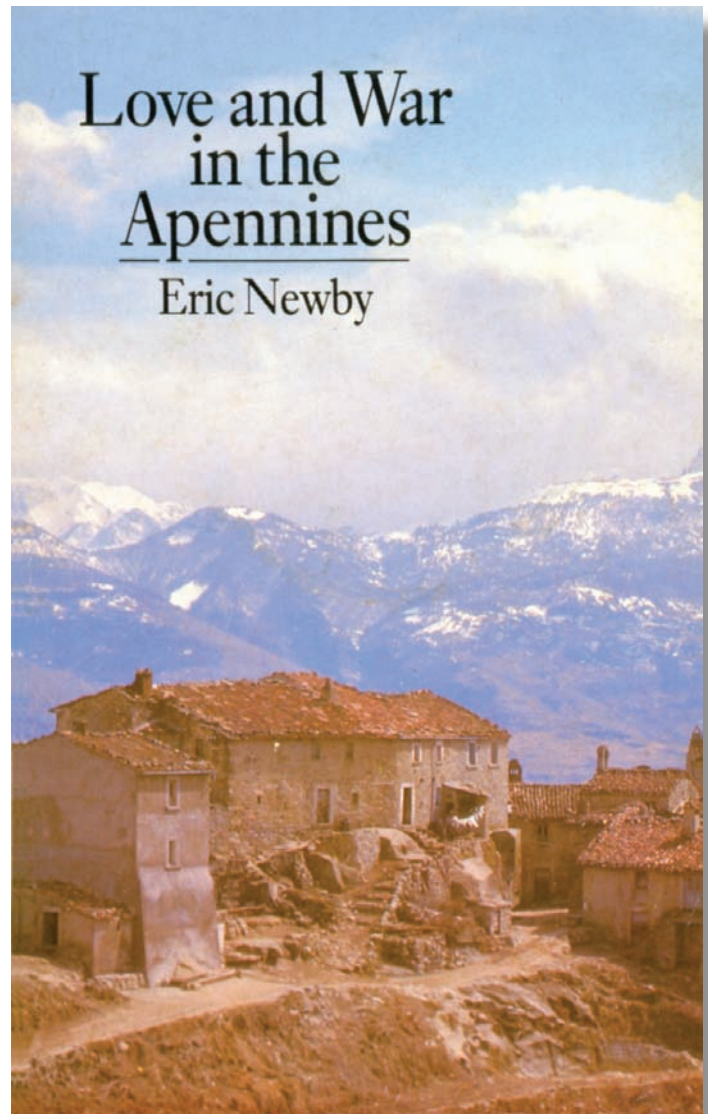
The story of *Love and War in the Apennines* begins in August 1942 with Eric's seven-man commando unit sent on an ill-conceived mission to attempt the sabotage of German Junker bombers at an airfield in Sicily. The three officers and their enlisted men were

put to sea off the Sicilian coast from a small British submarine in folding canvas canoes in which they rowed to shore. They buried the canoes on the beach and cut through the wire surrounding the airbase. They planted a few bombs destroying various pieces of German equipment, but were discovered before they could destroy any of the German bombers. With the 1000-man German forces alerted, they decided to abort their mission, find their buried canoes, and rendezvous with the submarine. Unfortunately the submarine was not found and they were rescued at sea by Sicilian fishermen who believed they were survivors of a sunken British ship. The fishermen turned them over to the Italian authorities on the mainland and they were eventually made prisoners of war by the Italian Army.

Eric and his mates spent the following year imprisoned – ultimately in a disused orphanage near Fontanello. They were reasonably well treated by their Italian captors, with regular exercise and mediocre prison food (supplemented by Red Cross parcels). They tried unsuccessfully to escape by digging a tunnel, then played endless games of backgammon and read many books. Eric's comments on the British class structure among the imprisoned officers are quite amusing.

In July 1943 *Il Duce* Mussolini was deposed by the Italian King, rescued by the Germans, and reinstated as titular head of the northern Italian "government."

Then, on September 9th, the Italian King, and Marshall Badoglio, the head of the Italian civil government, arranged for an



armistice with the Anglo-American Allies, and promptly departed from Italy, leaving the Allies to sort out the mess of dealing with the surrendered Italian Army and still-large occupying force of the Nazi-controlled German Army.

In the meantime, Eric fell down a flight of marble stairs at the orphanage prison and broke his ankle, requiring his transfer to the prison hospital. Thereby hangs the rest of the tale.

Because the German Army was en route to the orphanage, it was necessary for the prisoners to leave, but with Eric's broken ankle he was not able to walk. So he was transported by horse to a farm where they all holed up temporarily. It was there that another doctor decided that he needed to be admitted to a proper hospital nearby at Fontanello.

While at the farm, Eric had noticed and was immediately charmed by a beautiful young woman, Wanda, who was also attracted to him. She was a Slovenian by birth, but had moved to Italy with her parents when Slovenia was annexed to Italy. In the brief encounter at the farm, Wanda offered to teach Eric Italian and to visit him at the new hospital.

Eric stayed at the hospital for a while, learning Italian and falling in love with Wanda, and then escaped the Germans again with Wanda's help. She arranged for her father's car to pick him up after he fled the hospital one night by slipping through a bathroom window and sliding down a drainpipe!

(While this book reads at times like fiction, it is in fact a true story. It was made into an excellent movie in 2001, with the title *In Love and War* and available on Netflix.)

The rest of the book tells the story of Eric's hiding out in various peasants' homes in the Apennine mountains and continuous contact with Wanda who helped him with food and more Italian lessons and found new hiding places for him. The reprisal risk for peasants who helped escaped POWs was death, which caused Eric to become increasingly concerned about their welfare. The peasants finally built him a refuge in a mountain cave, but then, when his refuge was betrayed, he turned himself in to the Germans and again became a POW.

Eric survived the remainder of the war as a POW in various German camps and returned to England. The British government, amazingly, offered to send Eric and some of his fellow ex-POWs back to Italy to thank and help the peasants who helped them. Eric returned to Italy, found Wanda, and, true to the best of Hollywood clichés, they were married in 1946 at the church of Santa Croce in Florence. Later in life, after their two children were grown, they built a small house in the Apennines and lived there part of the year and part in England.

Hard to believe, but true!

The story is not only true, but is marvelously well told. Eric Newby was a gifted writer with a wry sense of humor and a self-deprecating style. He was also very well informed so his travels are the occasion for many excursions into history and biography. Eric's writing is also full of memorable imagery and deft character sketches. The whole tale moves along briskly—a true page-turner. He writes what I believe is travel literature, a grand genre. But he travels lightly, seeming forever the amateur, somehow managing his way

through dangerous scenarios. He was, in fact, awarded the British Army's Military Cross for his bravery during the aborted Sicilian mission.

Which is what brings me to the quest: I became so fascinated by Eric Newby's storytelling that I turned to some of his other books. He wrote at least 18 others during his long life. In addition to the books already mentioned I suggest these:

(1) *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush* - an interesting tale of how Eric and a friend attempt climbing an 18,500-foot-high mountain in Nuristan, the most formidable of the wild Afghanistan mountain ranges. After spending a few days in Wales learning a bit about climbing, these two rank amateurs attempt the impossible and almost make it after some harrowing experiences.

(2) *Something Wholesale* - an amusing story of Eric's 10-year go at managing his father's wholesale women's clothing business in London. He is actually quite good at this most difficult business enterprise.

(3) *Slowly Down the Ganges* - the story of Eric and his wife Wanda's boat trip down the 1,200 miles of India's Ganges river. It is truly India from the bottom rung, but it is an interesting anecdotal history of the British experience in India, and the very real life and deaths of those who live on or near the river.

(4) *A Traveller's Life* - a sampling of excerpts from his many books.

By a rather uncanny coincidence, another writer of travel literature who lived a similarly dangerous but fascinating life during World War II was Patrick Leigh-Fermor. "PLF" as many designate him, was a British Special Operations man who also left home at age 18, and after a rambunctious but classical school life in England, made a two-year hike across Europe in 1933-1934 from Holland to Constantinople.

Later in life in 1977 and 1986, PLF wrote the story of that trip as *A Time of Gifts* and *Between the Woods and the Water*, based on his diaries. He also wrote many other books, married his wartime companion, and they too built a Mediterranean house as their post-war refuge in Greece, spending summers in England. PLF's Greek language skills put him in Greece and Crete during the war. In another "made in Hollywood" story, it was PLF who led the resistance in Crete, disguised as a shepherd. In 1943, it was PLF, together with his sidekick, William Moss, and a group of brave Cretan partisans, who engineered and

pulled off one of the more audacious capers of the war, by successfully kidnapping German General Kreipe, the commander of all the German forces in Crete. That story is told best by Bill Moss in his *Ill Met By Moonlight*, another true, almost unbelievable tale. These men were not just heroic soldiers, they were literate. They actually brought a small library of books with them when they left Cairo for Crete, and they read them to each other in between raids on the Germans. Moss became a best-selling author after the war and married a young woman he met in Cairo. PLF wrote many other books covering a wide range of travels and ideas. They include books on living in monasteries, traveling the Caribbean, and life and history in northern and southern Greece. PLF's writing style is different than Eric Newby's. While both are diffident about their own lives, and both have an active sense of humor, PLF has a distinctive style embracing the Classics and describing events, people and scenes in an unusually graphic and memorable way. A very exciting writer.

Learning more about the travel literature genre as I read Newby, Moss, and Leigh-Fermor, I realized that my own English cousins were at least amateur members of that class of soldier/writers. They are actually second and third cousins, but since there are only a very few Tomeses in the world and we all come from the Cotswolds in England, they are literally my cousins. They helped me find my ancestors.

The first was Colonel (retired) L.T. "Dick" Tomes, who was born in 1915 and died in 2004. Dick was a Sandhurst graduate of 1935 and was posted to the Maginot Line in France in 1939. He was a Captain of Infantry and ordered with his Warwickshire regiment to manage a fighting retreat as the Nazis invaded Belgium and France. The German forces were vastly superior, but his regiment was ordered to form and defend a perimeter south of Dunkirk and "fight to the last man and last round," which they did. On May 29th, 1940 Dick was personally manning an anti-tank gun against the oncoming SS tanks at Wormhoudt, south of Dunkirk, when he was wounded and knocked unconscious. He was rescued by one of his men and carried to the cellar of a local house where he was captured. He spent the next five years as a POW, escaping twice, but recaptured twice, and was finally liberated at the end of the war by American troops. He had learned the Serbian and Croatian languages while he was a prisoner and

See CAXTONIANS READ, page 8

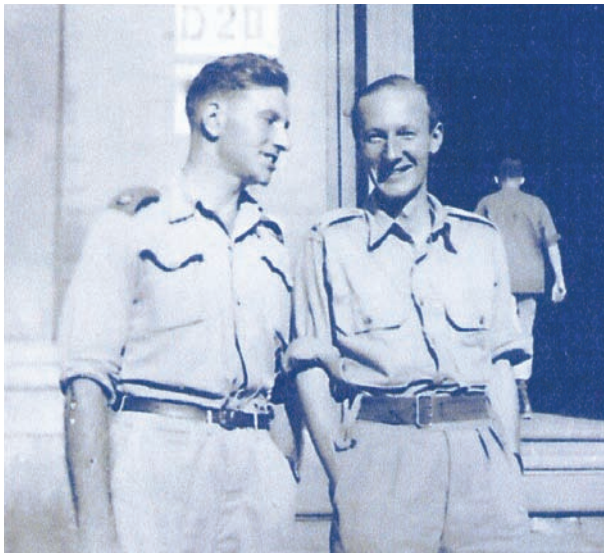
was sent to Trieste as an intelligence officer after the war. It was there that he met his English wife, Jane Cooke, who had enlisted as an ambulance driver during the war, but was then also in the intelligence unit at Trieste.

In a slight variation on the form (after all, Jane was English) Dick and Jane were married in 1946. Dick remained in the regular British Army as an intelligence officer, posted around Europe and in Washington D.C., retiring as a Colonel OBE. He and Jane retired in 1962 to Hawkchurch in Dorset and opened and managed the Archway bookstore in Axminster. Dick also wrote a memoir of his war experiences, a copy of which is in Special Collections at the Newberry Library.

Dick's older brother John Tomes was a 1933 graduate of Oxford where he was also a member of the Royal Air Force Reserve Officer corps. Upon graduation, he was posted to Cairo where he met a young English girl, Joanne Maxwell, then employed by Imperial Airways. They were married in England in 1935. John taught Joanne how to fly in Egypt, and then John became a bomber squadron commander during the war. (He was mentioned in British dispatches and awarded the American Distinguished Flying Cross.) After the war John stayed in the RAF and ultimately retired as an Air Commodore. They lived in Bath where John wrote the Blue Guides for Scotland, Belgium and Luxembourg, and Wales, and many travel guides and articles for American Express. Joanne enjoyed traveling with John doing their travel "research." John was born in 1913 and died in 2005. My wife Josie and I were able to meet both Dick and John and their wives in 1975 and had many good times with them before they died. John and Joanne's son, Major (retired) Ian Tomes, is a Sandhurst graduate and a combat infantry veteran awarded the Military Cross. He is the family genealogist with many published genealogies (available at the Newberry – including ours) to his credit, and a world traveler.

And last, my own ancestors.

My great-great-grandfather, Francis Tomes, (1780-1869), was an inveterate traveler and keeper of detailed travel journals. He emigrated from England to America in 1815 and founded an import-export business which caused him to go frequently to England on sailing ships, as well as overland throughout



TOP; Captain Dick Tomes in 1946. BELOW; Dick with family and bookshop in 1995.

frontier America, both south and north, including Chicago in 1837. He travelled by horseback, wagon, stagecoach, riverboat and lake boat, staying in crowded inns and friends' houses. His travel journals are filled with his observations of the people, cultures and politics of the time. I discovered his handwritten travel journals in 1975 and transcribed them for the family. The originals and the transcribed copies are in Special Collections at the Newberry. Although Francis's education was cut short by his father's early death, Francis had learned Greek and Latin in grammar school, was a life-long reader, and had a small personal library. One of my favorite quotes from his 1838 journal is, "There is nothing better than a good ship, a good captain, a snug cabin, and a good book." A true literary traveler.

One of Francis's sons, my great-grandfather, Dr. Robert Tomes, (1817-1882), carried on the literary travel tradition. He became a full-time writer after medical schools in

Edinburgh and Paris and a few years practicing medicine in New York City. He was a medical officer in the U.S. Sanitary Commission and a writer for *Harper's Monthly Magazine* and *Virtue & Co.* (publishers) during the Civil War. Before and after the war he wrote histories, biographies and many articles for New York City newspapers and *Harper's*. But he qualifies as a writer of travel literature as the author of Admiral Perry's *United States Naval Expedition to Japan, 1852-54*, *The Champagne Country, Panama, 1855*, and *My Later Days*. He wrote about the Champagne region in 1867 after serving for two years as U.S. Consul in Reims, France. He wrote *Panama, 1855* after traveling with the inaugural railway train as the *New York Post* reporter of record across the Isthmus of Panama in 1855, and *My Later Days* as a handwritten memoir of his life from 1840 to 1849. It covers his time in graduate medical school in Paris in 1841-42, his return to New York, and his service as a ship's surgeon on an Atlantic steamer and then around the Horn of South America to San Francisco bringing prospectors to California and gold back to Panama. He also lived with his family in Wiesbaden, Germany from 1870 to 1880 where he wrote many articles for *Harper's*. All of Robert's books – original and transcribed memoirs – are in the Newberry Library.

Thus, our family has at least a marginal claim to the travel guide, if not the travel literature genre. At any rate, they were good soldiers and they were literate!

But the quest continues: The world of travel literature is a vast genre, beginning perhaps with Homer, and including a huge swath of writers. Other Greeks, Julius Caesar and other Romans, Chinese, Japanese, Persians, Arabs, Marco Polo and other Venetians, Boswell, Johnson, Darwin, Dickens and other Englishmen, Jefferson, Twain, Melville and other Americans, Latin Americans, De Tocqueville and other Frenchmen, and then on to the 20th century with Richard Halliburton, Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, John Steinbeck, Rebecca West, Ernest Hemingway, Martha Gellhorn, Che Guevara, Bill Bryson and too many more to give even a cursory list. I commend them all. There is nothing easier or more invigorating than armchair traveling with a literate companion. *Bon Voyage!*

§§

Charles Bliss, Jr.: Closet Bibliophile in the Open

Tom Joyce

Charles Bliss Jr. was never a Caxtonian, but he ought to have been. Charles was a bona fide bibliophile. His book collection exceeded ten thousand volumes in a one-bedroom apartment. Three walls of his living room were books from floor to ceiling – and two of those walls were double-shelved. His double front hall closet held his raincoat, his overcoat, a lighter coat, an extra umbrella, but the rest was filled with books and LPs. The inner closet was jammed with books. The linen closet had no linen except linen used as book cloth. The bedroom closet contained several suits, some shoes, some shirts, and floor to ceiling double-shelved books.

Seem familiar?

Charles was the kind of person who would easily be overlooked. He was below average in height, and always tended toward the fleshy side of stout. He had thick glasses. He graduated from Lake Forest College with an ambition to become an editor with a publishing house. Herman Kogan was pleased to print a number of Bliss's book reviews in the *Sun-Times*. I knew Charles for decades, but never knew that he had an M.A. in English from Northwestern. Some Caxtonians, if shown a photograph of him, might recall him from the new book department at Marshall



Bliss with Andrew.

Field's department store, where he labored for decades.

It is double hard for a bibliophile if he works in a bookstore. And Charles had too many interests to be able to resist so many temptations. He had the second-best collection of Shakespeareana I have seen in private hands (exceeded only by Prof. Marder, who founded and edited the *Shakespeare Newsletter*). Bliss's fondness for the Bard was omnivorous. It included notable sets, multiple versions, statuary, literary criticism, videos, sound recordings, Toby jugs, ephemera, and used tickets to plays. It extended to other Elizabethan writers, such as Edmund Spenser and John Donne, and Shakespearean editors

such as Samuel Johnson. He was devoted to Sherlock Holmes, and mysteries generally. He had extensive collections of book designers Bruce Rogers and Victor Hammer. Those other Inklings, C. S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, were present in shelves – long runs of their writings. And then there were the books about books, sets of Ian Fleming, Dr. Who and much more.

Charles Bliss Jr. passed away during a cardiac procedure. I am sure that he is holding his own, swapping tales in that Great Library in the sky, with other bibliomaniacs such as Eugene and Roswell Field, Sir Thomas Phillips, Henry Folger, and Abel Berland.

Charles was never a Caxtonian, but he deserves consideration for a posthumous prize as an Honorary Caxtonian.

Note: Charles also earned some consideration toward paradise due to his generosity. He gave extensive assistance to at least one bookseller in need.

Selections from the Bliss collection were auctioned at the Leslie Hindman Auctioneers at the November 7th book sale. Ask Mary Kohnke for a catalogue. Sadly for Charlie's dear friends – the ones listed in his will, who he had planned would pick one book each from his collection – the books were sold to pay off his outstanding debts. He had supported too many booksellers.

§§

CAXTONIANS COLLECT, from page 12

room." The first floor is largely an open plan, but this corner room has walls and a door, so if a family member needs time alone, it provides an escape. Its shelves include some modern firsts, some architecture, and some history books. Oh, and photography books of Avedon, Helmut Newton, Victor Skrebneski, and the French photographer Lucien Clergue.

From there, we went up the stairs, pausing on the landing for some more modern firsts by more favorite authors. On the second floor, the master suite has the two main shelves of his Edward Gorey collection. "I had good relations with Gotham Book Mart, which always had a pipeline to his projects, so I frequently got an early chance to pick my copy of a given release," he explained. Gorey often made limited editions with both numbered and lettered copies. "Frequently there was something special about the lettered ones – say some



hand coloring, or an additional stuffed figure – so I would pick the lettered ones any time I could afford it."

The second floor also holds his main work-and-collecting room. Handsome shelves,

which line the walls, contain his pop-up books, plus his magic library. Some of his favorite author collections are here, most notably that of Capote, which includes the author's personal copy of *In Cold Blood*.

Railing joined the Club in 1995, nominated by the late Jay Marshall, a fellow magician. Magic is

Railing's main source of income these days. His specialty is sleight-of-hand, which he performs for small private gatherings and corporate events throughout the world.

§§

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: "Blood, Gold, and Fire: Coloring Early German Woodcuts" (how a largely illiterate public liked their devotional imagery: raw, emotional, and very bloody), Gallery 202A, through February 17. "Rarely Seen Contemporary Works on Paper" (nearly 100 popular contemporary works on paper, many of which have not been seen in years), Galleries 124-127, through January 13.

Chicago Botanic Garden, Lenhardt Library, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-8202: "The Garden Turns 40: Documenting Our Past, Planning for the Future" (traces the garden's roots from 1890, through 1972 when the Glencoe garden opened, to its present state), through February 10.

Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago, 312-266-2077: "Vivian Maier's Chicago" (Maier spent her adult life as a nanny but devoted her free time and money to photography), through summer 2013.

Columbia College Center for the Book and Paper Arts, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., 2nd floor, Chicago, 312-344-6630: "Druckworks: 40 Years of Books and Projects by Johanna Drucker" (comprehensive retrospective exhibits her books, graphic art, and visual projects), through December 7.

Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State Street, Chicago, 312-747-4300: "Author, Author" (retrospective by photographer Michael Childers has 50+ intimate portraits of the 20th century's greatest authors), Congress Corridor, Ground Floor, through February 3. "Limitless: The Abstract Wood Sculptures of Kip Pasta" (the Chicago artist's wood sculptures have been compared to the action paintings of Jackson Pollock for their spontaneous kinetic qualities), Exhibit Cases, Eighth Floor, through December 31.

DuSable Museum of African American History, 740 East 56th Place, Chicago, 773-947-0600: "Word, Shout, Song: Lorenzo Dow Turner" (rare photographs, recordings, and artifacts collected by Turner from Gullah communities in Africa, South America, and the U.S.), through December 31.

Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, 312-280-2660: "Color Bind: The MCA Collection in Black and White" (dozens of works in all media musing on the ways the

words "black" and "white" evoke both simple formal notions and metaphors for race, politics, and historical movements), through April 28. Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, 312-943-9090: "The Newberry Quasiquicentennial: 125 Extraordinary Years, 125 Extraordinary Objects" (including the first Bible printed in North America; an aria handwritten and signed by Mozart – when he was 9; a Shakespeare First Folio; original artwork featuring American Indians by

American Indians; an original and never-bound manuscript of Voltaire's *Candide*; letters from Thomas Jefferson, Jack Kerouac, and Ernest Hemingway; and rare correspondence between a slave woman and her husband), through December 31.

Northwestern University, Block Museum of Art, 40 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, 847-491-4000: "De-Natured: German Art from Joseph Beuys to Martin Kippenberger" (varied work of ten German artists from the mid-1960s into the first decade of the 21st century), through December 9.

Northwestern University Library Special Collections, third floor of Deering Library: access through the Main Library entrance at 1970 Campus Drive, Evanston, 847-467-5918: "Decorative Cloth: Publishers' Trade Bindings" (case binding made uniform edition bindings possible; they were soon decorating covers and spines as a form of commercial enticement and an expression of house pride), through March 25.

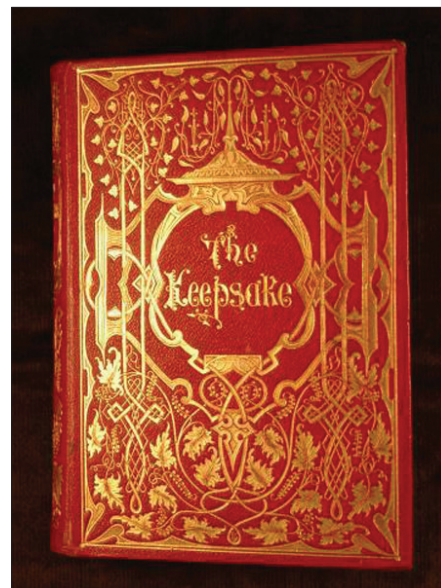
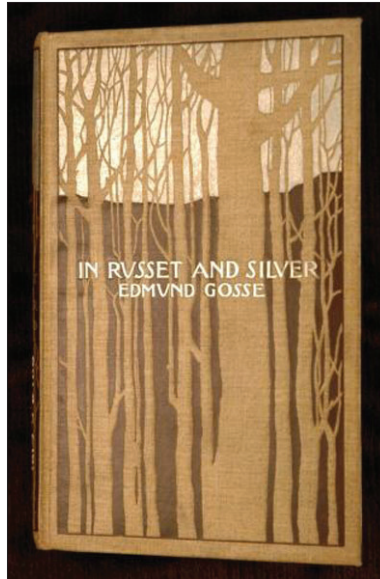
Oriental Institute, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, 773-702-9514: "Birds In Ancient Egypt," through July 28.

Smart Museum of Art, 5550 S. Greenwood Avenue, Chicago, 773-702-0200: "Awash in Color: French and Japanese Prints" (parallel traditions in France and Japan since before 1854 influenced each other), through January 20.

Spertus Center, 610 S. Michigan, Chicago, 312-322-1700: "Uncovered & Rediscovered: Stories of Jewish Chicago" (the work of influential Jewish artists active in Chicago between 1920 and 1945), through December 29.

University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library Special Collections Research Center Exhibition Gallery, 1100 East 57th Street, Chicago, 773-702-8705: "Swiss Treasures: From Biblical Papyrus and Parchment to Erasmus, Zwingli, Calvin, and Barth" (historical Biblical texts and modern manuscripts in Biblical studies drawn from eight libraries in seven Swiss cities), through December 14.

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



Northwestern U Library: Trade Bindings

Caxtonians Collect: John Railing

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

John Railing remembers vividly how he learned the concept of “collectibility” in books. Mind you, he had already gathered quite a few books of modern literature and history before he discovered what it was. “In fact, I had enough books that I needed a bookcase to put them in. I discovered one that my landlord had in a basement storage area, and asked him if he’d sell it to me. He was glad to get rid of it – and he even told me that I could have the books, too.”

As he was packing it up for moving, he began to notice the odd titles he had acquired. There were a couple of old Dickens volumes, also a *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, a multi-volume set of Havelock Ellis’s *Psychology of Sex*, an early printing of *Ulysses*, and most unusually, a group of mimeographed sheets of Nazi pornographic writing. So Railing packed the couple hundred books in cartons and put them in the trunk of his car. He looked up some book dealers in the Yellow Pages, and arbitrarily picked Hamill and Barker, where he persuaded a reluctant young man (was it Terry Tanner?) to take a look at the books in his trunk. The first book he picked up, a true first (Contact Editions) of *The Dream Life of Balso Snell*, by Nathaniel West, encouraged the book dealer to look more deeply in the boxes. In the end, despite the relatively poor condition from languishing for years, there were some wonderful treasures (the *Chatterley’s Lover* was a Florence edition), so he advised Railing that many of his books were “collectible” and offered him close to \$1000 for 19 of them.

Railing visited a few other dealers and learned that the offer was fair, so he returned to Hamill and Barker and concluded the deal. He then went home and looked at some of the books he had previously collected (the two best-represented topics were mathematical amusements and magic) and discovered to his

delight that he’d been lucky in his purchases. Many were first editions, and some were even association copies.

Meanwhile Railing had been pursuing a variety of careers, more and less conventional. He had grown up in southern Indiana, and attended the University of Cincinnati. He practiced law in Cincinnati, spent a year traveling abroad and then settled in Chicago, where he performed magic every night at the Pump Room. “The Pump Room was a great

the same time, and they compared their “want lists”; and he met one of the masters of the genre, Ib Penick, the so-called dean of paper engineers, who, by coincidence, lived nearby. “Ib was a genius; he not only came up with the most wonderful designs, but he also understood all aspects of production and assembly. And he shared his secrets with me!”

Railing was consumed with pop-up books. He started collecting them voraciously, then meeting the people who made them. Before

long he got involved with pop-ups in advertising, creating and producing the pop-ups for magazine ads. He would arrange to have the multi-million ads hand assembled in plants in Mexico, sometimes requiring up to 1,000 assemblers for several months.

One perk was attending the annual Children’s Book Fair held in Bologna, Italy. “The important thing that happens there is international deals in making pop-up books. If you can put together publishers in several countries to bring out a book simultaneously, it reduces the price per copy to affordable levels. Everything is the same for the various editions except the black printing plate, which has the text in different languages for different



experience,” he says. “All sorts of famous and interesting people passed through, and many of them authors. I met William S. Burroughs, Philip Roth, Gore Vidal, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee that way!”

After two years, he moved on from the Pump Room and was an options futures trader with a seat on the Chicago Board Options Exchange for 6 years, from 1981 to 1987. In the meantime, he prowled bookstores, used and new, and built a sizeable collection of modern firsts of his favorite authors.

And then, around 1988, he wandered into the children’s department of a bookstore and discovered pop-up books. Nothing has been the same since. A couple of coincidences magnified the effect: he had a college friend, then living in NYC, who discovered them at about

countries,” he explains.

He simultaneously built his own collection of movable books, including ancient volvelles (whose rotating charts illustrated many concepts in early publishing) and the latest children’s books. Today he believes he has something like 5000 examples, which may well be one of the world’s largest collections.

Railing and his wife, Sheila, have three children. They live in a Villa Park house he largely built with his own hands. It is inspired by *The Not So Big House* book series by Sarah Susanka (who was the architect), which despite the name is not so much about how big a house is, but about how well it suits its owners’ needs. He gave me a tour.

It began in what Susanka called the “away



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Bookmarks...

Luncheon: Fri., Dec 7, 2012, Union League Club
Robert McCamant
Member-Collectors Show 'n' tell

We've had handmade books shown 'n' tells before. But this time we'll have member-presenters sharing items from their collections of various kinds. Confirmed presenters at press time include Roger Baskin, Jeff Jahns, plus moderator McCamant, so there will undoubtedly be some maps, some architecture, and some fine press. But there will be surprises!

Note that because of holiday scheduling our meeting will take place on the first Friday of the month.

December luncheon: Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Boulevard. Luncheon buffet (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. Special Revels dinner: Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton. Timing:

Beyond December...

JANUARY LUNCHEON

On January 11 (at the Union League), David Buisseret, formerly of the Newberry's Cartography Center and subsequently Professor at the U of Texas, will explain how he recently proved that an important 1673 Jacques Marquette map (declared a fake by another professor), was indeed authentic!

JANUARY DINNER

On January 16, we will meet at the Union League Club. Tim Samuelson, Cultural Historian of the city of Chicago, will speak, on a topic to be announced.

Dinner: Wednesday, Dec. 12, Newberry Library
Our Annual Revels with Auction

Join our magical holiday Revels celebration on 12/12/12, when camaraderie abounds. Besides beverages and dinner, silent and live auctions, our evening finishes with an innovative presentation by Caxtonian and acclaimed storyteller Peggy Sullivan. As auctioneer, Caxtonian and noted raconteur Tom Joyce returns to introduce us to many a gem.

Peruse auction items as they arrive at www.caxtonclub.org. Last day to donate? December 12 (direct them to Dan Crawford at the Newberry). Bring a guest (or 2) and be eligible for free-dinner drawing.

This is our only FUNdraiser...and, what FUN! Reservations are wise.

*Spirits and bidding begin at 5:00 pm, buffet dinner at 5:45 pm. \$48. For reservations call 312-255-3710 or email caxtonclub@newberry.org; **reservations are needed by noon Friday for the Wednesday dinner.***

FEBRUARY LUNCHEON

On February 8, we will meet at the Union League Club. Program to be announced.

FEBRUARY DINNER

On February 20, we will meet at the Union League Club. Eric Slauter, Associate Professor, Department of English at the University of Chicago, will talk on "Walden's Carbon Footprint: How People, Plants, Animals, and Machines Made an Environmental Classic."